



Media Release

15 December 2023

Cockburn Council endorses Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025

Cockburn Council has endorsed the City's fourth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), since adopting its first 12 years ago, becoming the first Perth Local Government to do so in 2011.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025 outlines specific actions to guide the City as it gains a deeper understanding of its sphere of influence and establishes the best ways to advance reconciliation.

The Council endorsed the RAP at its Ordinary Council Meeting on 14 December.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the Innovate RAP would allow flexibility to consolidate foundation work in the areas of employment, cultural learning and community engagement, while 'stretching' the City's work on anti-discrimination and procurement.

"The City continues to plan the Aboriginal Cultural and Visitors Centre in Bibra Lake, investing in cultural competency training for Elected Members and staff which is so important to reflect our shared values and increase our knowledge of Nyungar heritage, culture and language," Mayor Howlett said.

"As we celebrate National Reconciliation Week, acknowledge Sorry Day, and extend our shared journey through various activities during NAIDOC Week there is more we can do as a community to 'close the gap' in the health and life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other significant gaps that remain a challenge to us all.

"Connecting with Elders and our Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) will increase knowledge sharing and providing guidance and recommendations to our Council on the many aspects of the RAP and other related activities.

"We thank the ARG and local Elders for their ongoing guidance and participation. The City is proud that it has had an ARG in place continuously since 2002 and we greatly value this relationship."

City of Cockburn CEO Daniel Simms, who is the City's endorsed Innovate RAP Champion, said the City's vision for reconciliation was to create an inclusive community

Media Release

with strong relationships across cultures based on mutual respect and understanding.

“The City’s commitment to developing its fourth RAP is to work towards closing the gap between First Nations people and other Australians,” Mr Simms said.

“This means providing equitable access to services, inclusion in decision making and access to employment and business opportunities, so all people can be valued and participate fully in the Cockburn community.”

The RAP cover page features a painting by Cockburn resident and artist Kathleen Sherie who grew up on Beeliar Boodja and has connections to Minang/Goreng Country in southwest Western Australia, through her grandmother.

The artwork celebrates Beeliar Boodja which is home to the yaakan/yakkin (Southwestern snake-necked turtle, *Chelodina oblonga* – prev. *C. colliei*).

Kathleen said the circles represented Cockburn’s 24 suburbs, while the shades of blue represented the land, lake or swamp, boodja and pinjar/binger.

The sitting people were symbols of respected Elders of the community past and present.

Actions in the 2023-2025 RAP include:

Relationships –

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies: Undertake review of the Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying’ policy to ensure it adequately addresses racism in the workplace

Respect –

Ensure an Acknowledgement of Country is visible at all City premises and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags can be flown at key venues:

- Develop a two-year Plan for the installation of flagpoles and Acknowledgement of Country signage at identified key City facilities including the City Administration Centre.

Opportunities –

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development:

- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework focused on recruitment, retention and professional development.



Media Release

Governance –

Ensure genuine and ongoing engagement with the Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) to support Council's work:

- Elected Members and Executive to strengthen relationships with ARG through in-person meetings.

Key achievements of the 2018-2021 RAP include:

- Progressing the Aboriginal Cultural and Visitors Centre located opposite Bibra Lake wetlands, with construction anticipated to begin in 2024
- Cultural Competency training for all staff including online, general cultural education delivered by First Nations providers, and 'Let's Talk about Racism' workshops delivered to more than 400 staff in collaboration with City of Melville
- Development of a Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Nyungar language incorporated into interpretive signage across multiple parks, and meeting rooms at the City Administration and Operations centres
- Working with schools to support and share progress with staff developing RAPs
- Growth in procurement of First Nations businesses with expenditure of \$280,000 across one year and 22 providers in the system
- A Reconciliation landing page on the City's website covering our Vision for Reconciliation, the RAP and regular updates on its implementation, Reconciliation activities and events.

Read the RAP on the City's [website](#).

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For more information contact:
Media and Communications Officer
City of Cockburn
T: 08 9411 3551
E: media@cockburn.wa.gov.au