



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yass Valley Council wishes to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people on whose land the Local Government Area sits. Council acknowledges, recognises and respects the cultural heritage, beliefs and connection the traditional owners have to the land and water.

Council also acknowledges and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living within the Yass Valley and looks forward to working with these groups to advance reconciliation.

Contributors to this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) included:

The RAP Working Party

- Cr Michael McManus
- Bradley Bell
- Denise Bell
- Ken Bell
- Lillian Bell
- Pam Bell
- Katrina Higgins
- Laurie Hutchinson
- Members of the Yass Valley Aboriginal Consultative Committee
- Reconciliation Australia

Yass Valley Council

P.O Box 6

Yass NSW 2582

Phone: 62261477

Email: council@yass.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.yassvalley.nsw.gov.au

Contents

JOINT MESSAGE 4

OUR GOAL..... 5

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 5

HOW THIS PLAN WORKS 6

RELATIONSHIPS..... 7

RESPECT 8

OPPORTUNITIES..... 8

TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING 11

JOINT MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure we present Yass Valley Council's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Countless people in Yass Valley, Aboriginal and non-indigenous, have worked toward reconciliation over many years. Yass Valley Council is committed toward strengthening these relationships and partnerships in the community.

The Reconciliation Action Plan aims to raise awareness of reconciliation within the organisation and the community as well as continuing to foster relationships with the Aboriginal groups and people. The plan identifies a series of actions to achieve these aims and assist with measuring progress toward reconciliation.

The Reconciliation Action Plan is a 'living document' that will be continuously reviewed by Council's Aboriginal Consultative Committee and adjusted to reflect changing priorities in the community.

We take this opportunity to thank those members of the community who took time to contribute to the development of this Reconciliation. Their input has proved most valuable.



Cr Rowena Abbey
Yass Valley Mayor



Lillian Bell, Ken Bell and Pam Bell
Aboriginal Elders



Cr Michael McManus
Chair ACC

OUR GOAL

Council's goal is to have a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that will strengthen existing partnerships and deliver better outcomes for the people of Yass Valley. Our Council is fully committed to reconciliation.

Council seeks advice on Aboriginal issues through its Aboriginal Consultative Committee, its strong working relationships with local Aboriginal organisations and with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups.

Council plays a critical role in the social, economic and environmental success of the local community.

Yass Valley covers an area of 3,999km² and has a population of approximately 16,739. People who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the 2016 Census make up 2 per cent of the population, lower than the NSW average of 2.5 per cent. From 2006 to 2016 the population of Yass Valley identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased by 57.

In December 2016 Council had 152 employees, fewer than 2 per cent of whom identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Yass Valley workforce is below the NSW Public Sector target of 2.6 per cent by 2015 (NSW Government, *EEO Benchmarks and Targets*, 2012).

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been developed in consultation with Council's Aboriginal Consultative Committee and the RAP Working Group.

The RAP will provide Council with a framework for future actions and priorities to advance reconciliation support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander equality and promote closer working relationships between the Council and the Aboriginal community. It will recognise the positive contribution that both Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to Yass Valley. Establishing this RAP affirms Council's long standing commitment to reconciliation.

This RAP has been developed through a process that included:

- Research and consultation
- Input from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff of Council, the Aboriginal Consultative Committee and the RAP Working Group
- Input from Reconciliation Australia
- Consultation with the Onerwal Local Aboriginal Lands Council, as well as members of the broader local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Council is committed to working towards a positive partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through reconciliation. Council recognises that reconciliation will not be fully achieved while there are huge gaps in health, education and employment opportunities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. Council also recognises that cultural awareness, respect, and employment are key issues that can be acted on within Yass Valley to reduce these gaps.

HOW THIS PLAN WORKS

Reconciliation Australia has developed a framework for the development of Reconciliation Action Plans. This framework identifies four different levels of RAP.

1. **Reflect RAP** – The Reflect RAP is designed for those organisations taking their first steps towards a formal reconciliation plan. It is designed to provide direction in the establishment of relationships and raising awareness of reconciliation within the organisation.
2. **Innovate RAP** – An Innovate RAP is designed to develop specific programs and initiatives that promote reconciliation. This can include tools such as formal cultural protocols, memorandum of understanding, employment strategies and procurement plans.
3. **Stretch RAP** – A stretch RAP is designed to build on the success of an Innovate RAP or for organisations that have a strong success rate in existing initiatives that promote reconciliation. It focuses on setting measurable targets for initiatives, such as employment and procurement. It is about expanding or refining existing initiatives that have proven successful in improving relationships, respect or awareness of reconciliation.
4. **Elevate RAP** – This type of RAP is designed for organisations that have a successful Stretch RAP and are seeking to extend their activities in the area of reconciliation. These organisations are leaders and champions in the reconciliation area.

The RAP Working Group has identified that a Reflect RAP is most suitable for Yass Valley Council. This RAP acknowledges work that has already been undertaken by Council to promote reconciliation, such as the establishment of the Munnagai Yerribi Walking Track, the creation of an interpretative display at Oak Hill Aboriginal Reserve, the drafting of Council's first Aboriginal Heritage Study and ongoing commitment to NAIDOC Week community celebrations.

This Reflect RAP is made up of actions and initiatives in four key areas:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Tracking and Reporting

Some are new initiatives and some are already standard practice within the organisation.

The progress of this Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported on to Reconciliation Australia and to the Council via its Aboriginal Consultative Committee.



RELATIONSHIPS

Acknowledging and respecting the cultural practices of the Ngunnawal people and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is a significant part of the relationship- building process. Yass Valley Council is committed to forming partnerships and maintaining relationships to achieve our vision of reconciliation.

Focus Area: Expanding networks, cultural protocols, community engagement, encouraging initiatives to support relationship-building.

RELATIONSHIPS			
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASUREABLE TARGETS
Build internal and external relationships	Aboriginal Consultative Committee	June 2019 Annually Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a directory of Yass Valley Aboriginal contacts, services, events and artists to be available on Council's website Conduct an annual community conversation session involving councillors, senior staff and Yass Valley's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities Support Council's Aboriginal Consultative Committee
Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Community Planner Organisation Development Manager	Planning meetings between February & June 27 May – 3 June Ongoing Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and support a NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week Working Group (reporting to the Aboriginal Consultative Committee) to expand community Reconciliation Week celebrations Host a NRW celebration event Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and materials to staff Encourage Council staff to attend a community NRW event
Raise awareness of our RAP	Community Planner Media & Communications Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness amongst all councillors and staff of our RAP commitments Promote NRW locally via social media, local print and radio

RESPECT

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important to Council. Recognising the cultural diversity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people builds respect and positive relationships. Council values the contribution of the diverse histories and culture each community brings to Yass Valley and supports an inclusive environment based on respect for all cultures.

Focus Area: Acknowledging the custodians of the land, cultural awareness training and participation in significant public celebrations.

RESPECT			
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASUREABLE TARGETS
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	Organisational Development Manager	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the local Aboriginal community in developing and delivering cultural awareness training at Yass Valley Council
Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	Organisational Development Manager	June 2019 Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policies and corporate protocols to ensure that there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in NAIDOC Week Share information amongst staff about the importance of NAIDOC Week
Raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Community Planner Chairpersons General Manager Community Planner	April 2019 Ongoing September/October following a Council election Following a Council election June 2019 June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Council protocol for implementing Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country cultural protocols. The Chairs of all Council Meetings, committee meetings, workshops, and planning forums acknowledge country at the commencement of meetings Invite local custodians to the first meeting of a new Council to explain to Councillors the significance of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Distribute information to community groups about Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country accompanied by a letter from Elders and the Mayor encouraging them to invite Elders to perform Welcome to Country at events Develop a list of contacts for organising a Welcome to Country Organise and display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in Council's Offices

Reconciliation Action Plan 2019

Work together to promote, protect and enhance Aboriginal heritage	Community Planner	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt OEH Plan of Management for Oak Hill Aboriginal Reserve • Protect Scarred Trees by creating an interpretive display of the trees at Oak Hill • Support listing as an Aboriginal Place the section of Yass Cemetery that contains historic graves of Aboriginal people • Develop a Management Plan to protect and enhance the cultural history of the Aboriginal graves • Update the Yass Valley Heritage Study and present it to Council
	Natural Resources & Sustainability Officer	September 2019	
	Strategic Planning Manager	September 2019	
	Community Planner	April 2019	
Investigate Aboriginal cultural heritage tourism opportunities	Strategic Planning Manager	September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source information about at least one Aboriginal cultural tourism experience and encourage promotion of the opportunity in tourism marketing material
	Economic Development & Tourism Manager	August 2019	



NAIDOC Week 2018

Mayor Rowena Abbey, Tyahn Bell, Ken Bell, Bradley Bell and Alyssa Bell

OPPORTUNITIES

Council is committed to building a culturally diverse and inclusive workforce. To this end, Council will explore opportunities to increase supplier diversity through engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and empowering local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with the knowledge to build their capacity to attract grants and deliver sustainable community-based projects that enhance the wider community's knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

OPPORTUNITIES			
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASUREABLE TARGETS
Council adopts a strategy to Support Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander employment within the organisation	Manager Organisation Development	June 2019 March 2019 August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure reference to Aboriginal employment is included in Council's Workforce Plan All Council job advertisements to include the phrase 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply' Review recruitment procedures and policies to ensure that there are no barriers to employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Council's workforce. Provide a discussion paper to a meeting of the Aboriginal Consultative Committee.
Financially support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives in Yass Valley	Community Planner Strategic Planning Manager	February 2019 March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review grants policies to ensure that Aboriginal projects are eligible Contribute to awareness of funding opportunities for Aboriginal cultural heritage initiatives through Council's grants programs At least one Aboriginal grant project funded per annum
Identify sources of funding to support the actions identified in the RAP and assist the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to apply for relevant funding	Community Planner	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the Aboriginal community of funding opportunities Identify and apply for external funding in partnership with local Aboriginal organisations to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives The number of joint grant applications submitted

TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the actions outlined in this RAP provides valuable information to Council about the success of the RAP – what worked well, what didn’t and what is needed in the next iteration of the RAP. Reporting on the successful actions in this RAP also provides insights for other organisations undertaking the reconciliation process and adds to the body of evidence Reconciliation Australia can draw upon to support other organisations through the process.

Focus Area: Measuring success, celebrating progress, reflecting on challenges and opportunities for the future.

RESPECT			
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASUREABLE TARGETS
A framework is developed for monitoring the implementation of actions	Community Planner	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A monitoring framework is developed
RAP Working Group and Aboriginal Consultative Council to actively monitor implementation of actions and their impact	Community Planner	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aboriginal Consultative Committee meets at least four times a year to review and evaluate the actions taken under the RAP The Aboriginal Consultative Council to ensure key information is collected and contributed to the development of the next RAP
The annual RAP report is prepared	Community Planner	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual report is provided to the Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Reconciliation Australia

