

RECONCILIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Reviewed and Adopted September 2021

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters we live and work on. On these lands, Djaara has performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

We recognise their resilience through dispossession and is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.



1. Project Background

In July 2018 Hepburn Shire Council adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). By adopting a RAP, Council makes a commitment to working positively today, and into the future, with the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to learn, acknowledge and move forward together with the whole Hepburn Shire community. Council's 'Reflect' RAP was developed in partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (now trading as DJAARA), Atkinson Consulting Group and a Community Reference Group appointed by Council.

The 'Reflect' RAP includes practical actions that have directed Council's contribution to reconciliation both internally and in communities throughout the Hepburn Shire.

Some of the progress and achievements since the adoption of the Reflect RAP and the establishment Reconciliation Advisory Committee include:

- Establishing a Cultural Competency programme for staff and Councillors.
 - Commissioning Traditional Owner Acknowledgement graphics for Council signage, print and electronic media.
 - Commissioning Dja Dja Wurrung public art as part of the RAP deliverable to include Aboriginal Art in new civic spaces.
 - Supporting the community to engage in reconciliation by providing a community grant category for activities and resources that support reconciliation.
 - Encourage discussion on Australia wide topics such as January 26; Council lowered the Aboriginal flag to half mast to acknowledge the day of mourning for many Aboriginal people. Supported alternative community events and established a MOU for Traditional Owner Acknowledgment at Council funded community events that celebrate Australia Day.
 - Participate in and create Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week events.
 - Encourage Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise procurement through exemptions in HSC procurement policy.
 - Opening Australia's first Avenue of Honour to acknowledge the Aboriginal lives lost in Frontier Wars and Massacres.
 - Truth telling via Reconciliation Week Tours on Country and via film in partnership with the DDWCAC and Djaara Elder.
 - Forming an Internal Working Group to monitor and support implementation of the RAP
 - Proposing the rename of Jim Crow Creek (considered a racist name) to a Dja Dja Wurrung name 'Larni Barramal Yaluk'.
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- Increasing Dja Dja Wurrung language in Council projects including;
 - Manna Gums Frontier Wars Memorial Avenue of Honour signage,
 - Glenlyon Public Art Project,
 - Proposed Renaming of features.

Council's future RAPs will build on the success achieved through the 'Reflect' RAP under the themes of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. These depend upon the partnerships and collective action as well as further developing Council's capacity to enable mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

2. Reconciliation Advisory Committee (RAC) Function

The Reconciliation Advisory Committee (RAC) will function to provide a forum for the Hepburn Shire Council to consult key stakeholders and seek advice regarding the process, development and implementation of each RAP stage and reconciliation activities in the Hepburn Shire community. Each RAP stage will set practical actions that the organisation will take to build strong relationships and enhance respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples and other Australians.

The RAC members will:

- Draw on their connections and experience from within their respective areas of expertise to generate **ideas** for how the RAP deliverables can be most effectively carried out.
- Act as **advocates** and actively support the RAP's actions, intent and outcomes.
- **Review** RAP implementation and development of future RAP stages by providing input and comment.

3. Role of the Reconciliation Advisory Committee

The RAC is comprised of voluntary non-Indigenous and remunerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The role of the RAC is not a decision-making one but rather an advisory role providing advice and expertise. All feedback from the RAC will be considered by Council.

The RAC's role is to:

- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations and provide input that represents inclusive interests, needs and experiences identified by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

- Provide feedback on the methodology and research processes involved in developing each RAP stage (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate).
- Support and assist with community engagement activities that promote and deliver actions of Reconciliation.
- Represent their respective organisations, sectors or groups.
- Communicate feedback on the RAP development between organisations, the community and Council.
- Promote a shared knowledge and understanding of the Shire's commitment to reconciliation.
- Provide advice on agenda items raised by the RAP Internal Working Group.
- Discuss issues and concerns and recommend ways forward that progress reconciliation.
- Provide advice and comment on the RAP framework and reconciliation priorities identified by Council.

4. RAC Membership

The RAC will comprise of a Councillor (Mayor) as the Chair and a maximum of ten (10) community members and a minimum of four (4) community members.

RAC membership should attempt to reflect the diversity of Hepburn Shire and the First Nations Community in terms of age, gender, Aboriginal Status (Youth, Elders), education and employment status and role within community.

Membership will be invited through an Expression of Interest process. Recommendations of appropriate members will be presented to Council for consideration and appointed by Council resolution.

Members should notify Council in writing if they intend to rescind their membership. If membership numbers fall below four (4), Council may seek to increase membership through another Expression of Interest process.

From time to time, the RAC may establish focus groups from RAC members for the purpose of delivering a specific project e.g., Reconciliation Week activity. Focus groups are voluntary for all members (i.e. inclusive of remunerated members) and exist for the length of the project in an informal capacity. Focus group meetings do not require a Chair or formal Agenda/Minutes.

4.1. Membership Recruitment

An invitation for Expressions of Interest will be publicly advertised and circulated through numerous community networks including: Shire-based Neighbourhood Houses, DJAARA, local and regional newspapers, local reconciliation networks and social media. Membership will be sought from Djaara and

other identified Aboriginal representatives and community agencies who express an interest in participating.

The recruitment process will occur as such:

- Invitation for Expressions of Interest circulated in the community.
- Expressions of Interest received by Council.
- Selection Committee including Coordinator and two Council officers will assess the applicants against the selection criteria.
- Recommendation of appointments to Council for approval.
- RAC member agrees to Terms of Reference and Privacy Agreement.

4.2. Requirements for Members (Criteria)

RAC members will be able to demonstrate some of the following:

- Applied knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history.
- An understanding of the barriers and issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities in the Hepburn Shire Council region and in the broader context.
- Relevance of background and expertise to assist in the implementation and future development of Hepburn Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plans.
- Ability to influence with the purpose of promoting reconciliation in the Hepburn Shire (e.g., affiliations with community organisations, local businesses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and businesses).
- Ability to work collaboratively and constructively with key stakeholders and the community.
- People who identify as Djaara (Traditional Owner), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- An understanding or willingness to learn the historical policies and social context that have detrimentally affected First Nation Peoples.

4.3. Terms of Appointment

Council has committed to a multi-year project to enable it to progress through the RAP stages identified by Reconciliation Australia. To enable an equitable opportunity for community members to participate in the RAC, the term for members shall be either 3 years or 4 years to ensure the committee can continue to function during an EOI process. RAC members completing a term may reapply for an additional four year term (maximum of eight years).

4.4. Chair

The Hepburn Shire Mayor will chair the RAC and be an ex officio member of the RAC without voting rights. The alternate Chair will be a Councillor who has been appointed the alternate position by Council and will also be a Councillor acting as an ex officio member without voting rights. The alternate Chair will only attend meetings via invitation as required. Should a Councillor not be in attendance, a Chair will be nominated by Council staff present.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring the Advisory Committee operates efficiently, effectively and according to the Terms of Reference. The Chair will act to enable all members have equal opportunity to contribute.

4.5. Co-opted Members

Co-opted members from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background may be appointed for participation in a RAC meeting where existing members do not have the level of expertise or lived experience to advise Council. A fee for DJAARA (or other organisation) may be paid or a travel reimbursement may be offered to co-opted community members in recognition of the cultural load they may carry. Co-opted members will be remunerated at the rates outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1. Co-opted member remuneration rates

Co-Opted Member	Amount \$	Approval
DJAARA Employee or another relevant formal organisation/consultancy.	Fee as set by organisation.	Council Officer and relevant supervisor. According to budget availability.
Co-opted Member from community (no ABN).	Travel reimbursement @ ATO rate per/km. (0.72per/km 2020/21) <i>* Up to a maximum of \$250.00 per meeting</i>	Council Officer and supervisor. According to budget availability. Community Member will complete Reimbursement Form that includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of meeting • Locations of travel • Total KMs

4.6. Condition of Members

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAC members will be paid a sitting fee in recognition of the knowledge they hold and the cultural load they may carry. Council acknowledges that Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander RAC members hold a greater depth of understanding and sensitivity to issues effecting their community that can guide the non-Indigenous community and Council on our work in Reconciliation. Effective Reconciliation requires deep listening, respect for culture, and recognition of self-determination as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and enshrined in legislation, including The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. Self-determination recognises the key principle that First Peoples are entitled to determine and control their own destiny.

Hepburn Shire Council understands and acknowledges that we are unable to progress Reconciliation without the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAC.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members will be remunerated at the rates outlined below in Table 2.

Table 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member remuneration rates

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAP Advisory Committee Members	Sitting Fee	Approval
Members appointed to the RAC committee according to the EOI process and guidelines in the TOR	\$200 per meeting.	New supplier form and ABN/or Hobby form required.

5. RAC Administration and Conduct

Hepburn Shire Council will have accountability for management of the RAC. Council is committed to working cooperatively with RAC members in the advisory role.

5.1. Administration

It is expected that the Advisory Committee will meet at least four times per year at key project milestones and further if required. Approximately two hours per meeting will be required of members. Preparation for meetings is required including reading of Minutes and Agendas.

Meetings will be held at Hepburn Shire offices or Community Halls unless otherwise arranged. Venues will be considered for their cultural safety and inclusiveness for all RAC members. Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander members living outside of Hepburn Shire or off Country may choose to attend virtually. Meetings may be moved to an online platform for all members.

The Hepburn Shire Council officer is responsible for the preparation and circulation of meeting agendas, minutes and any other attachments. The agenda, minutes and any other attachments will be distributed by email at least five working days prior to the meeting. Agenda items must be forwarded to the Reconciliation Officer by the close of business, seven working days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Members may raise an item under "Other Business" if necessary and as time permits, at the discretion of the Chair.

Agendas will generally be structured as follows:

- Attendance (members present and apologies).
- Actions arising from previous meeting and their outcomes.
- Project Status Update.
- Internal Working Group items.
- Items for Discussion.
- Other Business.
- Next Meeting details and review of actions.

5.2. Conduct

All RAC members will work in a co-operative and positive manner that is respectful of members, staff and Councillors. The following qualities and behaviours are expected of members:

- Be fully prepared for and actively participate in meetings and attend a minimum of 50% of meetings.
 - Inform the Reconciliation Officer if they are unable to attend a meeting.
 - Treat all persons with respect and due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others.
 - Adhere to the principle of clear and open communication.
 - Where issues of conflict arise parties will be encouraged to discuss issues openly and clearly in a respectful manner. Where there is difficulty in resolving issues of conflict, Council will make a final decision on the matter.
 - Members have a responsibility to disclose any direct or indirect conflict of interest or potential conflict between their business or professional interests, and their roles as members of the Advisory Committee. Where the Advisory Committee discusses the DJAARA in its role as the
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Traditional Owner group entity under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement, no conflict of interest will apply.

If a conflict of interest is disclosed, the conflicted member must take the following steps:

- Tell the committee you have a conflict of interest.
- Tell the Chair you are leaving the meeting.
- Leave the room until the matter has concluded.

Breaches of the Terms of Reference may result in revoking the member from representing the Committee.