



Cook Shire Council Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2023 – May 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Cook Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Shire and recognises their continuing connection to lands, water and community. We pay our respects to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our vast Shire and to Elders and leaders past, present and emerging.

We would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), both individually and within the RAP working group sessions. We also extend our appreciation to all those who shared their thoughts and ideas on reconciliation and equality. We look forward to working together to strengthen relationships, create opportunities and achieving positive outcomes for the future.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are advised that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons.



The Artwork – Understanding Reconciliation



Reconciliation is a process that acknowledges the past wrongs to build relationships of mutual respect and understanding. The different skin toned dots in the top section of the painting acknowledges the diversity of people and cultures. The rainbow serpent – which in my culture is a powerful symbol of connection – surrounds them. The footprints of animals symbolises our ancestors and our cultural ways – much of which has been lost since the colonisation of Australia. The black and white figures symbolise how far acknowledging the past can bring together culture and perspectives of many kinds.

Other aspects of my culture are celebrated in the large circles: culturally significant native animals of Australia; a white dot painting represents the Dreamtime and the importance of Indigenous cultures and spirit; the Great Barrier Reef, where many in my community go to connect and share knowledge, and a family walking towards the hope of Reconciliation and a future full of the merging of two different cultures.

If you look closer at my artwork, the circles and painting inside of them are not perfect. The shapes aren't always clear and the colours aren't harmonious. This was intentional, but at first I didn't know why this was important to me. Then I realised that Australia did not have peaceful treaty to Reconciliation. History is not perfect – so why should my painting be? We will all benefit by recognising and acknowledging our wrongs. I'm not interested in the forms and colours, I'm only interested in expressing my Understanding of Reconciliation.

The Artist – Ilyaree Snider



Ilyaree Snider is a proud descendant of the KuKu Yalanji Nation from Laura and the Guwamu and Yugambah Nations from South Queensland.

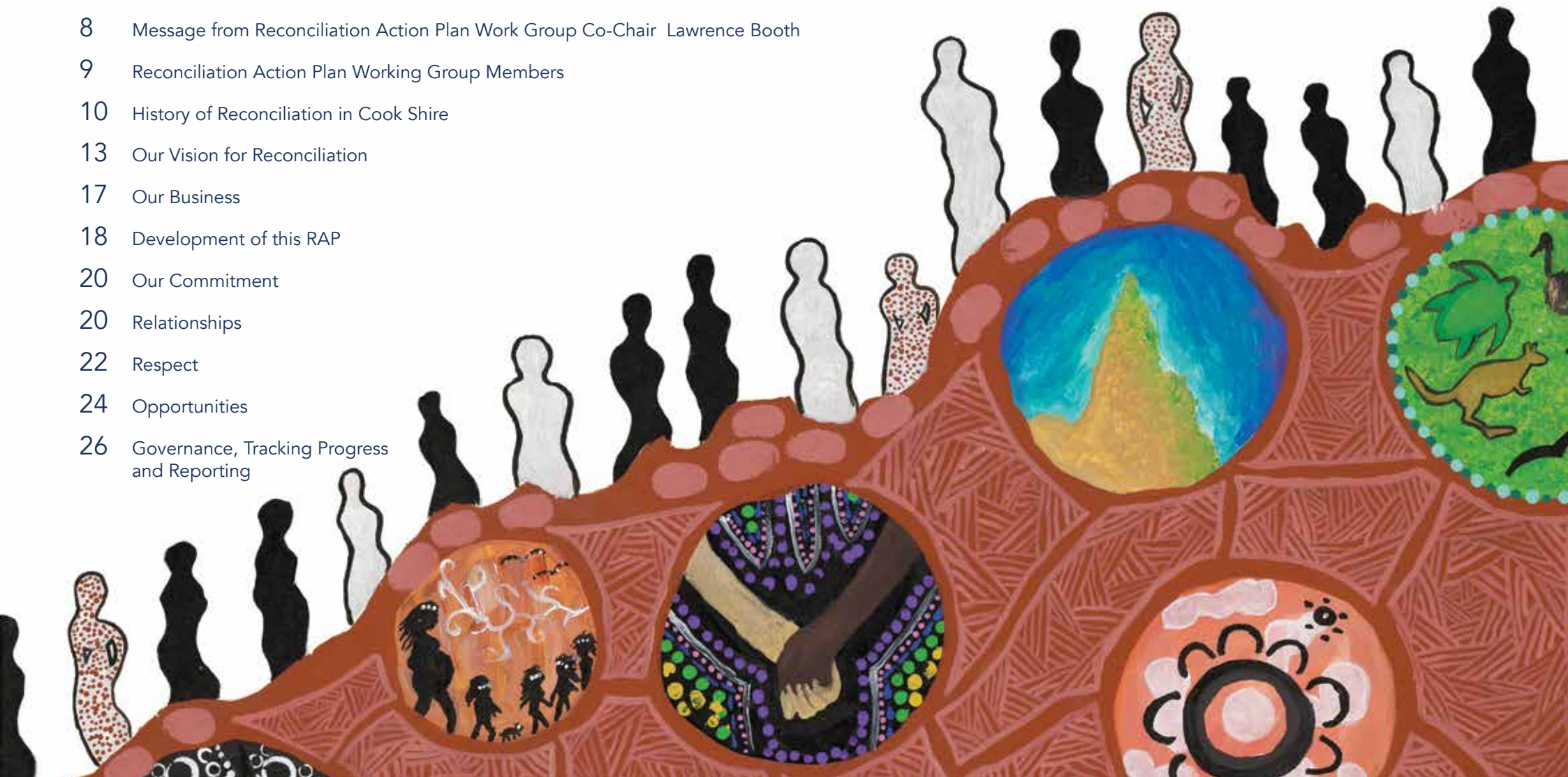
The second eldest of five sisters, Ilyaree comes from a family of artists and creatives, and attributes much of her creative practice to her father Nash, and her late mother Nefertiti, both celebrated Indigenous artists, dancers and cultural leaders.

Ilyaree readily admits that she really only paints when an idea or inspiration truly moves her. Then she will start drawing it first, "in books, on my hand or on random bits of paper. Painting it then helps me to get my thoughts and views on things out into the world."

Currently in Grade 11 at Cooktown State School, Ilyaree plans on becoming a Commercial Aviation Pilot with an international airline, so she can fulfil her dream of seeing, and sharing her culture with the world.

Contents

- 5 Welcome from the Mayor Councillor Peter Scott
- 6 Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer Brian Joiner
- 7 Message from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer Karen Mundine
- 8 Message from Reconciliation Action Plan Work Group Co-Chair Sacheen Deemal
- 8 Message from Reconciliation Action Plan Work Group Co-Chair Lawrence Booth
- 9 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Members
- 10 History of Reconciliation in Cook Shire
- 13 Our Vision for Reconciliation
- 17 Our Business
- 18 Development of this RAP
- 20 Our Commitment
- 20 Relationships
- 22 Respect
- 24 Opportunities
- 26 Governance, Tracking Progress and Reporting







Welcome from the Mayor Councillor Peter Scott

When considering our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Cook Shire recognises and factors in, our unique position in the environmental, cultural, economic and social landscape that makes up the largest and one of the most remote Local Government areas in Queensland.

We collaboratively interface with nine Local Government First Nations Councils and those in the Torres region. Cook was responsible for establishing the Regional Organisation of Councils Cape York (ROCCY) 25 years ago and progressing that political lobby group to today's respected and relevant Torres and Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA).

We take up 80% of Cape York, which is home to 21.9% of Queensland's First Nations population. Cooktown and Coen are regional centres for education, health, sporting and social interaction and the pragmatic relationship between our neighbouring Councils sees a reciprocal exchange of support, resources and funding for our regional benefit.

Statistics indicate that 15-20% of the Shire's population identifies as First Nations people and Council's workforce is in that same ratio. We have sponsored and supported key First Nations service facilities such as the PCYC, the Holy Spirit Special Assistance School and the Cape York Family Centre. In Coen, we have supported the Welfare Reform Policy, the Cape York Aboriginal Academy and Family Responsibility Commission agenda.

Council's corporate plan includes an acknowledgement of our unique historical association, personalised by the interaction 250 years ago between Captain Cook and the Traditional Elder to settle a dispute and create the first Act of Reconciliation. Our community mantra of "two cultures, one people" has resulted in design of policy, events and infrastructure that reflects the collaboration of ideology and respect of culture that has Cook Shire at the forefront of promoting and strengthening the reconciliation ambition.





Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer **Brian Joiner**

This Reconciliation Action Plan reflects our desire as an organisation to consider reconciliation in all of our interactions and the business that we conduct. Our communities are predominantly made up of First Nation's people and we recognize that true reconciliation is a way forward to connect with ancient cultures and show respect for the custodians of the land on which we live and work.

The ways of the past resulted in expectations that First Nation's people should adapt to the ways of people who have been recent arrivals to this country. Our Reconciliation Action Plan demonstrates our commitment to reverse this thinking with a roadmap of actions to help our organisation and its staff understand the culture and rich tapestry of beliefs of the First Nation's people.

Many of our staff have been involved in the preparation of this Reconciliation Action Plan and the cooperation in getting this finalised has gone some way towards reconciliation by itself. We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the contributions made by various individuals, including former Cook Shire CEO, Linda Cardew, in the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

We are fortunate to live in one of the greatest areas of the world and to have people willing to share so many stories of the land and culture. I thank the traditional owners for sharing their lands with us and I hope we hold up our end by living reconciliation and not just writing about it.





Message from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer **Karen Mundine**

Reconciliation Australia commends Cook Shire Council on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Cook Shire Council to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Cook Shire Council will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Cook Shire Council is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Cook Shire Council's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Cook Shire Council on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.





Message from Reconciliation Action Plan Work Group Co-Chair **Sacheen Deemal**

Cook Shire Council is pleased to join a growing number of Councils who are committed to creating positive change through the development of the Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP).

Council's RAP builds on, strengthens the existing relationship with Cook Shires Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, and displays Council's dedication and commitment to reconciliation. This is a strategic document involving all departments within Council.

Implementing a RAP across such a large and diverse organisation presents challenges but Council is ready and committed to embed initiatives into our organisational practice.

This RAP encourages greater understanding, acknowledgment, respect, inclusion and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Cook Shire and it ensures that Councillors and Council staff contribute to the reconciliation process.



Message from Reconciliation Action Plan Work Group Co-Chair **Lawrence Booth**

Privilege is an over-used and misunderstood word, however, I truly feel privileged in my role within Cook Shire Council and as Co-Chair of Council's RAP Working Group. I feel privileged to:

- Live and work in Cook Shire on lands that have been in the custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners for millennia;
- Become truly immersed in and experience the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures;
- Contribute meaningfully to the development of Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan to help staff to learn about what it truly means to walk in each other's world;
- Help to spread the message of voice, treaty and truth as a way of developing understanding, healing and advancement;
- Be able to help our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to grow, develop and progress; and
- Be able to move the Shire forward for the lasting benefit of all residents.

Thank you to all for these wonderful, life-changing opportunities.

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Members

Indigenous Co-Chair

Sacheen Deemal

Non-Indigenous Co-Chair

Lawrence Booth

Committee Members

Councillor	Larissa Hale
Brian Joiner	Chief Executive Officer
Shane Gibson	Indigenous Partnership Officer
Kristina Olsen	Communications and Customer Experience Coordinator
Sha-Lane Gibson	Economic Development, Trade & Investment Officer
Waratah Nicholls	Regional Arts Officer
Barbara Rosendale	Librarian
Christine Delaney	Manager, Human Resources
Billy Pratt	Water Treatment Officer



History of Reconciliation in Cook Shire

Pre-1770

For millennia, Aboriginal clan groups in Far North Queensland considered Waymburr (the area now known as Cooktown) as a special 'healing' place and a place where differences were settled and no blood was to be spilt. Indigenous peoples and clan groups regularly met at Waymburr for ceremonies, special occasions and to resolve and reconcile their differences.



1770

After Hitting the reef just off the coast of the Australia, Captain James Cook and the crew of the HMB Endeavour spend 48 days anchored on Waalmbal Birri (now known as the Endeavour River) repairing their ship, documenting their surrounds and their interactions with the local Indigenous people. On 19 July 1770, the two groups clashed over a misunderstanding about the hunting of turtles. Despite rising tensions, a Guugu Yimithirr Elder referred to by Banks as the "little old man" brokered a peaceful resolution by laying down a broken tipped spear. Cook writes of this encounter in his journal "I Handed the spear back to Him which reconciled everything."

1974

Eric Deeral, a respected Elder of the Guugu Yimithirr nation, was the first Indigenous person elected to Queensland Parliament, representing the seat of Cook from 1974 – 1977.



2002

Cook Shire Council champions the establishment of the Regional Organisation of Councils of Cape York (ROCCY)

2012

Eric Deeral passes away, leaving a legacy that amplified the rights and voices of First Nations people in Queensland.

2017

Cynthia Lui, a proud Lamalaig woman from the Kulkalgau Clan of lam (Yam Island) and the Kulkalgau Tribe of the Torres Strait is the second Indigenous person elected to represent the seat of Cook.



2018

Cook Shire Council champions the establishment of the Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA) which is a collaborative partnership between 12 of Queensland's 16 Indigenous local governments, with Cook Shire Council, Torres Shire Council and Weipa Town Authority, to represent the common interests of local governing bodies within the region.

Council commenced work on a draft Reconciliation Action Plan. Community feedback on the draft indicated that the Plan required significantly more consultation and alignment with the Reconciliation Australia guidelines.

2019

Cook Shire Council appoints its first Indigenous Partnership Officer.

2020

March

Celebrations for the 250-year anniversary of Cook's time in Waymburr are postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The event is re-branded and renamed to the Cooktown and Cape York Expo 2021 – The Rising Tide

October

Commenced trial format of Cultural Awareness training with all Council staff



The Warrma performed at the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021

November

Cook Shire installs two additional flagpoles outside its main administration building in Cooktown. To coincide with NAIDOC Week celebrations, council then holds a ceremony to commemorate the hoisting of the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Island flags alongside those of Australia and Queensland, for the first time. Council also announces the formation and members of its inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan Committee.

2021

May

Reconciliation Rocks in Cooktown – the site where the first recorded act of Reconciliation between Captain James Cook and the Guugu Yimithirr elder that took place in 1770 - is officially recognised on the Queensland Heritage Register as the site of Australia's first recorded act of Reconciliation.

June

Cooktown and Cape York Expo 2021 – The Rising Tide is held in Cooktown with a focus on celebrating the Reconciliation story as well as the richness and diversity of the many Indigenous cultures across the Cape York Peninsular and Torres Strait.



Raising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag outside Council Chambers, November 2021

August

With a commitment to building an understanding of First Nations culture among its staff, Council formed a First Nations Bama Working Group to provide a forum for cultural information and knowledge-sharing. The Bama Working Group meet four times per year to monitor and report on Operational Plan initiatives that have First Nations considerations to the operations.

2023

February

Council unanimously passes a historic resolution to formally accept the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, thereby supporting Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia, and for the establishment of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.



Performers preparing to perform at the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021



Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to build unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in Cook Shire Council. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples of Australia and have strong connections to the lands, waters, places, and cultures.

As a first step on our Reconciliation Journey, we recognise that wherever we are in our Shire, we are on Aboriginal lands. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and operate, as well as the Traditional Custodians of the lands of our neighboring Local Government First Nations Councils.

We believe that Reconciliation is more than just a word, and we are committed to actively building and nurturing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect, understand, and value their histories, rights, and experiences, which will result in stronger relationships based on trust, respect, and truth-telling, and a special ongoing connection to Country.

We will work to support the national objectives of closing the social, economic, and health gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community, and achieving reconciliation in Australia. Our vision is to ensure that reconciliation is alive in our organisation by increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and current issues. We will hold ourselves accountable and take responsibility for change.





Preparing to perform at the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021

Our vision for Cook Shire Council is to:

- 1 Embrace inclusion and diversity, and foster a culture of dignity;
- 2 Actively promote equity and equality while celebrating the unique and vibrant communities within our region;
- 3 Empower people of all backgrounds to share their diverse perspectives, and actively listen to them;
- 4 Respect and acknowledge the Bama, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands that cover our region;
- 5 Treat all co-workers, clients, and members of the public with courtesy and respect, and genuinely appreciate the differences of all cultures;
- 6 Value and support the Bama Tribe and Clan groups, and honor their customs, culture, heritage, and language;
- 7 Continuously improve the quality of our services for communities through learning and endeavor;
- 8 Build relationships based on mutual respect, knowledge, and understanding;
- 9 Work together with the First Peoples and the broader community to remove social and economic disadvantage, and to close the gap in life expectancy between First Peoples and other Australians;
- 10 Connect with and jointly respect our natural environment;
- 11 Recognize and acknowledge our past and continue to work towards Reconciliation.
- 12 Value the importance of involving non-Indigenous community members, residents, staff, and stakeholders in developing historical acceptance, cultural competency, and robust relationships. This approach will create an environment and society that fosters mutual understanding and respect.

Cook Shire Council is fully committed to advancing Reconciliation both within the organisation and in the community. Some examples of this include:

We worked with the National Trust of Australia (Queensland) to list Cooktown's Reconciliation Rocks site, where Australia's first recorded act of reconciliation occurred in 1770, on the State Heritage. Council also obtained funding from the Federal Government to create a parkland to honor this historic moment. The parkland features two specially commissioned public artworks that celebrate the contribution of local First Nations people.

We advocated for and obtained funding from the Federal Government to create the First Peoples' Grove at the Cooktown Botanic Gardens, which is Queensland's second oldest botanic gardens. The grove celebrates the continuing connection of First Nations people to land, sea, and country.

We organised the 10-day Cooktown and Cape York Expo - The Rising Tide, which showcased First Nations' visual and performing arts, culture, and history. The event included a Reconciliation Rocks concert with local and national performers, as well as a First Nations Precinct that celebrated First Nations culture across the millennia.

Council also takes a leading and immersive role in the local annual NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week community events.



Community Street Parade during the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021



Performers at the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021





Our Business

Cook Shire is the largest land area shire in Queensland. From the Bloomfield River in the south to north of the Jardine River, it covers more than 100,000km², occupies 80% of Cape York Peninsula and borders with 10 of the 16 Indigenous Shire Councils in Queensland.

While Cook Shire and Cape York are renowned to be rich in First Nations' history, culture and community members, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working for Council has not been formally documented. However, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand and improve this.

With a total population of just over 4,631 people, Cook Shire's main township is Cooktown that has a population of around 2,746 people. The remainder of the population resides in smaller communities, including those at Coen, Lakeland, Laura, Marton, Ayton, Rossville, Portland Roads and Lizard Island. Each community brings its own unique contributions to the shire's economy and culture: Lakeland is a national leader in agriculture and Laura is world-famous for its ancient Aboriginal rock art galleries.

While the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not known, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this.

As the local council, Cook Shire provides a range of services to these communities, including roads, water, waste removal, libraries, and public events. The council also has a responsibility to manage and improve the economy, social services, the environment and cultural aspects of the communities it serves, which is challenging given the Shire's geographically dispersed population and limited revenue base. To address this, Council relies on strong partnerships with State and Federal governments and funding bodies. Council also collaborates with other organisations, community groups, non-government organisations, not-for-profits, private enterprise and businesses in the region to consistently improve service levels and delivery.

In order to help achieve these goals, Council works with every First Nations Council on the Peninsula, as well as with regional organisations such as the Torres and Cape Indigenous Council Alliance, Cape York Natural Resource Management, and Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, Federal and State Government Departments such as the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the many First Nations Corporations across the region.



Development of this RAP

Council:

- Established a RAP Working Group to develop this RAP, which includes five representatives who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Council's senior management and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff support the development of the RAP document.
- Arranged for this RAP to be championed by the State Member for Cook Ms Cynthia Lui and Cook Shire Councillor Ms Larissa Hale.
- Holistically identified actions related to Council's operations, services, and business that will contribute to improving the physical and psychological health, wellbeing, equality, and economic development opportunities for Australia's First Peoples. The document provides details of Council's commitment to achieving these outcomes and actions within specific timeframes.
- Developed this document to provide Council's employees, members of the First People's communities, and the public with information about Council's commitment to reconciliation.
- At the end of the RAP in 2025, a public report will be produced to detail progress, challenges, and lessons learned. The RAP will then be reviewed and refreshed with new projects, programs, and initiatives.



Background information

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a strategic document developed by organisations to outline practical actions that contribute to reconciliation both internally and in the communities they operate in.

Reconciliation Australia's RAP Program supports organisations in advancing the five dimensions of reconciliation by creating respectful relationships and opportunities with Indigenous Australians.

The five dimensions of reconciliation include positive race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity, and historical acceptance.

The Five Dimensions of Reconciliation:

- 1. Race Relations:** Positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians throughout society.
- 2. Equality and Equity:** Indigenous Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life and the distinctive individual and collective rights and cultures of Indigenous peoples are Universally recognised and respected.
- 3. Institutional Integrity:** Political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation.
- 4. Unity:** Indigenous histories, cultures and rights are a valued and recognised part of a shared National identity and, as a result, there is national unity.
- 5. Historical Acceptance:** There is widespread acceptance of our nation's history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated—there is truth, justice, Healing and historical acceptance.



Figure 1: Dimensions of Reconciliation
Supplied from Reconciliation Australia

Cook Shire's RAP has followed the development process outlined by Reconciliation Australia and utilized the "Innovate" template to continue its journey towards reconciliation. The Innovate RAP encourages organisations to think strategically about actions and deliverables that can achieve their vision for reconciliation within their sphere of influence.

OUR COMMITMENTS



Relationships

At Cook Shire Council, we understand that building positive and productive relationships with First Peoples and communities is crucial for the reconciliation process. We believe that these relationships must be nurtured in a supportive environment and backed by the right information and resources to ensure they are dynamic and effective. We are committed to fostering these relationships and working towards a better future for all Australians.



The official opening of the Gateway to Cape York in Lakeland, April 2022

RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1. Provide opportunities and events during NRW for employees to build relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	• Support and host activities and initiatives as a part of National Reconciliation Week (NRW) from 27 May to 3 June each year	May 2023, 2024, 2025	Manager Tourism, Arts and Events
	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	May 2023, 2024, 2025	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	• Encourage all Council employees to participate and engage in National Reconciliation Week	May 2023, 2024, 2025	CEO
	• Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year	May 2023, 2024, 2025	Manager Tourism, Arts and Events
	• RAP Working Group will participate in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May 2023, 2024, 2025	Indigenous Partnership Officer
1.2. Develop and maintain meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes	• Create networking opportunities between our elected members, senior staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders	December 2024	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	• Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement	December 2024	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	December 2023	Indigenous Partnership Officer
1.3. Promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence	• Include a commitment to progressing the RAP in Council's Corporate Plan	December 2023	CEO
	• Develop a RAP webpage on Council's website	August 2023	Communications and Customer Experience Coordinator
	• Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce	June 2024	Manager Human Resources
	• Promote our RAP journey and commitment to reconciliation publicly	March 2024	Communications and Customer Experience Coordinator
	• Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes	March 2024	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	• Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation	September 2023	Indigenous Partnership Officer



Respect

Developing an understanding of the cultures and heritage of local First Nations communities is essential in building respect and understanding. By seeking to learn, understand and appreciate, we demonstrate our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. As part of our commitment to Reconciliation, Cook Shire Council is focusing on the engagement of our staff in cultural awareness raising and the implementation of cultural protocols. We believe that this will create a supportive environment that fosters dynamic and effective relationships with First Peoples and communities.

RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation 	September 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy 	March 2024	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communications a cultural learning strategy document for all staff 	May 2024	Director Organisational Business Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a calendar for staff with dates of significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 	June 2023	Community Lifestyle Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Traditional Owners to explore installing signage throughout Cook Shire in dual language – both English and local Bama language 	November 2023	Manager Tourism, Arts and Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video record cultural events and activities as appropriate and share with the wider Cook Shire community 	September 2023	September 2023 Communications and Customer Experience Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR Staff and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning 	October 2024	Director, Community, Economy and Innovation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver programs that allow staff to learn and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures 	June 2023	Indigenous Partnership Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver Cultural Awareness Training for new staff. Upload our cultural induction video onto the intranet and internet for public access 	October 2023	Indigenous Partnership Officer



Sharing culture at Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021

RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols 	June 2023	<i>Indigenous Partnership Officer</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communication a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country 	July 2023	<i>Indigenous Partnership Officer</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate protocol at significant events each year 	June 2023	<i>Indigenous Partnership Officer</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an Acknowledgment of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of all meetings 	June 2023	<i>Communications and Customer Experience Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bama Working Group to meet four times per year to monitor and report on Operational Plan initiatives that have First Nations considerations to the operations 	Every February, May, August and November, annually	<i>Executive Assistant – Organisational Business Services and Community, Economy and Innovation</i>
2.3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event 	July 2023 and July 2024	<i>Economic Development, Trade & Investment Officer</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week 	July 2023 and July 2024	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff 	July 2023 and July 2024	<i>Economic Development, Trade & Investment Officer</i>
2.4. Increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage information across our organisation and community programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop a Fact Sheet to inform developers about their obligations under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 	November 2024	<i>Property and Commercial Services Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Cultural Heritage information on the intranet to increase staff knowledge and understanding 	November 2023	<i>Indigenous Partnerships Officer</i>



Opportunities

Cook Shire Council is dedicated to establishing a culturally inclusive workplace that fosters diversity and promotes sustainability. We strongly believe that such an environment can enhance the capacity of our staff and create economic prospects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. Our unwavering commitment to these values is what motivates us to work towards a future that is more equitable and inclusive.



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise and promote job vacancies to effectively reach and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 	August 2023	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Employee Details form to include an indication of Cultural identity. This is a voluntary identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage 	June 2023	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy 	April 2024	<i>Senior Advisors, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy 	April 2024	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities 	May 2024	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in our workforce by 5 percent 	October 2024	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace 	July 2024	<i>Manager, Human Resources</i>
3.2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy 	August 2024	<i>Procurement Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote procurement opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses 	August 2024	<i>Procurement Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership 	September 2024	<i>Director, Organisational Business Services</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communication opportunities for procurement of good and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff 	August 2024	<i>Procurement Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses 	October 2023	<i>Procurement Coordinator</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses 	March 2024	<i>Economic Development, Trade & Investment Officer</i>



Governance, Tracking Progress and Reporting



Ngurraan - Waandaarn (Black Cockatoo and White Cockatoo) represent neighbouring Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire at the Gateway to Cape York Sculpture Park in Lakeland

GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1. Establish and main and effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Reconciliation Working Group 	February and July, 2023 and 2024	Administration Officer, Planning and Environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Working Group 	April 2023	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet at least 4 times per year to drive and monitor implementation of the RAP 	March, July, September, December 2023 and 2024	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
4.2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for implementation of RAP 	May 2023	Communication and Customer Experience Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leader and Cook Shire staff of delivery of RAP commitments 	July 2023	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments 	April 2023	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the following RAP Champions: State Government, Councillors and CEO 	September 2023	CEO
4.3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence 	Every June	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire 	August, annually	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia 	30 September, annually	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly 	March, July, September and December, annually	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings annually 	November 2023 and 2024	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer 	May 2024	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP 	July 2025	Indigenous Partnerships Officer
4.4. Continue our Reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing next RAP 	March 2024	Indigenous Partnerships Officer



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