

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rising to the occasion: Council celebrates NAIDOC Week and commences work on its Reconciliation Action Plan

18 November 2020
COOKTOWN

On Tuesday 10 November 2020, Cook Shire Council celebrated National NAIDOC Week 2020 by raising the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags alongside the Queensland and Australian flags, outside Council Chambers in Cooktown for the first time.

The special flag-raising ceremony also included a Welcome to Country by Waymburr Warra Traditional Owner, Erica Deeral and speeches from Indigenous community leaders, Nash Snider (Kuku Yalanji), Shane Gibson (Dhubbi/Bulgan Warra), Sha-lane Gibson (Waymburr/Gamaay Warra) and James Tapau (Torres Strait Islands), who spoke about the NAIDOC theme *Always was, always will be*, and the history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

“The spiritual roots of Cooktown (Waymburr) are all about harmony and reconciliation,” said Cook Shire Mayor Cr Peter Scott. “It’s a special place where First Nations people have always come together to share knowledge and care for each other. By flying these flags together, we recognise this and acknowledge the connection First Nations people have always had, and always will have on this land and the important role they have in bringing our community together.”

Adding to the occasion, at the November Council meeting held immediately before the flag-raising ceremony, Council endorsed the members of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG) – 12 council staff and Cr Larissa Hale – who will work together to formulate Council’s inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan that will be published in 2021.

The RWG is considered the governing body of the RAP and is ultimately responsible for the development, implementation and reporting phases of a RAP.



MEDIA RELEASE

All Council staff were invited to submit an Expression of Interest in order to be considered for the RWG. Submissions were evaluated by an assessment panel and candidates selected from across a wide range of Council departments, locations and levels. The RWG also includes three Indigenous members plus Cr Hale who is also the group's appointed RAP champion.

"I'm a proud Indigenous woman and am passionate about my culture. I am incredibly excited to be able to help raise the profile of Council's reconciliation initiatives as part of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group," said Cr Hale upon her appointment. "This is a momentous opportunity for Council and an important step forward for Cook Shire."

Download images [here](#).

For more information contact the Senior Media, Marketing and Communications Officer via email at mail@cook.qld.gov.au or phone on 4082 0500.

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