

Title	DRAFT HUON VALLEY COUNCIL REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
Agenda Number	19.009/21*
Strategic Plan Reference	2, 3 & 4
File Reference	44/35
Author	Manager Community Development
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Development
Reporting Brief	The Director Community Services presenting a report from the Manager Community Development on the Draft Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
Attachments	A. Draft Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Background

1. At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community for the benefit of all Australians.
2. During the development of the Huon Valley Arts and Culture and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, community engagement highlighted a desire for closer collaboration with the Aboriginal community.
3. In February 2020, Reconciliation Tasmania presented to Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team about Council's role in reconciliation and the intention of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP).
4. The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan was approved in the 2020/21 Annual Plan and aimed to improve Councils understanding of local aboriginal culture.
5. The process was supported by Reconciliation Tasmania with the first stage focusing on building the organisations understanding of reconciliation, our community's attitudes and developing our relationships with the Aboriginal community.
6. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Council to release the draft Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan for broad community engagement.

Council Policy

7. The Arts and Culture Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy both include directions to collaborate with the local Aboriginal community.
8. Council's 2020/21 Annual Plan endorsed the development of a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

Legislative Requirements

9. There are no legislative requirements relating to this engagement or the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Risk Implications

10. It is noted that engagement on issues relating to Aboriginal culture, language, identity and recognition have the potential to bring strong public opinion and debate.
11. Staff, community members and key stakeholders have volunteered considerable time to the development of the Plan, participating in workshops and interviews.
12. The draft Reflect RAP has been developed through community and staff consultation. Failure to endorse the draft Plan for final engagement could result in community dissatisfaction.

Engagement

13. Engagement was undertaken in collaboration in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Framework.
14. During the development of the draft RAP, the focus of engagement was on Aboriginal stakeholders and Council employees. Although there were aspects of broader engagement, this approach was deliberate, given the plan is predominantly about the relationship between the Huon Valley Council, as an organisation, and Aboriginal people.
15. In November 2020 staff and community were consulted via face-to-face forums and a survey.
16. In November 2020, Councillors, senior management and working group members participated in locally led Aboriginal cultural awareness sessions.
17. In early 2021, local Aboriginal people and groups were consulted via in depth face to face meetings. In-depth engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal people was critical to creating a meaningful plan. The project team took the time to meet face-to-face with a wide range of Aboriginal people and have continued to check in with them throughout the drafting process
18. In July of 2021, Community Development staff, Arts and Culture and Health and Wellbeing Committee members attended a Come Walk with Us Cultural Awareness session facilitated by Reconciliation Tasmania.
19. A summary of the key themes of the engagement is included in the draft RAP as Appendix 1.
20. A Council workshop was held on Tuesday 6 July where the draft document was presented for review and discussion. Feedback provided by Councillors has been incorporated into the draft RAP.

21. Engagement with Reconciliation Australia has been undertaken, with a copy of the draft document presented for review prior to endorsement by Council. This review process ensures that the actions within the Plan are in align with the essential elements of RAPs. Feedback provided by Reconciliation Australia has been incorporated into the draft RAP.
22. Further community engagement with the broader community will be recommended in this report, to be undertaken at Consult Level for a period of three weeks in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Framework.

Human Resource and Financial Implications

23. The development of the draft Reflect RAP has been undertaken with the support of Council's Community Development Manager, Arts and Culture Officer and the Internal Working Group.
24. The Arts and Culture Strategy budget has supported the engagement of Reconciliation Tasmania who have guided the development of the Reflect RAP.
25. Reconciliation Australia will review this RAP at no charge but have advised that future RAPs will be fee for service.
26. The implementation of this Reflect RAP will be undertaken within existing budgets.
27. The development and implementation of future RAPs will require an ongoing budget allocation. This is reflective of the initial RAP including many investigative actions.

Discussion

28. Whilst a RAP is a strategic document, it is more than just words, a RAP includes practical actions that drives an organisation's contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which it operates.
29. The three essential elements of all RAP's are:
 - Relationships - Building and encouraging relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations, and the broader Australian community.
 - Respect - Fostering and embedding respect for the world's longest surviving cultures and communities.
 - Opportunities - Develop opportunities within your organisation to improve socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
30. A Reflect RAP focuses on developing understanding of the culture of our work pace and community in relation to reconciliation and of developing relationships with the local Aboriginal community.
31. The development of the draft Huon Valley Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan has been led by an internal working group made up of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff.

32. This Draft Reflect RAP outlines a number of actions to be undertaken by Council within 12 months of endorsement by Council and Reconciliation Australia. A number of these actions are noted as essential by Reconciliation Australia.
33. Some of the identified actions have been developed in consultation with the staff and the community.
34. Other actions have been identified for inclusion in future RAPs.
35. Following broad community engagement, the feedback received will guide a review of the Draft Reflect RAP.
36. The final Huon Valley Council RAP will then be presented to Council for endorsement, prior to be lodged with Reconciliation Australia for final endorsement.
37. Following endorsement, the Reflect RAP will be launched publicly and actions will be undertaken.

Conclusion and Recommendation

38. The development of the Draft Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan has been undertaken in consultation with staff and community, including the local Aboriginal community.
39. To seek feedback on the Plan, it will be recommended that the draft Plan be endorsed for community engagement.

19.009/21*
RESOLVED

CR LOVELL

CR O'MAY

That:

- a) **The report on the Draft Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan be received and noted.**
- b) **The Draft Huon Valley Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan be released for community engagement at the Consult Level for a minimum period of three weeks and a maximum period of six weeks be made available to the public via Council's website and Customer Service Centre.**

Councillors Doyle, Newell, Gibson, Campbell, Prince, Lovell, O'May and Clark voted for the motion and no Councillor voted against the motion.