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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

27<sup>th</sup> August 2021

# **HAVE YOUR SAY: ADVANCING RECONCILIATION IN THE HUON VALLEY**

Huon Valley Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is being released for broad community engagement following an extensive and significant engagement process between the Council and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

“Council is committed to strengthening our relationships and working partnerships with our local Aboriginal communities as we continue to embark on this reconciliation journey,” Mayor Bec Enders said.

“It is increasingly important to create meaningful actions that build respect, relationships and opportunities. It is by developing a Reflect RAP that we turn our good intentions into action by formalising Council’s commitment to reconciliation.”

We invite you to comment on the draft Reconciliation Action Plan via the Council’s website and at the Customer Service Centre in Huonville.

A face-to-face session with the Council’s Community Engagement Officer and Council’s Arts & Culture Officer will be held on Monday 13th September from 2pm-4pm at the Huon Valley Hub.

Mayor Enders said the process to develop the plan has been extensive and collaborative. It has involved a close working relationship between the Huon Valley Council, the Aboriginal communities, individuals and Reconciliation Tasmania.

The engagement has involved a series of locally led Aboriginal cultural awareness session with Councilors, senior management and working group members, followed by in depth face to face consultation meetings with local Aboriginal people and groups, and a Come Walk with Us Cultural Awareness session for Council staff facilitated by Reconciliation Tasmania.

“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,” Mayor Enders said.

**Communications & Media Officer**

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The review processes undertaken mean that the actions within the Plan are in alignment with the essential elements of Reconciliation Action Plans.

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) include practical actions that drive an organisation's contribution to reconciliation both internally and within the community.

There are four types of RAP within Reconciliation Australia's RAP Framework: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate.

Mayor Enders said a Reflect RAP clearly sets out the steps Council needs to take to prepare it for reconciliation initiatives in successive RAPs.

"What this process does is helps us to produce future RAPs that are meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable.

"The journey to reconciliation is ongoing and the RAP provides us with an opportunity to learn and build our capacity for reconciliation that will prepare our council for the journey ahead."

Some of the key action ideas are in the Reflect RAP include:

- Connect the community through local Aboriginal cultural experiences.
- Support Aboriginal cultural awareness and competency training.
- Show respect through actions such as Acknowledgements of Country and flying the Aboriginal flag.
- Consult with Aboriginal staff and community members about projects that impact on them.
- Create a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison role within Council.
- Consider dual naming using local language.
- Share local Aboriginal histories and cultures to all in an inclusive and accessible way (interpretation signage, displays, films, exhibitions).

**For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300**

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