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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# The Journey of Reconciliation

“Reconciliation is a journey.

“It’s a time when two groups of people who have been a long way apart are starting to come gradually together, to understand one another and to start working towards a common goal together.

“Reconciliation is about coming together, working together, doing things together.

We want to share history, we want to share culture, we want to do these things together.”

### **Local Elder Rodney Dillon**

The Huon Valley Council’s Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

Mayor Bec Enders said one of the steps Council has taken to making a meaningful impact in Australia’s reconciliation journey is developing the RAP.

“We began this journey in November 2019 with a significant engagement process, hearing the aspirations of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the wider Huon Valley community, and our staff.

“Meeting with and listening to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been critical to creating something meaningful. The ideas and feedback received through this process directly shaped the actions set out in the plan.

“For too long, the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have not been heard. We recognise the history and culture of the original local clans, the Melukerdee and Lyluequonny people of the South East Nation.

#### **Communications & Media Officer**

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The engagement to develop the RAP involved a series of locally led Aboriginal cultural awareness sessions with Councillors, senior management and working group members, followed by in depth conversations with local Aboriginal people and groups, and a Come Walk with Us Cultural Awareness session for Council staff and committee members facilitated by Reconciliation Tasmania.

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

Included in the Huon Valley Council's RAP are meaningful actions that build respect, relationships and opportunities. Some of the key action ideas in the 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)

"Our vision for reconciliation is that all who live on this land, acknowledge our shared history and move forward together, in a respectful way," Mayor Enders said.

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

To hear more from Elder Rodney Dillon please visit: [www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/the-journey-of-reconciliation/](http://www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/the-journey-of-reconciliation/)

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

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