### City of Port Phillip

### Reconciliation Action Plan (2012-2015)

### Evaluation

### Understanding the Picture

Prepared by Indigenous Careers and Employment

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### Acknowledgement of Country

The author acknowledges the traditional Aboriginal owners of country (please confirm) and pays her respects to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

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* Alicia Hooper, Acting Coordinator Health Equity and Social Justice, Community Health and Service Planning.

**Note on language:** Throughout this report, the term ‘Aboriginal’ is used to refer to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Executive Summary

“The City of Port Phillip RAP has been an encouraging progress towards Reconciliation”.

Lydia Thorpe, Manager, Aboriginal Employment, Municipal Association of Victoria.

City of Port Phillip Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2012-2015 is the Council’s guiding policy document on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Developed in 2012 in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens of the area, the *Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation -* a voluntary, not for profit community group, and the broader community, the plan seeks to realise Council’s vision for strengthening its diverse and inclusive community.

The RAP affirms Council’s commitment to reconciliation by identifying 28 actions across four “focus areas”, Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Tracking Progress, that support Council to achieve its’ vision.

The aim of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2012 – 2015 evaluation (the evaluation) is to review the implementation of these actions from the viewpoints of key stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens, Council staff, the *Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation* and local community services.

The evaluation provides a snapshot of some of the great work Council has achieved since the introduction of the RAP and also identifies areas for strategic development.

The evaluation shows that most actions committed to in the Reconciliation Action Plan were developed and successfully implemented. These actions have had a strong impact on reconciliation and the relationship between Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal citizens.

The evaluation also provides context for the actions that are still in development or that were not achieved and will assist Council to identify and consolidate key learnings in developing future policy and programs.

 The City of Port Phillip Council has a very positive reputation in the area of Reconciliation and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and is perceived as a leader in this area.

## Background and Context for the Project

The Reconciliation Action Plan spanned a three-year period from 2012-2015. As part of the City of Port Phillip’s commitment to continuous improvement, Council commissioned *Indigenous Careers and Employment* to conduct an independent evaluation.

## Project Aims and Objectives

The evaluation aims to assist Council to:

* consider the merit of the process taken to develop and implement the RAP, ie, stakeholder engagement and collaboration;
* evaluate the short to medium term impact of the RAP actions.

The findings of this evaluation will inform Council’s next steps in the reconciliation process and provide a benchmark for future progress.

## Methodology

To serve the objectives of the evaluation and determine whether Council is on the right pathway to reconciliation, the consultants were directed to seek out voice of the Traditional Owners, ATSI and community stakeholders (key stakeholders).

The key stakeholders identified to participate in the evaluation were members of the Aboriginal community, Council staff and community organisations (see Appendix A).

The evaluation provides an analysis of the stakeholder input that was provided through focus groups and semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face and by telephone.

The evaluation also draws on the results of the City of Port Phillip Reconciliation Barometer (2014), a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey. The Port Phillip Reconciliation Barometer adopted the methodology used by the National Reconciliation Barometer and was conducted for the purpose of establishing a baseline for community awareness of the RAP.

The City of Port Phillip Reconciliation Barometer interviewed 423 residents. Of those surveyed, 24 identified as Indigenous and 399 identified as non-Indigenous.

Evaluative methods (primary data sources):

* One-on-one interviews with stakeholders
* Engagement with the Local Indigenous Network (Group consultation)
* Paper-based surveys (for Indigenous stakeholders who were not able to attend a one-on-one consultations)
* An electronic survey conducted with Council staff identified as having participated in the internal RAP working group over the relevant time period

Secondary data sources:

* City of Port Phillip Reconciliation Barometer
* A review of relevant Council policy documents and publications

### Individual face-to-face and telephone interviews

Qualitative semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with:

* Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation
* Inner South Community Health Service
* Reconciliation Victoria
* Access Health
* Municipal Association of Victoria
* St Kilda Baptist Church
* Sacred Heart Mission
* Council staff – Indigenous Policy officer and coordinator of Culture and Capability
* Elder of the Indigenous Community and LINS representative

A total of ten individual interviews were conducted (n = 10). Three identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; three were Port Phillip residents, three held professional roles in community organizations; two were the City of Port Phillip staff members.

In the interviews stakeholders were given a table of all 28 actions of the RAP and asked to identify which actions they considered to be complete (fully achieved);

Stakeholders were also asked to consider:

• the impact of the RAP - did the RAP have an influence?

• what the most significant achievement/s of the RAP was/were

• whether the RAP contributed to reconciliation

• what are the opportunities that should be considered for future development?

### Consultation with the Local Indigenous Network

The consultants attended two LINS meetings. In this forum and through follow-up consultation provided by the consultant, the Indigenous voice and key Indigenous stakeholders were very difficult to engage. This was initially due to timing (ie, interviews were scheduled during NAIDOC week and many stakeholders were participating in events. Additionally, a few community members were on leave and unavailable at short notice. Despite Council extending the timeframes for data gathering the challenge to engage indigenous stakeholders persisted.

Outside of the data gathering methods outlined above, a number of indigenous community members did provide feedback in broad terms, stating that they would like a more active engagement in the development of the next RAP*.*

### A review of relevant Council policy documents and publications

The evaluation also reference relevant Council policy documents and publications including:

* Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2013-17
* Social Justice Charter 2011
* Boonatung Ngargee Yulenj- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy 2014-17

### Understanding the Picture - Reconciliation Barometre

The national reconciliation barometer has been used since 2008 to measure community perception of the quality of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, knowledge and importance of Indigenous history and culture the value placed on Indigenous culture, and awareness of and participation in actions towards reconciliation.

The reconciliation barometer conducted in the City of Port Phillip in 2014 identified:

* 70 % of residents consider the relationship between Indigenous people and other Australians to be important (compared with 46% nationally)
* High engagement in reconciliation actions- over 90% in barometer had taken part in at least one RAP action in the past 12 months
* Those interviewed expressed clear understanding of and views on reconciliation

Reconciliation and the City of Port Phillip Council:

* City of Port Phillip Council is viewed as having strong commitment to reconciliation and is seen as a leader in this area, both within the local area and at a state level
* Over 80 % of Port Phillip residents surveyed in the Barometer supported Council taking action on reconciliation. However, there is a low level of awareness of Council action being undertaken
* All stakeholder groups felt that Council had a strong role to play in Reconciliation however there was not a consistent understanding of Council’s RAP and the role of the Council’s RAP

A wide range of views on the role of both the Indigenous community and the wider community in working toward reconciliation were expressed

### Understanding the Picture – Council staff e-survey

The majority of surveyed Council staff had attended an identified Council RAP activity and 62% of City of Port Phillip staff were aware of the RAP

Council protocols in relation to reconciliation were less well known amongst staff with 41% being aware of the protocols and only 23% being aware of when to utilise them. Given this survey was conducted prior to the release and distribution of the Protocol Framework, it is anticipated that these levels would be higher if the survey was conducted today

It was recognised by a number of those participating in this evaluation that the City Of Port Phillip provides additional support and funding outside of the identified RAP actions, including via community grants, that supports the needs and aspirations of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

## RAP ACTIONS - Overview

* Most actions committed to in the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) were developed and successfully implemented
* Stakeholders across all groups consistently saw the RAP as a very important component of working toward reconciliation in the City of Port Phillip
* Using a Leichardt scale in which ‘one’ describes ‘no awareness’ and ten describes ‘a high level of awareness’, the RAP scored an average of 6.5. Interviewees’ knowledge about the completion of specific RAP actions varied considerably, scoring an average of 5. Given these participants were chosen for the collaboration with Council in the area of reconciliation these figures were not as high as anticipated
* Reconciliation Week events, the Indigenous Acknowledgement, Welcome to Country and funding to support local groups and services were the RAP actions most identified by all interviewed stakeholders
* Other key effective actions identified included Council-run reconciliation events, such as the Indigenous program as part of the St Kilda Film Festival, the annual Sorry Day Lunch and the creation of and commitment to the Indigenous Policy Officer role. This role was seen as integral in the implementation of the Council’s RAP
* In some cases actions RAP actions were adapted to respond to changing community needs and take advantage of partnership and resource opportunities.
* Staff and external stakeholders were unaware of how some specific RAP actions were implemented and consequently there was a perception that these actions were not undertaken. This highlights the importance of ongoing communication and promotion of the implementation of Council’s RAP actions

## RAP ACTIONS – FOCUS AREA - RELATIONSHIPS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Timing | Measurable Target  | Progress  |
| 1. RAP Working Group established and made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other staff members with executive support, to manage the implementation of the RAP
 | Short term: Year1 | * Working Group will meet quarterly and report annually
* Four meetings per annum to monitor progress
 |  | * The RAP working group was established and all meetings occurred
* The meetings’ were a very appropriate forum for the monitoring of progress
 |
| 1. RAP Statement of Commitment is embedded into Council’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders policy framework following endorsement by Councillors.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Copies of the Statement of Commitment are sent to all staff, and included in the induction package for new staff
 |  | * Copies of the Statement of Commitment are available in electronic and hard copy format
 |
| 1. Community Networks – support the efforts of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to establish both formal and informal social networks through assistance that may include the provision of premises and other meeting spaces, expertise and grants.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Service agreements to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups annually
* Maintenance and continuance of community network support
 |  | * Council invested heavily in supporting a variety of community networks including the Local Indigenous Network, Rainbow Place, Wominjeka BBQ’s, Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation, NAIDOC and Sorry Day activities.
* Council supported provided through provision of meeting and office space, catering, administrative and executive support
* Council also provided funding through service agreements and funding deeds for example, Inner South to run the Wominjeka BBQ’s every Monday at Veg Out
 |
| 1. Aboriginal Gathering Place – support the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community’s efforts to establish an Aboriginal gathering place in the area.
 | Medium term:Year 2  | * Evaluate possible options and consult with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
* Identification of potential Gathering Place
 |  | * A Gathering Place was established at the Peanut Farm Reserve in 2015. A precinct model was adopted and council continues to explore the value of whole venue options.
* This was a complex task and required the resource allocation of an indigenous cadet.
* A consultant was engaged by Council to research and identify a potential gathering place.
* The key learning for this action item is timing. Actions that involve multi-layered community consultation require additional time.
 |
| 1. Reconciliation Groups – continue to support the activities of Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation through service agreement, and practical and in-kind support.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Service Agreement reviewed annually
* Annual activity report presented at RAP Working Group meeting
 |  | * The report was presented to the RAP working group.
* Continued funding and support of the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation.
 |
| 1. Cultural Promotion – publicise the contributions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through Council publications, newsletters, local and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets, and other media.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Progress is monitored through reports to the RAP Working Group
* Report annually on the number of stories with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content that are published in Council publications with the aim to have at least one publication in each media outlet
 |  | * Council has developed a wide range of stories received media coverage for this work including articles in the Koori Mail and a Department of Justice Koori Justice Award.
 |
|  |  |  | 6/6 | 100% completed |

### Discussion of Results - RAP Action Area - Relationships

“Councils have a vital role in creating an environment that enables reconciliation to happen in their communities. The City of Port Phillip really understands that role”.

Deb Chapman, Reconciliation Victoria

Reconciliation is well supported by Port Phillip residents and organisations together with strong support from the local Indigenous community. The City of Port Phillip Council has very positive reputation in the area of Reconciliation and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and is perceived as a leading local government in this area.

This has been realized through thedevelopment of clear positions in Council policy and strategy under the RAP’s auspice, e.g., Indigenous Arts Strategy 2014-17 and the establishment of a *RAP working group* with representation from nine departments across Council.

Relationships are integral to the implementation of these policies and good working relationships between Council officers and the traditional owners and ATSI community were evident in many collaborative projects. However, communication was consistently identified as an issue for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, both within and external to Council.

Internally this could be due to the RAP working group’s evolving membership over the three-year period. Whilst the group met quarterly, member turnover due to staff leaving roles, made it difficult to operate cohesively.

Whilst incidental and informal communications via regular networks and at events are recognized as important channels for meaningful communication, external stakeholders considered that there was too much reliance on word of mouth information. This meant that at times information sharing was inconsistent and somewhat dependent on individual relationships. On occasions where information was not widely shared, a number of interviewees felt that their organisation’s involvement in and promotion of the event or activity was limited.

Interview participants identified that communications were the responsibility of the Indigenous Policy Officer (IPO) and acknowledged the crucial role the IPO has played in the development of partnerships and relationships. Interview participants understood that role of IPO was a very busy and acknowledged that communications could be resource intensive. On occasion, when resources were stretched timeframes did not allow for adequate stakeholder engagement. To rectify this and ensure stakeholders buy-in, project timelines had to be extended.

### Recommendations - RAP Action Area - Relationships

The evaluation identified a need to be more strategic with communications. A strategic communications plan could be developed to assist in embedding RAP communications. Clearer communication would also increase engagement, reduce expectation on individuals and facilitate participation by broader community. Well planned consultations and engagement programs have proved to ensure key stakeholder participation. This is particularly pertinent to the development of the next RAP. Additionally, because Council has been recognised as a leader in reconciliation in the State, there is an opportunity to share the RAP’s successes with peak bodies and other councils and to strengthen future partnerships.

## RAP ACTIONS – FOCUS AREA - RELATIONSHIPS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Timing | Measurable Target | Progress and Lessons Learned |
| 1. Leadership – build capacity and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * Support the Elders Working Group by providing Council meeting space
* Support opportunities to boost Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) youth leadership
 |  | * Council provided council meeting space to the Elders and hosted many intergenerational events.
* Council provided many opportunities to boost Youth Leadership. Some opportunities included the employment of trainees and encouragement of Youth to take a lead role in projects, eg the Gathering Place
 |
| 1. Aboriginal Cross-Cultural Awareness Training for Council staff
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * All new and existing staff undertakes training on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness
* This commitment is incorporated into People and Organisational Development Policy
 |  | * Cross-cultural awareness training included: an induction video for new staff, cultural and natural heritage walks as part of the Sustainability department’s programming and ATSI Protocol briefings that were conducted with a number of CoPP service units
 |
| 1. Cultural Heritage Consultation - Council to consider potential impacts of development or rezoning, including consulting with the Traditional Owners – the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * An annual review for reporting on programs involving Traditional Owner negotiation or consultation
* An annual review will be prepared on the number of applicants required to prepare an archaeological assessment
 |  | * Cultural Heritage Consultation is considered on all major projects, For example, Fisherman’s Bend Urban Renewal Area
* Further work is required by Council to outline the Cultural heritage framework. Meetings have commenced with Council planners
 |
| 1. Flying the Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags will be flown every day at St Kilda Town Hall except on instances when a special event is taking place or request has been made to fly a different flag and it is granted (where this happens, this will be for a short period of up to a day).
 | Short term: Year1 | * Monitor the number of days the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag is flown at the St Kilda, Port Melbourne, and South Melbourne Town Halls
 |  | * The Flags are permanently flown on the flagpoles at St Kilda, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne
 |
| 1. Welcome to Country –involves a Traditional Owner or community leader welcoming people to the land at the beginning of a civic event or ceremony. Council will commission the services of the Traditional Owners, the Yalukit Wilam clan of the Boon Wurrung, to conduct ‘welcomes to country’ at civic events through annual service agreements. Council will ensure a ‘welcome to country’ or acknowledgement of country\* (see next action) will be conducted for all major civic events.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Develop a protocol outlining the processes for a ‘welcome to country’. Communicate this protocol throughout the Council, and evaluate its uptake at RAP Working Group meetings.
 |  | * Protocols have been developed
* The protocols are used throughout council and more than 1000 copies of the protocols have been distributed to staff and community agencies
 |
| 1. Acknowledgement of Country – involves either Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (who are not Traditional Owners) or non- Indigenous people acknowledging and showing respect for the Yalukit Wilam clan of the Boon Wurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the event is taking place. Council will encourage an ‘acknowledgement of country’ for all other Council meetings and events.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Develop a protocol outlining the processes and language to use for an ‘acknowledgement of country’. Communicate this protocol throughout the Council, and evaluate its uptake at RAP Working Group meetings
 |  | * Welcome to Country and acknowledgment of country is undertaken both at internal and external events, meeting and forums
 |
| 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy – ensure resources are available for annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts calendar. Input on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts program will be received via local networks such as Local Indigenous Network.
 | Long Term:Year 3  | * An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts calendar is developed following consultation on its development
 |  | * The Boonatung Ngargee Yulenj – place, action, knowledge, was developed and is the City of Port Phillip’s [Aboriginal and Torres](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/CPP0052_IndigenousStrategy_FINAL.pdf) [Strait Islander Arts Strategy 2014 - 2017](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/CPP0052_IndigenousStrategy_FINAL.pdf).
 |
| 1. Signage – increase the use of signs in public locations that pay respect to the area’s Traditional Owners – the Yalukit Wilam clan of the Boon Wurrung.
 | Medium term: Year 2  | * An annual report is prepared on the number of new signs that are introduced in parks and open spaces that acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture
 |  | * To date Signage has been completed for Bubup Nairm and Bubup Wominjeka Family and Children’s Centres. A family centre in South Melbourne is also considering a Boon Wurrung name for its building.
* The signage is reported through the RAP working Group
 |
| 1. Corporate Identity – update and revamp the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content on Council’s website and intranet.
 | Medium term: Year 2  | * That new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is uploaded, content management processes are developed, and an updated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander directory is established
 |  | * Council regularly update the City of Port Phillip website
* There is a need to improve communications and the website could be used to better promote events and RAP achievements
 |
| 1. Education - make available a range of resources for children and young adults to educate them about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. Resources would be appropriate to different stages of a child or young person’s development.
 | Long Term:Year 3 | * Each Council run maternal and child health centre, child care centre and adventure playground makes resources available on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history
 |  | * Council have invested in cultural workshops and are still exploring the purchasing of resources
 |
| 1. Sorry Business (A traditional time of mourning for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community) – when a death occurs, funding may be available for activities and events that recognise the contribution of significant members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * Report annually on Council’s history of supporting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community when a death occurs
* Bereavement fund to be established
 |  | * The bereavement fund has been established and has been utilised. For example, Aunty Francis Bond’s Funeral
* Reporting is made through the RAP working group
 |
|  |  |  | 9/11 |  |

### Discussion of Results - RAP Action Area - Respect

The *Indigenous Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country* were identified as a key action of the RAP action area of ‘Respect’ These Council adopted Protocols were consistently viewed as the most effective actions (refer to appendix B)within the RAP by respondents to the Council staff e-survey and those interviewed and were even considered to have been normalized as a “core” and “normal” part of Council business. The establishment of an identified Sorry Business fund was viewed very positively by a number Indigenous participants. It was seen as an innovative RAP action and one that highlighted Council’s knowledge and understanding the needs of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and the community.

The *Indigenous Arts Strategy* was not widely recognized as identified as a RAP action by only three external interviewees and two Council staff. It was, however, seen as highly important, unique and effective by those who are aware of it. This provides an excellent opportunity to further highlight Council’s work in the Indigenous Arts area.

At the time of the report, participants identified RAP action items seven (Leadership development); eight (Cross-Cultural Awareness Training); and 16 (Educational Resources development) as being among the **least advanced** or were viewed as being the **least effective.** In many cases lack of agreement on what success for each action would look like contributed to confusion within stakeholder groups as to whether an action had or had not been completed. For example the “resources” developed under action item 16 were programmatic, ie, modules for school-based teaching rather than the design and printing of educational collateral as expected by some stakeholders. While the value of cultural workshops and making culture available is important, it was deemed that more tangible resources such as books and play items were needed.

The concern that some stakeholders expressed within the ‘relationships’ focus area, was also touched on regarding the ‘respect’ focus area, with the perception that priority seems to be given to specific service providers. Stakeholders reported concern for the unrealistic expectations this places on the capacity of certain individuals. Conversely this scenario discourages and/or fails to recognise the involvement of others, limiting the breadth of views that inform decision-making and action.

### Recommendations - RAP Action Area - Respect

The evaluation identified that adequate resourcing is required to more thoroughly embed reconciliation protocols and process across all aspects of Council’s business. This may include allocating resources for the professional development of sector workers and training for staff, the development of learning materials.

## RAP Action Area - Opportunities

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Target Date | Measurable Target | Progress |
| 1. That Council develop, deliver, and monitor an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Development Strategy, which includes an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, and advocate for Indigenous Australians to start their own business.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * Aboriginal Employment Strategy is developed and Council endorsed
* Strategy progress will be reviewed annually
* That Council take on at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee per year
* That 2% of total staff by 2020 are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 |  | * The Economic Development and Employment Strategy has been developed and will seek Council endorsement in early 2016
* Two trainees and one indigenous cadet have been employed over the three year period
* Opportunities have also been provided to young Indigenous Leaders
 |
| 1. Naming – review the process of consultation in relation to place naming of new Council facilities, reserves and open spaces ensuring input from Traditional Owners – the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * Report annually on the number of new names recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture
* That a process for consultation with Traditional Owners – the Yalukit Willam Clan of the Boon Wurrung - is in place
 |  | * Council continues to respect and undertake consultation’s with traditional owners on all matters
* Council has named the Bubup Nairm and Bubup Wominjenka Family and Children’s Centre in the Boon Wurrung language. A family centre in South Melbourne is also considering naming their new building in the Boon Wurrung language
 |
| 1. Support for the aims of ‘Close the Gap’ health funding initiatives – Council to provide meeting space to Urban South Close the Gap reference groups and local health service providers. Council will advocate that Port Phillip area receives a proportionate allocation of ‘Close the Gap’ health funding earmarked for the Southern Metropolitan Region. Council will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues are considered by local primary care partnerships.
 | Long Term:Year 3 | * ‘Close the Gap’ health initiatives are developed, launched and implemented. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues are acknowledged in the strategic documents of local primary care partnerships
 |  | * Council has supported all “Close the Gap” initiatives and have developed and implemented many actions
* For example, the Gathering Place. Gathering Place officer employed with Close the Gap funding and regional funding allocation for Urban South region focused on tobacco control, and youth leadership
 |
| 1. Recognition of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates - Council will actively support key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates including Australia (Invasion) Day
 | Short term: Year1. | * All significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates be included into the Council calendar of events, and recognised
 |  | * Council have incorporated all significant events into Council’s Calendar
 |
| 1. Sustainability – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of environmental and social sustainability to be researched and incorporated into Council publications
 | Long Term:Year 3 | * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sustainability case studies and research to be compiled in a Council document and publicly available
 |  | * Sustainability – in partnership with EcoCentre and Boon Wurrung Foundation, 300 participants have been involved in 3 Indigenous sustainability events, as well as a cultural heritage walk and bushtucker gardening event at St Kilda Sea Baths
 |
| 1. Food Security – Council will support initiatives which ensure that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Port Phillip have access to sufficient, affordable, and quality sources of food. Council will review and research food security issues in Port Phillip including the need and likely use of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-managed Community Garden.
 | Medium term: Year 2 | * Research into food security issues faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Port Phillip to be completed
* Council will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gatherings around food, such as the Wominjeka BBQ, and Our Rainbow Place BBQ
 |  | * Council has identified that ATSI gatherings are effective in identifying Food security issues
* Council supports a variety of ATSI gatherings and access to foodbanks
* Gathering Place project coordinated resources to establish a regular foodbank at Peanut farm Reserve
 |
|  |  |  | 5/6 |  |

### Discussion of Results - RAP Action Area - Opportunities

Progressing Reconciliation within a political environment requires the ability to identify and exploit opportunities. This ability is built on the strong foundation that the previous two areas of focus ‘relationships’ and ‘respect’ provides. Many project and partnership opportunities were taken up to progress reconciliation. While the majority of the opportunities acted upon represented evolving ATSI community need, their being outside of the 28 actions of the RAP, may compromise those included in the RAP for strategic focus.

 *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Economic Development Strategy* was viewed as the most important and potentially most impactful of the RAP actions. However, because the The Aboriginal Employment and Economic Development Strategy is still being finalized and has not yet been endorsed by Council, it was also viewed as one of the **least advanced** and/or the **least effective actions.** This view was shared across all internal and external participants and equally amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Other actions, such as naming of Council’s facilities and reserves and the recognition of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates were perceived by participants as having become well-incorporated in Council’s business and expected to continue into the future.

A number of actions in this focus area were delivered through funding deed and service agreements with community groups and service provider. Representatives from these organisations expressed gratitude to receive Council support to implement important community programs. However, they felt that processes and communication could be improved so that there is more certainty to be able to better plan services and activities and that expectations for delivery are clear.

### Recommendations - RAP Action Area - Opportunities

The evaluation identified Council is well placed to pursue the opportunities present through strong partnership developed in the process of the first RAP. This includes the design and delivery of federal and state government initiatives, ie, Close the Gap Projects. Council also has the opportunity to better promote its role in delivering cultural events and activities, as some activities and events that were delivered in partnership were not seen as an initiative of Council.

***“***Reconciliation seems to be well understood throughout Council. The support we receive allows us to do some great programs and it’s fantastic to see both staff and Councillors attending and engaging in events”.

Rosemary Rule, Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation

## RAP Action Area – Tracking Progress

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Target Date | Measurable Target | Progress and Lessons Learned |
| 1. RAP reporting – Council monitor implementation of the RAP through the Working Group meetings and annual reports.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Outline annual progress in implementing the RAP Reporting will be against each applicable Council department
 |  | * The RAP working Group monitor the RAP implementation
* A mid strategy report was developed that highlighted Councils achievements
 |
| 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Survey – Council will gather data on the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to assist in the development of policy. Council will aim for this to be reported in the first 12 months of the RAP.
 | Short term: Year1 | * Survey analysis completed and available to public
 |  | * A survey of the local community was conducted in 2014
* Data on the local ATSI community has been collected and is used in as evidence in the design and development of strategies, projects and initiatives
* The local community has been consulted and provided input into Health and Wellbeing Plan, Gathering Place report, Fishermans Bend report, Victorian Coastal Strategy, and Gaswork Arts Park report
 |
| 1. Port Phillip Attitude to Reconciliation Survey – Council will gather data to gauge the attitudes of Port Phillip residents towards the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and reconciliation. Follow-up surveys will measure whether attitudes change over time.
 | Medium term: Year 2  | * Survey analysis completed and available to public
 |  | * Port Phillip survey – a community survey, conducted by Leading Edge, in 2014, was undertaken involving the phone surveys of 400 non-Indigenous residents in Port Phillip. The data establishes a baseline understanding of community attitudes to reconciliation, which can be measured against future data collections
 |
| 1. RAP Promotion – that the RAP be promoted internally within CoPP and made available to the public on the Council website and the Reconciliation Australia website.
 | Short term: Year1 | * RAP promoted on Council website and intranet. RAP to be published on Reconciliation Australia website
 |  | * The RAP is promoted on the website and intranet.
* Council has been identified as a local leader in development and delivery of RAPs, and has contributed to the LGPro Indigenous Special Interest Group, and Reconciliation Victoria forum. RAP development assistance, upon request, has been provided to Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda Baptist Church, City of Stonnington, City of Kingston, and UnitingCare.
 |
| 1. Annual Reporting - RAP is reported on annually, and a new RAP is developed in early 2015.
 | Short term: Year1. | RAP evaluated and reviewed by 2015 |  | * This report is demonstration that the RAP has been evaluated and reviewed
* The RAP review and evaluation was initiated in mid-2015
* RAP progress report is provided to Reconciliation Australia annually
 |
|  |  |  | 5/5 |  |

### Discussion of Results - RAP Action Area - Tracking Progress and Reporting

Throughout the evaluation there was a very strong acknowledgement of and support for the Indigenous Policy Officer position. This role is highly valued across all stakeholder groups. There is, however, a lack of clarity amongst stakeholders as to the scope of the role, its alignment with the RAP, its capacity to support external organisations and its integration across Council.

As discussed above a small number of RAP actions were perceived among stakeholders as being not yet fully developed or actively implemented. Additionally, as community priorities evolved, and emerging needs were identified, some actions initially proposed in the RAP were adapted to to enable different responses to the identified issues. While, in general this was viewed by stakeholders as a positive with Council appearing to be more flexible and able to respond to community need, no formal reporting mechanism on the progress of RAP actions resulted in some stakeholders feeling uninformed or excluded.

Issues were raised regarding the level of community consultation in identifying the key RAP actions. There was a view that Council should work to engage more broadly in facilitating consultation and feedback on development of the RAP.

### Recommendations - RAP Action Area - Tracking Progress and Reporting

The evaluation identified that Council could improve the promotion of activities using culturally appropriate medium and develop formal reporting mechanism on the progress of RAP actions. Improved communication and stronger branding will improve the understanding of Council’s role in the initiatives. Additionally a memorandum of understanding or protocol for engagement and better planning in undertaking consultation will improve the quality of stakeholder input and feedback.

## Evaluation Recommendations

1. That the City of Port Phillip Council continues its active support of reconciliation across the local government area.
2. That Council continue to embed the importance of reconciliation, the actions contained in the RAP and the related roles and responsibilities across Council portfolios to ensure that ‘Reconciliation is Everybody’s Business’.
3. That Council’s work toward reconciliation is continued through the development and implementation of another Reconciliation Action Plan. The City of Port Phillip Council has a strong mandate from residents, service providers and Aboriginal community members to take a leading role in the area of reconciliation.
4. That a Reconciliation Communication Strategy is developed and implemented to support the implementation of the next RAP and that it include well-articulated responsibilities that, internally, are further embedded into departmental work plans across Council; and externally better showcase positive reconciliation stories, inform the broader community about Council action and facilitate community involvement.
5. Develop and implement a mechanism to ensure timely, inclusive and representative consultation with Indigenous community members that can be utilised by both Council and relevant external agencies. As part of this, work to ensure the increased engagement and involvement of the broader local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, beyond currently engaged individuals and groups. Additionally, develop strategies to increase the participation of Aboriginal people not attending Aboriginal specific programs or not employed within Aboriginal specific roles in Council or community organisations. it is recommended that Council develop and invest in an annual community consultation and stakeholder engagement process.
6. Undertake a broad consultation process in development of any future RAP. Explore strategies to facilitate engagement from a wide range of Indigenous community members, residents and both Aboriginal and mainstream service providers.
7. implement, monitor and evaluate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Economic Development Strategy. Ensure that this strategy includes the development of long-term meaningful career opportunities, including permanent staffing roles across Council portfolios, cadetships and other employment pathways, mentoring and high quality professional development. Expand the strategy to include and support local organisations and businesses to recruit, support and retain Indigenous staff.
8. Maintain Indigenous Policy Officer role and undertake a process of review and role clarification to ensure the role works effectively across Council and with local Indigenous and mainstream organisations and to identify opportunities for further refinement of the position.
9. Provide financial and in-kind support to make Cultural Respect training available to external individuals, organisations and businesses and continue to actively implementing training within Council.
10. Explore the issue of Constitutional Recognition by identifying the range of views held by the local Indigenous community and developing an active Council position on the issue.
11. Council to take a more active role in building collective action and facilitating collaboration amongst organisations within the municipality to support collaborative practice across the reconciliation portfolio. Its recommended to develop MOU’s with such organisations and to explore potential partnerships in areas such as Cultural Respect training, professional development, and shared purchasing and procurement arrangements.

### References

Australian Bureau of statistics (2015) *website*

City of Port Phillip (2011), *Social Justice Charter*, St Kilda

City of Port Phillip (2012), *Reconciliation Action Plan 21012-15,* St Kilda

City of Port Phillip (2013), *Municipal Public Health and wellbeing Plan 2013-17*, St Kilda

City of Port Phillip (2014), *Boonatung Ngargee Yulenj: Place Action Knowledge; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy 2014-17,* St Kilda

City of Port Phillip, *Council policy documents supplied to evaluators,* 2015

Reconciliation Australia (2015) website

Reconciliation Australia (21012) *Evaluating the effectiveness of Reconciliation Action Plans*, ACT

## Case Study – Bubup Narim Family and Children’s Centre

The City of Port Phillip has worked closely with Aunty Carolyn Briggs regarding using local Aboriginal words to name various buildings in the area.

In 2013, Council was seeking a name for the Family and Children’s Centre in Carlisle Street in St Kilda.

A name was sought that thematically reflected and identified the new integrated centre as a place for children and families as opposed to the name identifying the location solely i.e. calling it the St Kilda Family and Children’s Centre.

The Boon Wurrung Foundation suggested and endorsed the ‘Bubup Nairm Family and Children’s Centre’ which translates from the Boon Wurrung language, ‘Children of Port Phillip Bay’.

In choosing an Aboriginal name for the centre, reflects;

* Council’s understanding that the use of language and its relationship to land fosters the capacity for self-development, self reliance and cultural integrity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and all residents of Port Phillip.
* Council’s commitment to cultural promotion and awareness of Iocal Aboriginal culture.
* The City of Port Phillip’s commitment to the National ‘Close the Gap’ Campaign; to improve health and life expectation equality and to close the 10 – 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians within 25 years.
* The City of Port Phillip commitment to Reconciliation, and
* The City of Port Phillip’s commitment to Social Justice

Subsequently, City of Port Phillip has named another mainstream family and children’s centre in Port Melbourne, ‘Bubup Wominjeka Family and Children’s Centre’ which means ‘Children Welcome’.

Building on its commitment in using an Aboriginal name for a significant mainstream activity, Council is now finalising Boon Wurrung language options for the naming of a new Family and Children’s Centre in South Melbourne.

The naming process solidifies a respectful working relationship with the Boon Wurrung Foundation, especially with senior Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs, a descendant of the ‘first peoples’ of the land on which the centres are located*.*

### Appendix A.

List of stakeholders was provided to the consultant:

• Boon Wurrung Foundation

• Urban South Local Indigenous Network (LINS)

• Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation

• Inner South Community Health Service

• Reconciliation Victoria

• Access Health

• Municipal Association of Victoria

• St Kilda Baptist Church

• Sacred Heart Mission

• Melbourne Museum

• Aboriginal Health Coordinator, Urban South Koolin Balit Project

• City of Port Phillip staff (ATSI and non-indigenous)