



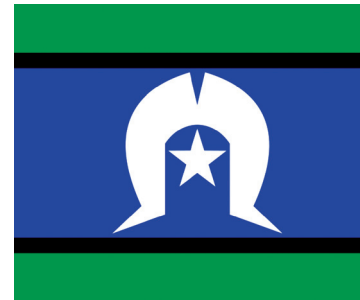
**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

INNOVATE

January 2017 – December 2018







Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is that our community walks together towards a shared future, acknowledging through actions and words the histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.



A message from our Mayor

We recognise the Bundjalung peoples as the first Australians of this region and we acknowledge that we live and work on their traditional lands.

The various clans that lived in the Lismore area over many thousands of years knew and respected this land and the physical and spiritual sustenance it provided.

Despite the ravages of colonisation, dispossession of land and injustices such as the forced removal of children, that connection to country and culture remains strong and enduring. However, we see the manifestation of past and present injustices transparent in unacceptable gaps in health, education, employment and life expectancy.

Lismore City Council is determined to play a role in improving employment opportunities and in helping to Close the Gap.

Through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), adopted in 2013, we have already made some big steps to address these issues, boosting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rates, establishing an Aboriginal Advisory Group and providing cultural

awareness training that has had a profound effect on many staff. This and much more has already been achieved – but we still have work to do.

In our new RAP we continue our efforts to increase Aboriginal employment, with a goal to have a workforce that is 6% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. We will continue our commitment to the Aboriginal Advisory Group and to hosting community events where culture and understanding can be shared. We will also continue cultural awareness training and, importantly, reach out to other local governments and organisations to encourage others to adopt a RAP.

Our RAP turns symbolism into action and we are dedicated to the three themes within the plan as a framework for change – Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of this new RAP creating change in our local community and, in doing so, make our country a better place for all Australians.

Isaac Smith
Mayor



A message from our General Manager

When we adopted our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in May 2013, I was immensely proud that we were the first local government to develop a RAP in the Northern Rivers.

We were showing leadership and we wanted to make a real difference in the lives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

At the launch, I made the commitment that this would not be a plan that would sit on the shelf. This would be a plan that would honour the words in its title – in particular Reconciliation and Action.

I am pleased that we have honoured that commitment.

We were overwhelmed with the response to our trainee program and it was a difficult task selecting just nine trainees from over 120 interested people. Three of those trainees are now permanent employees, which is a fantastic outcome.

This year we will take on six Elsa Dixon school-based trainees.

Our Cultural Awareness Training has been piloted and will be rolled out across the organisation in 2017/18.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our dedicated staff who have risen to the challenge and wholeheartedly supported the actions in our RAP.

While we have made a promising start, there is much more to do.

This new RAP will delve deeper, it will consolidate our efforts to date and make us stretch a bit further to reach our goals.

I look forward to seeing the results of our actions.

Gary Murphy
General Manager

Our business

The Lismore Local Government Area is a mixed urban and rural community in the heart of the Northern Rivers. The city is situated on the Wilsons River and covers an area of 1,290 square kilometres.

Lismore City Council delivers local government services to around 45,000 residents. Those services include:

- Local roads and bridges, sewerage and drains, and parks and gardens
- Waste management and recycling
- Management of recreation and cultural facilities such as the Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre, Lismore City Hall, Richmond Tweed Regional Library and various sporting fields
- Strategic planning and development
- Community engagement and partnering
- Development and monitoring of compliance activities
- Development and implementation of environmental strategies

- Facilitation of economic development initiatives
- Organisation and delivery of important community events, i.e. Citizenship Ceremonies, NAIDOC Family Day, Youth Week, Seniors' Week and Australia Day

Lismore City Council is made up of 11 Councillors. In accordance with the *Local Government Act*, Councillors participate in Council decision-making and strategic planning.

Council decisions and plans are implemented by Council's administrative body, which employs 485 staff. There are about 300 staff from the Infrastructure Services directorate, who work from various depots across the Local Government Area. The remaining 185 staff are from the Sustainable Development



and General Manager's directorates and are largely based in the corporate office in Goonellabah.

Lismore's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander population is 2% higher than the NSW average of 2.5% and Lismore's suburb of Goonellabah has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 6.3%. Lismore City Council is committed to equitable representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within its workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 6% of the working age population in the Lismore Local Government Area. Therefore, Lismore City Council has made a commitment to ensure that 6% of its workforce is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This equates to about 29 positions. Council currently employs 19 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.





Our RAP

Why we developed a RAP

The Lismore Local Government Area was first called home by the Widjabal/Wyabal people. They have lived in this region for more than 50,000 years and are part of the Bundjalung Nation.

In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that there were 1,950 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Lismore. It is with pride that Lismore acknowledges this and the Widjabal/Wyabal people's continuing connection to country.

Lismore City Council's 10-year plan developed in 2013, *Imagine Lismore*, showed us that recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was one of the highest priorities for people living in the region.

In 2013, Lismore City Council developed its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This was called a 'Reflect' RAP and included a series of actions and initiatives to advance both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander equality and social sustainability within the Lismore Local Government Area.



Our RAP journey to date

Notably, since 2013, Lismore City Council has:

- Delivered two 'RAP in the Region' workshops to encourage organisations in the Local Government Area to develop their own RAPs. About 23 participants attended the last workshop and seven organisations have made a commitment to pursue their own RAPs.
- Established an Aboriginal Advisory Group to provide advice to Council on local government matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Formed a strong relationship with its Aboriginal Advisory Group.
- Established a RAP Working Group to oversee the implementation and progress reporting of the RAP.
- Hosted two internal National Reconciliation Week celebrations annually for the Infrastructure Services and Sustainable Development directorates. Members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group were invited to these events. The celebrations help to raise awareness of our RAP and its initiatives among staff.
- Hosted three NAIDOC Family Days, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. They attracted an average of 2,500 people and featured more than 50 local providers offering services to Aboriginal people. They also included activities for young and old as well as food and live music by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and performers.
- Observed Acknowledgement of Country protocols at public events.
- Developed a three-year Aboriginal Employment Strategy (2015-2017). The strategy aimed to ensure 6% of Council's workforce is represented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This equates to 29 positions. The strategy set targets for one scholarship, two internships, 18 traineeships and/or apprenticeships and 12 full-time permanent positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Increased its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers from 10 to 19.
- Developed a three-year Cultural Awareness and Competency Strategy (2015-2017). The strategy required Council to develop and deliver a cross-cultural training program for Councillors, executive leaders, supervisors and staff. Training components included a film, online resources, face-to-face cultural immersions and participation at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.
- Developed a Cultural Awareness and Competency Training Program.

Since the RAP was launched in 2013, there have been clear successes as well as challenges, creating opportunities for Council to learn and develop. In particular, a review of Council's Aboriginal Employment Strategy showed that there were still gaps in workforce cultural awareness and that organisation-wide training is critical to increase success in future Aboriginal employment programs.





The new Lismore City Council RAP 2017-2018 has been developed as an ‘Innovate’ RAP to build on reconciliation initiatives and lessons learned to date and to encourage other organisations and businesses in the region to develop their own RAP.

Similar to previous years, a Councillor and the General Manager of Lismore City Council will continue to champion the RAP with the support of the RAP Working Group. The RAP Working Group, with representation from across the organisation, will oversee the implementation of the RAP. Members of the RAP Working Group are:

- Mayor
- One Councillor Champion
- General Manager
- Executive Director – Infrastructure Services
- Executive Director – Sustainable Development
- Integrated Planning Manager
- Partnering and Community Engagement Coordinator
- People Services Coordinator
- Team Leader (Roads)
- Customer Service Officer

Both the Team Leader (Roads) and the Customer Service Officer are local Aboriginal people who are also Council staff.

In addition to the RAP Working Group, Council will be supported by the Aboriginal Advisory Group.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group currently has eight community members but can have representation of up to 15 community members.

The group meets quarterly and on an as-needs basis to provide advice to Lismore City Council on local government matters affecting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The group provided strategic input into the development of this RAP and will receive updates on the progress of the RAP as well as provide strategic advice to support RAP implementation.

The Integrated Planning Manager is secretariat of the RAP Working Group and the Aboriginal Advisory Group, and acts as a conduit between the two.

Relationships

Lismore City Council is committed to improving relationships with Lismore's traditional custodians, the Widjabal/Wyabal people, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Council seeks to address local government matters affecting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents through Council's Aboriginal Advisory Group and relevant Aboriginal stakeholder groups. Council makes a further commitment to encourage other organisations in the region to advance reconciliation.

Focus area: <i>Community engagement</i>				
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
1. RAP Working Group actively monitors development of 'Innovate' RAP and implementation of actions, including tracking progress and reporting.	1.1	RAP Working Group oversees the development, endorsement and launch of Council's 'Innovate' RAP.	Nov 2016	Corporate Services Manager
	1.2	Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be represented on the RAP Working Group.	Dec 2018	
	1.3	Meet at least bi-monthly to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec 2017/18	
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and other staff.	2.1	Organise at least two internal events for National Reconciliation Week (NRW) each year. Hosting responsibilities for this annual event to be circulated among various programs within Council directorates.	27 May - 3 June 2017/18	Corporate Services Manager
	2.2	Register NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.		
	2.3	Support an external NRW event.		
	2.4	Through Council's interagency networks, promote regional collaborations to deliver NRW events.		
	2.5	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.		
	2.6	Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences or stories.		
	2.7	Download Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and circulate to staff.		

Focus area: *Community engagement*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.	3.1 Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	Mar 2017	General Manager's Office
	3.2 Ensure Council's Aboriginal Advisory Group meets quarterly to provide community representation and advice to Council on local government matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Feb, May, Aug, Nov 2017/18	
	3.3 Host an annual meet and greet with the Mayor and Councillors for the Aboriginal Advisory Group.	Dec 2017/18	Mayor's Office
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector.	4.1 Implement a plan to engage and inform staff of their responsibilities within the RAP.	Nov 2017	Integrated Planning Manager
	4.2 Review and implement Council's communications plan to raise awareness among staff and other Northern Rivers local governments about Council's RAP.	Dec 2017	Media Coordinator
5. Launch 'RAP in the region' to encourage other businesses and organisations in the region to develop their own RAP.	5.1 Plan and host a 'RAP in the Region' themed workshop, to guide local organisations to develop their own RAPs with Reconciliation Australia.	Dec 2017/18	Integrated Planning Manager

Respect

As an employer, Lismore City Council commits to a workforce that is representative of the Lismore community. To ensure the organisational environment is diverse and inclusive, Council makes a commitment to improve cultural awareness and competencies among its staff and Councillors. These efforts are focused on increasing staff understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, cultures and aspirations.

Focus area: *Cultural awareness and competency*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Engage staff in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	6.1 Develop and implement a Cultural Competence Training Strategy that defines the cultural learning needs of Councillors and staff in all areas of our business and which considers various ways of learning.	Nov 2017	People & Workforce Development Manager
	6.2 Investigate opportunities to work with the Aboriginal Advisory Group to develop cultural awareness training.	Dec 2017	
	6.3 Collaborate with the Aboriginal Advisory Group to deliver cultural immersion opportunities as part of cultural awareness training.	Dec 2018	
	6.4 Create opportunities for all Council staff, including RAP Working Group members, RAP champions and other key leadership staff, to participate in cultural training.	Dec 2018	
	6.5 Promote Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.	Dec 2017/18	
	6.6 Celebrate and recognise other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	Dec 2018	

Focus area: *Cultural awareness and competency*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>7. Engage staff in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning.</p>	<p>7.1 Review, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</p> <p>7.2 Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country.</p> <p>7.3 Invite a traditional custodian to provide a Welcome to Country at two significant annual events, i.e. Australia Day and the annual NAIDOC Family Day event.</p> <p>7.4 Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all Council meetings, external meetings and public events.</p> <p>7.5 Invite Widjabul/Wyabul traditional custodians to explain the significance of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country during cultural immersion experiences delivered as part of Council's Cultural Competence Training Strategy.</p> <p>7.6 Display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our office or on our office building.</p> <p>7.7 Continue to display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in Council Chambers and hoist daily at Council's Corporate Centre.</p>	<p>Nov 2017</p> <p>Dec 2017</p> <p>Dec 2017/18</p> <p>Dec 2017/18</p> <p>Dec 2017/18</p> <p>Dec 2017/18</p> <p>Dec 2017/18</p>	<p>Integrated Planning Manager</p>
<p>8. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	<p>8.1 Ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in NAIDOC Week in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act</i>.</p> <p>8.2 Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during the NAIDOC Family Day.</p> <p>8.3 Provide opportunities for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures at the NAIDOC Family Day.</p>	<p>July 2017/18</p>	<p>People & Workforce Development Manager</p> <p>Events Manager</p>

Opportunities

Council believes that long-lasting and sustainable social and economic change can be affected through employment and procurement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Therefore, Council makes a commitment to create real and genuine educational, employment, procurement, professional development and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Focus area: *Employment and procurement*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace.	9.1 Achieve 6% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation within Council's workforce to match the Lismore Local Government Area's working age population that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.	Dec 2017	People & Workforce Development Manager
	9.2 Implement Council's 2015-2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.	Dec 2017	
	9.3 Review and update Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy for 2018-2020.	Oct 2017	
	9.4 When updating the Employment Strategy, engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Council's Aboriginal Advisory Group and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers to consult on employment strategies, including recruitment, employment, professional development and retention strategies.	Oct 2017	
	9.5 Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.	Oct 2017	
	9.6 Implement Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy for 2018-2020.	Dec 2017/18	
	9.7 Advertise all vacancies in regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interagency networks.	Dec 2017/18	
	9.8 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and future applicants participating in our workplace	Dec 2017/18	
	9.9 Include in all job advertisements: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply.'	Dec 2017/18	

Focus area: *Employment and procurement*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation.	10.1 Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses supplying our organisation with goods and services.	Jun 2017	Strategic Procurement Coordinator
	10.2 Consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development advisors to develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.	Jun 2017	
	10.3 Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.	Jun 2017	
	10.4 Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.	Dec 2018	
	10.5 Facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and other local businesses and service providers.	Jul 2017/18	
11. Develop professional development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community members.	11.1 Develop a cultural mentoring network for existing staff and managers.	Dec 2017/18	People & Workforce Development Manager
	11.2 Develop and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways for traineeships or internships.	Dec 2017/18	
	11.3 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership through succession planning to identify new community leaders to replace Aboriginal Advisory Group members.	Dec 2017/18	
	11.4 Support a scholarship for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student at Southern Cross University.	Dec 2017/18	Mayor's Office

Tracking progress and reporting

Focus area: Reporting on outcomes			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Increase staff awareness of state and federal policy developments with implications for local government and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	12.1 Collaborate with NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, the Native Title Tribunal and NTSCORP Limited to deliver training to staff about native title claim implications for local government.	Sep 2017	Integrated Planning Manager
13. Report RAP achievements, challenges and lessons to Reconciliation Australia.	13.1 Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	30 Sept 2017/18	General Manager's Office and Integrated Planning Manager
	13.2 Integrate RAP reporting into Council's standard Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework processes.	Nov 2016	
14. Report RAP achievements, challenges and lessons internally and externally.	14.1 Report our RAP achievements, challenges and lessons through Council's <i>Local Matters</i> newsletter to residents.	Dec 2017/18	Media Coordinator
15. Review, refresh and update RAP.	15.1 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on lessons, challenges and achievements.	Jun 2018	General Manager's Office
	15.2 Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.	Jan 2019	

Contact us



Name: Annie McWilliam

Position: Integrated Planning Manager

Phone: 1300 87 83 87

Email: annie.mcwilliam@lismore.nsw.gov.au



