
Yarra City Council's

Draft Aboriginal Partnerships Plan #4

2019-2022

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We acknowledge their creator spirit Bunjil, their ancestors and their Elders. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Wurundjeri, who have never ceded sovereignty and retain their strong connections to family, clan and country despite the impacts of European invasion. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations here today – and to their Elders past, present and future.

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Introduction

The commencement of this Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2019-2022 marks the 20 year anniversary of Yarra City Council's partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community¹.

As a Council, we are immensely proud of this milestone, of relationships built and work completed during this time. We recognise, of course, that this is just the beginning of a long shared journey and that there is much work ahead.

What our twenty years has taught us, however, is that our partnerships-based model works. At its heart, this model is built on relationships underpinned by openness, trust, accountability and a willingness to learn. We thank the many community members who have advised and guided us over the years, as well as those who continue to guide us today.

This Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2019-2022 is our fourth, and it continues to build upon the strengths and learnings of previous plans.

The initial plan established simple but important commitments, such as reading the Acknowledgement of Country at important events and flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on Town Halls. More recent plans have seen Council support MAYSAR gym / community space to keep its doors open, advocate for a celebration of national identity that is more inclusive of Aboriginal people, and develop an outdoor artwork and garden that recognises the struggles and strengths of the Stolen Generations in historically significant Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy.

This plan is therefore not being created in a void, but builds upon a foundation of collaborative work and ongoing conversation with the local community.

With the development and implementation of each new Plan comes deeper, more meaningful commitments, but often too, deeper and more complex challenges. Council embraces these challenges as an opportunity to engage, listen, learn and grow.

¹ Note on terminology: for the purposes of this document all future references to Aboriginal people also includes Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have used this convention to avoid bureaucratic acronyms like 'ATSI', words with negative historical connotations like 'Indigenous', and informal words like 'Koori'. We are also eager to avoid repeatedly writing 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples'. We acknowledge that few terms are acceptable to everyone and, as 'always, we remain open to guidance from community on this issue.

Highlights from Previous Plans

Some of the highlights from previous Plans include:

- Creation of the Stolen Generations Marker *Remember Me* by Reko Rennie in Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy (2018).
- The January 26 project (2017 – ongoing).
- Support for MAYSAR to maintain a community-owned space in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (2009 – ongoing).
- Ongoing promotion of local history projects, a teacher’s resource and Facebook pages (2002 – ongoing).
- The ongoing work of Council’s internal RAP working group in developing organisational confidence, capacity, cohesiveness and competency (2011 – ongoing).
- Ongoing support for vulnerable Aboriginal community members through Billabong BBQ, Yarra Aboriginal Support Network (YASN) and Smith Street Dreaming Festival/ Working Group (2001 – ongoing).

Welcome to Country Ceremony – background information and protocol

A Welcome to Country ceremony involves a Traditional Owner formally welcoming people onto their country. It may also involve such things as dance, a smoking ceremony and the granting of safe passage as well as access to resources while on country.

This ceremony should be conducted at significant official events and can **only be carried out by a Traditional Owner on their traditional lands** (that is, a Wurundjeri person on Wurundjeri land).

Council commits to: “engaging the Wurundjeri to conduct ‘Welcome to Country’ at citizenship ceremonies (if applicable), Mayoral and civic receptions, openings of major events, official openings of Council buildings and significant official events where the Mayor is present.”

Ideally, a ‘Welcome’ should be booked at least 6 weeks in advance of an event through the [Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Cultural Heritage Compensation Corporation](#).

After a Welcome to Country ceremony, it is customary for the next speaker to thank the Traditional Owner for their Welcome and then read Council’s Acknowledgement of Country statement.

Acknowledgement of Country – important background information

Acknowledgment of Country is a simple statement that pays respect to the Traditional Owners and their unique, enduring connection to the land and waterways (tens of

thousands of years). It will often acknowledge other Aboriginal people too.

In the modern day context, it can also acknowledge the strength and resilience of Aboriginal communities in the face of rapid, irreversible changes that were made to their culture, health and ways of life from the time of European invasion onwards. Acknowledging this is an important part of a truth-telling process that has been deferred in various ways – and for various ends – from the commencement of European invasion onwards.

Denial of Aboriginal existence was the first step in the British taking possession of the land. By declaring the land was *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one), the British were able to ‘legally’ invade, claim sovereignty and assert English law – including the assertion that the Crown was the absolute owner of all land.

It wasn’t until 1992 that *terra nullius* as a justification for the British taking ownership of Aboriginal lands was legally declared a fiction.

Invasion impacted heavily on the Wurundjeri causing loss of life, loss of culture and disconnection from country. Despite this, the strong bonds between the Wurundjeri, their families and country could not be broken.

Whenever possible, Acknowledgment of Country should be read with this historical context in mind. The land was inhabited by many Aboriginal tribes and nations at the time of European invasion and they are still here. A hastily read or unfeeling acknowledgment implies that it is unimportant business and does more harm than good.

Acknowledgement of Country – official versions and protocol

It is appropriate for the first speaker at an event or meeting to read an Acknowledgement of Country statement. If there has been a Welcome to Country prior to this, the acknowledgement should take place immediately afterwards. Once acknowledgment has been pronounced, it is not necessary for subsequent speakers to repeat the Acknowledgment of Country, unless it is a particularly solemn / respectful Aboriginal community event (eg the Anniversary of the Apology, or National Sorry Day) in which case an acknowledgment might be pronounced by each new speaker. **An Acknowledgement of Country can be spoken by anyone, Aboriginal or not.**

Council has three official acknowledgments, which have been written for specific circumstances. In the vast majority of cases, Council staff and Councillors will only use the first one. Further details are outlined below.

Official Acknowledgment of Country #1

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations here today – and to their Elders past, present and future.

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- To be used by the Mayor and Councillors at the commencement of all Mayoral and civic receptions, openings of major events, official openings of Council buildings and official events where the Mayor is present.
- To be used by Council officers at the commencement of CEO briefings, significant internal events, as well as Executive, Senior Management Team, Senior Management Team Plus and Branch meetings.
- To be used by Council officers who would like to acknowledge country in any other meeting.

Official Acknowledgment of Country #2

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We acknowledge their creator spirit Bunjil, their ancestors and their Elders. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Wurundjeri, who have never ceded sovereignty and retain their strong connections to family, clan and country despite the impacts of European invasion. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations here today – and to their Elders past, present and future.

- To be read by the Mayor at the commencement of all Council meetings and all Aboriginal community events. It may also be used at any time at Councillor discretion, in place of the Official Acknowledgment of Country #1.

Official Acknowledgment of Country #3

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We acknowledge their creator spirit Bunjil, their ancestors and their Elders. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Wurundjeri, who have survived European invasion and never ceded sovereignty. We also acknowledge the significant contribution made by the many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra.

We acknowledge that Fitzroy and Collingwood are areas of special significance to Aboriginal people – as the cradle of Aboriginal affairs in Victoria, the birthplace of important Aboriginal organisations, the centre of political activism and a meeting place for Aboriginal people to link in with family, community and services. We acknowledge the role played by past federal and state government policies in the social and cultural dispossession of Aboriginal people – and the dispossession of land – which has caused the current disadvantages faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. And we believe that having an awareness of, and taking steps towards, mending this disadvantage is the shared responsibility of all residents in the City of Yarra.

Council pays its respects to all in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and

Elders from all nations here today – and to their Elders past, present and future.

- To be used by the Mayor and /or Councillors at the commencement of Yarra’s January 26 event, Yarra’s National Sorry Day event, Yarra’s anniversary of the Apology event and Yarra’s citizenship ceremonies (if applicable).
- It may also be used at Councillor discretion in place of the other official acknowledgments at any significant Aboriginal calendar day or Aboriginal community event.

Council’s Relationships with the Traditional Owners

Yarra’s formal relationship with the Wurundjeri formally began in 1999 when Wurundjeri Elder, Auntie Annette Xiberras, became a founding member of Yarra’s Aboriginal Advisory Group. Twenty years on, she continues to co-chair the group and provide invaluable advice, knowledge and guidance. We acknowledge and thank Annette for her ongoing support.

Since 2009, the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan has been strengthened by the employment of Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Colin Hunter. He is the only Wurundjeri person employed in a dedicated position by local government on Wurundjeri Country (which takes in 38 municipalities and the principality). We owe much to Uncle Colin’s dedication, tenacity and leadership. He is an ambassador for the Wurundjeri, for the community and for Yarra City Council.

Through Uncle Colin, we have strengthened our relationships with the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Cultural Heritage Compensation Corporation.

Role of the AAG

Yarra’s Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) was established in 1999, as a partnership between Yarra City Council, the Wurundjeri and the broader Aboriginal community. The group began work on Yarra’s first Aboriginal Partnerships Plan in 2002 and endorsed the Plan in 2004.

In the years since, the AAG has continued to meet bimonthly, overseeing the development and implementation of all subsequent plans. The group maintains an open and standing invitation to all in the Aboriginal community. It counts amongst its membership two Wurundjeri Elders, two Councillors, Aboriginal community representatives and Council officers.

The AAG is the formal mechanism for ensuring our partnership with the community is underpinned by regular, ongoing conversations. This mechanism is also now supported by a range of other working groups and platforms for ongoing consultation with the community.

Role of the RAP Working Group

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Since 2012, Council's cross-organisational capacity has been built through an internal working group, known as the RAP Working Group. The establishment of the RAP Working Group has built confidence, capacity and co-operation across many units and branches within Council. This group meets monthly to track actions, co-ordinate projects and build cultural awareness and confidence amongst officers. The RAP working group includes an executive sponsor and representation from staff across every division in Council.

A brief note: Although Council support the aims and achievements of the Reconciliation movement, we no longer maintain a Reconciliation Action Plan. Our Aboriginal Partnerships Plan is (and always has been) our lead policy document and, at this stage, best suits our responsive work style, as well as our planning and reporting cycles.

Broader Social and Political Context for the Plan: National, State and Local Highlights from 2017 and 2018

2017 and 2018 saw a number of firsts, milestones and high profile events which increased engagement with (and visibility of) Aboriginal people, experiences, issues, histories and achievements.

2017

2017 saw the 50-year anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, the 25-year anniversary of the landmark Mabo decision and the 20-year anniversary of the 'Bringing them Home' report into the Stolen Generations.

In May 2017, The Uluru Statement from the Heart was put together as a joint statement by First Nations Elders from around the country, calling for a designated Aboriginal voice in Parliament.

In June 2017, Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) language was spoken for the first time in Victorian Parliament at the adoption of the historic 'Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn*) Act 2017'.

In late 2017, three Victorian Councils – Yarra, Darebin and Moreland – made historic changes to how they mark January 26, taking positions that publicly acknowledge the pain and sorrow experienced by Aboriginal people on this day.

In November 2017, Lidia Thorpe became the first Aboriginal woman elected to Victorian Parliament.

2018

January 26 in 2018 marked the 80 year anniversary of the 1938 Day of Mourning protest and the 20 year anniversary of National Sorry Day. January 26 also saw large scale marches

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in all Australian capital cities in recognition and acknowledgement of this.

In July 2018, NAIDOC Week brought increased awareness of and due recognition to the achievements of Aboriginal women.

In Victoria, 2018 saw the commencement of historic treaty talks and the adoption of the 'Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018' – Australia's first ever Treaty law;

In June 2018, the federal seat of Batman was renamed after Yorta Yorta leader William Cooper.

Sporting organisations like the AFL and NRL continue to build pride in Aboriginal achievement through high profile events such as Dreamtime at the G as part of the Sir Doug Nicholls round.

Relevant State and Federal Policies, Acts and Commitments

Yarra's Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2019-2022 is cognisant of a range of local, state and federal commitments.

At a Federal Level we are bound by:

- The *Close the Gap* targets, which bind us to work towards improved health and life expectancy outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- The responsibilities inherent to Australia's role as a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including the recommendation that we develop a Treaty with Aboriginal peoples.

In Victoria, we are bound by:

- *The Yarra Protection (Wilip -gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*, which recognises the Yarra River as having unique qualities in need of special protections.
- *The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006)*, which: protects the distinct rights of Aboriginal people in Victoria; outlines the legal obligation of public authorities to act compatibly with Aboriginal cultural rights, and to properly consider Aboriginal cultural rights when making decisions; and advocates for consultation with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities when making any decision or action that may impact Aboriginal cultural rights.
- The Victorian State Government's *Close the Gap Statement of Intent 2008*.
- *The Advancing the Treaty with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*, which establishes a framework for the development of a Treaty with Victoria's Aboriginal people.
- The *Say No to Racism* campaign.

Council Policies

The Plan is cognisant of the Yarra Council Plan 2017–2021 and its values, especially the key objectives:

1. Community health, safety and wellbeing are a focus in everything we do
2. Inclusion, diversity and uniqueness are welcomed, respected and celebrated
3. Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment
4. Development and growth are managed to maintain and enhance the character and heritage of the city
5. Local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive
6. Connectivity and travel options are environmentally sustainable, integrated and well-designed
7. Transparency, performance and community participation drive the way we operate.

It is also cognisant of other Council Plans such as the Yarra Arts and Cultural Strategy 2016–2020 and the Yarra Libraries Plan 2017–2020.

Community Consultation Method for this Plan

Consultation for this Plan took place during August and September in 2018. This involved discussions with community members and the distribution of online surveys.

Consultation commenced with a special AAG meeting held at MAYSAR (184-186 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy) on 2 August 2018, with approximately 30 people in attendance. AAG co-chair and Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Annette Xiberras, opened the consultation with a Welcome to Country ceremony and also shared some personal memories about the area's history.

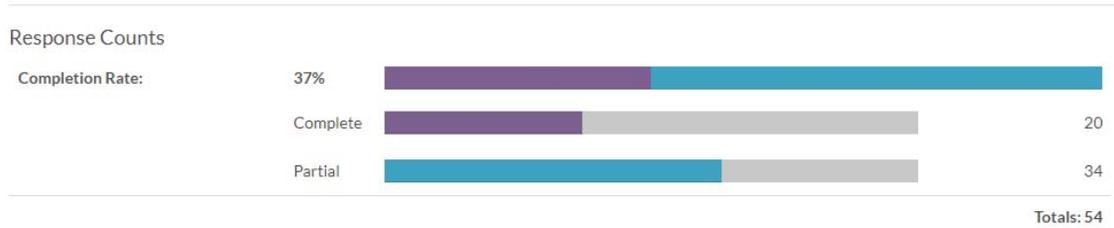
A slideshow was shown highlighting Yarra's collaborative work with the Aboriginal community over the last 20 years. This included a variety of history projects, events, celebrations, project posters and community gatherings. This was followed by facilitated discussions which primarily focussed on a few short questions: What is Council doing well? What does Council need to work on? If you were the Mayor of Yarra, what are the first three things you would do?

After the opening consultation, Community Partnerships officers sent online surveys to their extensive community networks inviting people to share ideas and give feedback. One of these surveys was for Aboriginal community only, and the other was for service providers and other people who work directly with the Aboriginal community.

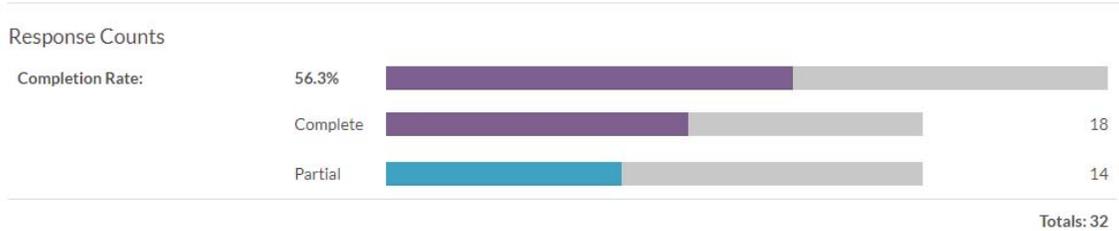
Council officers also visited a number of Aboriginal organisations and network meetings to present the slideshow and initiate discussion. The survey was then disseminated to these organisations for further distribution.

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In total, 54 Aboriginal people participated in the online survey, with 20 complete surveys and 34 partially completed surveys. This was a good level of participation, with many respondents providing rich and detailed information.



In total, a further 32 people who work directly with Aboriginal community participated in the online survey. This includes 18 complete surveys and 14 partially completed surveys.



Emerging themes from this consultation were then discussed with Yarra staff and the RAP Working Group to identify opportunities for future projects and actions.

Consultation Results

The majority of respondents from the Aboriginal community and people who work with the Aboriginal community said they thought Council was doing a good job. A number of people said that Yarra is leading the way for local government.

Yarra Council is leading the way, not only on a state level, but also on a national level.

Yarra's work on January 26, the Stolen Generations Marker and Smith Street Dreaming came up again and again, as Council projects that are highly valued by the community.

Yarra does so much for the community. It has been a trend setter and front runner in rolling out and supporting great initiatives for the A&TSI community. Such as the stolen generations marker, smith street dreaming festival and the council's stance on not celebrating the 26th of January.

Smith St Dreaming. It is a celebration and it is on the streets that a lot of Aboriginal people identify with and holds history of a long journey.

People also valued BlakWiz, Billabong BBQ and Yarra's historical resources.

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Snapshots of Aboriginal Fitzroy Heritage listing Atherton Gardens Wurundjeri History of Yarra MAYSAR support Teachers Guide: Connecting with the Aboriginal History of Yarra Plaque Tour Stolen Generation project.

People perceived Yarra to have strong relationships with the Aboriginal community underpinned by clear, transparent consultative processes.

Council has done well to build a strong relationship with its local Aboriginal community.

[Council] consults well, has credibility, acknowledges us mob. Yarra is respectful of the

Aboriginal community and consults well with our people and organisations.

A small number of respondents said that they weren't aware of any work that Yarra did with the Aboriginal community and that they wanted more contact with Yarra Council, or for events to be better advertised, including through traditional promotion (not just online and social media).

A strong and consistent theme in the consultation was that people wanted Yarra to create more employment opportunities for Aboriginal people both in the organisation itself and in the broader community.

Make sure all the council places are culturally safe and employees have had cultural awareness provided. Employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

Would like to see increase in Aboriginal employment by Yarra City Council. Need to have a think about what this is and how to do it. Need to tease it out and have a strategy for it. You have a RAP Plan, so you may have issues with internal issues, but push it through, just do it! We need jobs! Yarra has such a good reputation, but the RAP Plan is the guts of it. If you're fair dinkum, you've got to make this happen.

Other areas for improvement include: ensuring ongoing, long-term support and protection for MAYSAR as the last community-controlled Aboriginal organisation in historically significant Fitzroy:

MAYSAR to be better funded, community feeling that they need security for the organisation's future. i.e. 10 years or more, so that we can plan for the future.

MAYSAR to be listed to be officially Heritage Listed.

People wanted Aboriginal history and culture to be more visible in the municipality:

More of our history and culture needs to be visible.

We wanna show our pride and history.

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People wanted us to keep working on broader community education:

Keep up the education – through outreach, the teachers’ resource, Aboriginal liaison.

Have an Aboriginal person to go into schools. Teach people – you could partner with SNAICC to do that.

There’s more education needed.

Both community members and service providers wanted Yarra to advocate for affordable housing and find ways to maintain community connection to Yarra.

Advocate for increased public, social and affordable housing for Aboriginal people to remain in Yarra. Support organisations to stay in Yarra.

People feel that their community is being “pushed out” as services and affordable rent have pushed the community out of the area.

People also wanted us to provide support for people who are at risk of coming into contact with the justice system and people who are coming out of prison.

Help with dealing with the high rates of the mob being incarcerated. Help to reconnect, to link to community and culture. Programs inside and out of prison. Having people with lived experience to facilitate the programs.

Support healing services, or centres as a better way forward.

People wanted to see more support for young Aboriginal people, for vulnerable Aboriginal people, for the homeless and for people with substance abuse issues.

More youth activities – give them an alternative to drugs and alcohol, give them respect and a place to belong.

Move the local Aboriginal community out of North Richmond and provide support and resources for the substance issues.

Further community quotes and background information are also included in the ‘context’ sections for each of the four priority areas detailed in this Plan.

Yarra Aboriginal Partnerships Policy (2019)

The following policy statement, known as the Yarra Aboriginal Partnerships Policy (2019) is a quick reference stand-alone document which lists Council's official acknowledgments, statements of support and commitments. It remains the foundation of our work with the community. The values and commitments outlined here are applicable to all Councillors and officers at Yarra City Council.

Council acknowledges:

1. the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra.
2. the Wurundjeri's creator spirit Bunjil, their ancestors and their Elders – past, present and future.
3. the strength and resilience of the Wurundjeri, who have never ceded sovereignty and retain their strong connections to family, clan and country despite the impacts of European invasion.
4. the impacts of frontier wars, massacres and frontier violence in Victoria and the role these things played in the dispossession of Aboriginal people.
5. that Fitzroy and Collingwood are areas of special significance to Aboriginal people – as the cradle of Aboriginal affairs in Victoria, the birthplace of important Aboriginal organisations, the centre of political activism and a meeting place for Aboriginal people to link-in with family, community and services.
6. the strain that the rising cost of living and rapid population growth continue to put on Aboriginal connection to Yarra.
7. that ongoing presence, visibility and participation of Aboriginal people in Yarra is vital to maintaining a connection.
8. the significant number of volunteer hours worked by many Aboriginal people in order to fulfil cultural, familial and community obligations, often without acknowledgement.
9. the role played by past federal and state government policies in the social, cultural and economic dispossession of Aboriginal people; the ongoing intergenerational trauma experienced by many Aboriginal people as a result of this; the compounding effects of racism (overt, covert and unconscious) on this trauma – and the ways in which these forces combine to reinforce entrenched disadvantage, poor health outcomes, increased contact with the justice system and economic disadvantage.
10. that having a historical understanding of the ongoing impacts of European invasion on Aboriginal peoples today is essential to our shared healing in the City of Yarra.

Council supports:

11. the Wurundjeri community in their role as Traditional Owners.
12. the rights of Aboriginal people to live according to their own values and customs.

13. the Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) as a mechanism for ensuring Aboriginal input into the development of Council policies.
14. Yarra Aboriginal Support Network (YASN) as a mechanism for co-ordinating support for the Parkies community and other members of Yarra's disadvantaged Aboriginal community.
15. the Federal Government's 'Close the Gap' commitments.
16. the anniversaries of The Apology, NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day, Wurundjeri Week, Close the Gap Day, National Reconciliation Week, Indigenous Literacy Day, International Day of the World's Indigenous People and Indigenous Children's Day.
17. development of a Treaty with Aboriginal peoples (as per the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to which Australia is a signatory).
18. truth telling between governments and Aboriginal peoples.

Council commits to:

19. consulting the Wurundjeri Council on all decisions affecting the Wurundjeri, and the broader Aboriginal community on all issues affecting Aboriginal people in Yarra.
20. increasing Aboriginal employment at Council and working towards Yarra becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal community members.
21. developing Yarra's organisational culture so that it is attracting and welcoming to Aboriginal employees.
22. brokering Aboriginal community employment opportunities in the broader municipality.
23. ongoing employment of an Aboriginal person as the Aboriginal Partnerships Officer, with special consideration given, in the case of a vacancy, to a person who can demonstrate strong community connection.
24. engaging the Wurundjeri to conduct 'Welcome to Country' at citizenship ceremonies (if applicable), Mayoral and civic receptions, openings of major events, official openings of Council buildings and significant official events where the Mayor is present.
25. paying respect to the Wurundjeri and broader Aboriginal community by reading:
 - a) Council's official Acknowledgement of Country #1 statement at the commencement all Mayoral and civic receptions, openings of major events, official openings of Council buildings and official events where the Mayor is present, as well as CEO briefings, significant internal events, Executive, Senior Management Team, Senior Management Team Plus and Branch meetings.
 - b) Council's official Acknowledgment of Country #2 statement at the commencement of all Council meetings and all Aboriginal community events.
 - c) Council's official Acknowledgment of Country #3 statement at the

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commencement of Yarra's January 26 event, Yarra's National Sorry Day event, Yarra's anniversary of the Apology event and Yarra's citizenship ceremonies (if applicable).

26. remaining a local government leader and innovator in strengthening relationships with the local Aboriginal community; increasing visibility of Aboriginal people, culture, issues and achievements; improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Yarra; and developing the organisation's confidence and capacity in working with the local Aboriginal community.
27. developing a new action plan for each year of the four-years of the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan, to ensure Council projects and actions are responsive to and aligned with community need and emerging community issues.
28. maintaining recognition and profile of areas of local significance to Aboriginal people.
29. seeking opportunities to name places in Yarra using *Woiwurrung* language, in line with Yarra's *Naming of Roads Features and Places Policy, 2014*.
30. flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on Council's Town Halls on a daily basis, and at all ceremonial Council events where the Australian flag is flown.
31. advocating for improved Aboriginal employment and cultural awareness among staff in Victoria Police, Office of Housing Victoria and local services and agencies.
32. supporting the ongoing development of MAYSAR as a community space run by community for community, and the ongoing vitality of meeting places like The Stolen Generations Marker, The Meeting Place and Billabong BBQ.
33. promoting 'The Wurundjeri Protocol' as the first step for people, businesses and organisations planning cultural and community activities in Yarra.
34. facilitating ongoing monthly Yarra Aboriginal Support Network (YASN) and the Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) meetings.
35. building strategic, collaborative and supportive partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, other levels of government, the community and the private sector, in Yarra and beyond.
36. promoting and holding a small-scale, culturally-sensitive event featuring a Smoking Ceremony on January 26 that acknowledges the loss of culture, language and identity felt by the Aboriginal community on January 26.
37. developing a communications plan that focuses on broader community education to help people better understand Aboriginal community experiences of January 26 and to explain Council's position on January 26.
38. promoting information about Council's position on January 26 in the six most commonly spoken community languages in Yarra, and partnering with the Yarra Settlement Forum and the Yarra Multicultural Advisory Group to distribute and promote educational information.
39. partnering with Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Incorporated to run an education workshop for young Aboriginal people, run by and featuring a panel of local Aboriginal Elders with connections to Fitzroy, the establishment of important Aboriginal organisations and other achievements.

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40. seeking opportunities to partner with the Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Government Association, Reconciliation Victoria and State Government departments to hold an event to build understanding about January 26 and Council's position on it.
41. lobbying and seeking partnerships with State Government departments and other interested parties to acknowledge the Aboriginal community's pain and disconnection with Australia on January 26, and seek opportunities to promote education about this in the wider community.
42. contacting Melbourne City Council and Songlines to see how Council can support and promote Share the Spirit Festival.
43. ceasing to refer to January 26 as Australia Day in all communications, to acknowledge the fact that this date commemorates the British invasion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and is therefore not an appropriate date for an inclusive national celebration.
44. referring to January 26 merely as January 26 until a more appropriate term is adopted nationally to acknowledge the experiences of the people who inhabited the land for more than 60,000 years prior to the raising of the Union Flag on Gadigal country on January 26 in 1788;
45. ceasing to hold Citizenship Ceremonies on January 26;
46. continuing to recognise excellence and service in Yarra's community through Community Awards that are awarded on days other than January 26, which better suit the nature of each award, and not under the banner of Australia Day Awards.
47. supporting the #changethedate campaign in Council publications and social media in the lead up to January 26 to seek a more inclusive day to celebrate national pride.
48. considering ways it can lobby the Federal Government to change the date in line with the resolution passed by National General Assembly of Local Government in June 2017.
49. working to achieve aims expressed in the Victorian State Government's Close the Gap Statement of Intent (2008).
50. remaining a signatory of the:
 - a) Say No to Racism campaign.
51. Maintaining the responsibilities inherent to Australia's role as a signatory to the:
 - a) United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Plan: Priority Areas, Commitments, Context and Actions

For the next four years, Council's work with the Aboriginal community will be guided by four high-level **priority areas**:

- **Priority 1 – Relationships** – supporting community connections, promoting culture and protecting important places.
- **Priority 2 – A Visible Culture** – Increasing the visibility of Aboriginal people, culture, issues and achievements in Yarra.
- **Priority 3 – Community Health and Wellbeing** – Working towards improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Yarra.
- **Priority 4 – Organisational Development** – Increasing Council's capacity, confidence and connection through improved Aboriginal employment pathways, cultural awareness and internal coordination.

Each of these priority areas is underpinned by a number of **commitments**, which are detailed in the following pages, and a **context** description, which tells the story of each priority area and includes direct quotes from the community consultation.

Actions will be written into annual action plans (calendar year), with the 2019 Year One Action Plan being the first.

All priorities, commitments, contexts and actions are cognisant of the Aboriginal community consultation conducted from mid-late 2018, as well as ongoing Council projects, commitments and relationships with the community, and emerging opportunities and constraints within the organisation.

Action Plans will be available on Council's website and in printed hardcopies by request via the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer at the beginning of each year until the end of 2022. Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au, Phone: (03) 9205 5555

Priority 1. Relationships – Supporting community connections, promoting culture and protecting important places.

Commitments

Council will:

- 1.1 Consult the Wurundjeri people on all decisions affecting the Wurundjeri, and consult the broader Aboriginal community on all issues affecting Aboriginal people.
- 1.2 Promote broader understandings of Aboriginal people, history, achievements and challenges in the broader community, so that more people, services and organisations (as well as landlords and employers) are able to understand and support Aboriginal community connection to Yarra.
- 1.3 Continue to advocate for the ongoing protection and vitality of Aboriginal organisations and services in Yarra, as well as important urban meeting places and sites.
- 1.4 Continue to develop a range of positive relationships with the Aboriginal community and support organisations that are also building positive relationships with the Aboriginal community.

Actions

Detailed actions for each of the above commitments can be viewed in annually produced action plans. An updated action plan will be produced for each calendar year of the Plan's four-year lifespan (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022). Action Plans will be available on Council's website and in printed hardcopies by request via the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer at the beginning of each year until the end of 2022. Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au, Phone: (03) 9205 5555.

Context

Council's relationships with the Wurundjeri and broader Aboriginal community are at the heart of Yarra's Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2019-2022. These relationships are both formal and informal.

The Wurundjeri's unique connection to the land and waterways in Yarra extends back tens of thousands of years to the time when their creator spirit, Bunjil, created the land, the people and all living things. Given this enduring and special connection, it is vital that Council continues to develop a stronger relationship with the Wurundjeri people – especially with the Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corporation.

At present, Council engages the Wurundjeri Corporation for cultural, ceremonial, naming and land management issues. Further to this, Council commits to promoting the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Owners, advocating for their projects and concerns, and maintaining regular contact. According to some people who participated in the consultation for this Plan,

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Council is doing a good job of working with the Wurundjeri.

Contact with the Wurundjeri Council is excellent.

We will continue to build this relationship with the Wurundjeri through our Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG), which has been co-chaired by Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Annette Xiberras, since 1999, alongside various Yarra Councillor and Mayoral co-chairs. This group maintains an open and standing invitation to all in the Aboriginal community and provides an avenue for community to have an influence on strategic planning and decision making.

For the last ten years, Council's relationship with the Wurundjeri has been greatly strengthened also, by the employment of Uncle Colin Hunter – the only Wurundjeri Elder to be employed by a local government on Wurundjeri Country (which takes in 38 municipalities and the principality).

Council also deeply values its relationships with the broader Aboriginal community connected to Yarra. The area remains an important place for members of the broader Aboriginal community who live, work and spend time here. The Aboriginal history of Fitzroy maintains a deep resonance with the community. It is perhaps because of the Aboriginal community's pride in and connection to Fitzroy that Yarra has developed such a strong relationship with and commitment to the community. As one consultation participant described Fitzroy:

Fitzroy is the heartland and sacred place to Aboriginal community. It always has been and always will be.

Fitzroy stands along Redfern in its stature as an urban area of special significance. Aboriginal leaders gained influence and important organisations were born in and around the streets of Fitzroy. The area has seen Stolen Generations and estranged families reunited and it has given rise to renowned artists, activists and athletes. The positive impacts that ripple out from this community continue to be felt today. As another consultation participant put it:

Victoria has always been the home of radical Aboriginal politics. We lead the way for the rest of the country. We have always been progressive blacks – strong, proud and radical!

It is perhaps because of the community's courage, strength and pride, exemplified by this comment, that Council has found the courage to stand with the community on issues like January 26.

A number of branches within Council maintain relationships with the Aboriginal community, with the Community Partnerships team offering support when required. Branches such as Arts and Cultural Services, Yarra Libraries, Communications and Strategic Advocacy maintain solid relationships with the local Aboriginal community and deliver work, events and information of a consistently high standard.

Over the last twenty years or so, forces affecting greater Melbourne have continued to exert increasing pressure on community connection to the area. Greater Melbourne's rapidly

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growing population growth continues to push up property prices, and population density, traffic and congestion continue to put a strain on services and infrastructure.

According to the latest population forecasts, the City of Yarra's population will grow from 97,077 in 2018 to 157,607 by 2041. The number of dwellings is forecast to increase from 46,213 in 2018 to 78,327 in 2041.² This growth will have significant implications for service demand and delivery in the area – and will continue to strain Aboriginal community connection to the area.

Need to protect and maintain community connection: Gentrification continues to push people further north and away from Fitzroy.

Honouring, supporting and promoting community connection to Yarra in the face of these challenges is something that was repeatedly mentioned in the consultation for this Plan. It is also an issue that has no simple solution and requires a multi-pronged approach. Maintaining strong relationships will be an important part of this – to ensure we are in tune with community sentiment and ready to act on emerging opportunities.

In the consultation, people were eager to see Aboriginal organisations, spaces and meeting places supported, advocated for and protected. Many people said they wanted to see MAYSAR supported and protected as the last Aboriginal controlled organisation in Gertrude Street. People also wanted to see Charcoal Lane supported as an important Aboriginal youth training facility and social enterprise restaurant.

Secure more funding to employ staff and develop programs at MAYSAR. This place could resemble the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence in Redfern.

Maintain the good things we have: MAYSAR, Charcoal Lane

People wanted to see more Aboriginal spaces created in Yarra.

Buy back the Doug Nicholas Church and give it back to our community as a new Centre for us.

Buy back buildings in Fitzroy for our community to create community organisations in.

Yarra should buy or access deceased estates for the Aboriginal community for safe housing.

As well as advocating for Aboriginal spaces, people were keen to see Aboriginal walking tours run in the municipality, as a way to educate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people about the history of the area and how this history links to current challenges faced by the community.

Have the time to be story tellers about the Wurundjeri people, e.g. at committee meetings tell us about the Wurundjeri Aboriginal Land and Compensation Council, e.g. take the committee on the local Fitzroy

² <https://forecast.id.com.au/yarra/>

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walk, which is good not only for Aboriginal people but educates non-Indigenous people about the rich history of the local area. This will assist non-Indigenous workers to understand the diverse background (of life) for Aboriginal people who lived in the local region and help them to better understand the significance of this area and understand issues such as the stolen generation, trans-generational trauma, being institutionalised, grief associated with loss and highlight matters such as Aboriginal unemployment, lack of housing, limited opportunities for education, family breakdown, loss of lands and cultural practices and drug and alcohol issues, etc.

The last quote points to the simple act of storytelling as means to connect and improve relationships between otherwise disparate or disconnected groups. Storytelling will remain an important part of what we do – and this includes ongoing promotion of local Aboriginal history through a variety of platforms and formats.

Priority 2. A Visible Culture – Increasing the visibility of Aboriginal people, culture, issues and achievements in Yarra.

Commitments

Council will:

- 2.1 Strive to increase the visibility of Aboriginal people, arts, events, significant calendar days, culture, languages, achievements, issues and history in Yarra, and provide opportunities for the broader community to engage and learn.
- 2.2 Continue working towards a celebration of national identity that is more inclusive of Aboriginal peoples as outlined in Council's 'January 26 decision' of 15 August 2017.

Actions

Detailed actions for each of the above commitments can be viewed in annually produced action plans. An updated action plan will be produced for each calendar year of the Plan's four-year lifespan (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022). Action Plans will be available on Council's website and in printed hardcopies by request via the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer at the beginning of each year until the end of 2022. Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au, Phone: (03) 9205 5555.

Context

One of the ways participants in the consultation for this Plan were keen to see the community supported was through increased visibility – of people, activities, events and use of traditional languages. One of the ways we will continue to do this is by promoting and marking significant Aboriginal calendar days and weeks so that they are more visible to the broader community. This visibility is essential to maintaining a connected, supported and active Aboriginal presence in Yarra.

More public visibility. Like the Stolen Generations Marker.

City of Yarra cannot be a monument to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. It is a living history. There is a deep connection to this space that every young person that comes to Charcoal Lane gets when they come to Yarra. Yarra must support MAYSAR and Charcoal Lane to share the rich history of this area with the next generation. Through Charcoal Lane we connect young people to culture through food and experiences. Yarra honours Community well. We are hoping our students can embrace the community of Yarra and feel connected to a progressive municipality.

This increased visibility also needs to be inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people and history.

Torres Strait Islander history to be more visual and present – and Torres Strait Islander people to be invited to everything.

People cited The Stolen Generations Marker, Smith Street Dreaming Festival and the use of

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Woiwurrung language to name *Bargoonga Nganjin* as good examples of Council projects that have succeeded in increasing the Aboriginal community's visibility. It is worth noting that these projects are supported by educational activities and events, and that the combination of the two is important.

I loved the Stolen Generations marker because it encouraged inclusion – and is a welcoming site (for sitting and spending time).

Continue to run Aboriginal Community events that provide an environment where Aboriginal people are comfortable, feel acknowledged and can celebrate, share and express themselves as cultural people.

Council's stand on January 26 also increased pride, connection and visibility in the community – and also increased understanding of important issues relating to the current position of Aboriginal people in our celebrations of national identity.

To do what you did [re January 26], to stand against it, was really great. It's really great to have it finally recognised.

Not celebrating 26th Jan. You recognise the contribution Aboriginal Community has played in shaping the municipality and you celebrate it.

Council will continue to mark January 26 in line with our 15 August 2017 resolution and advocate for Aboriginal people, places, culture, achievements and experiences to hold pride of place in our local and national identity and any celebrations relating to identity.

Priority 3. Community Health and Wellbeing – Working towards improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Yarra.

Commitments

Council will:

- 3.1 Support vulnerable Aboriginal community members.
- 3.2 Advocate for Aboriginal people on issues in which they are experiencing poor outcomes.
- 3.3 Fight racism and advocate for broader understandings of Aboriginal community experiences, issues and stories in line with Council's 'January 26 decision' 15 August 2017.

Actions

Detailed actions for each of the above commitments can be viewed in annually produced action plans. An updated action plan will be produced for each calendar year of the Plan's four-year lifespan (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022). Action Plans will be available on Council's website and in printed hardcopies by request via the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer at the beginning of each year until the end of 2022. Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au, Phone: (03) 9205 5555

Context

Aboriginal people in Yarra, like Aboriginal people all around the country, continue to experience disadvantage in almost every measure of health and wellbeing. Aboriginal people are more likely to be imprisoned, to experience racism, to have housing issues or be homeless, to live shorter lives, to experience more grief, mental health and substance abuse issues. As one consultation participant put it:

No council has really taken the steps towards addressing the issues that have long plagued our communities and enforced change within council.

This is not an Aboriginal community issue but a whole of country issue – and working towards mending Aboriginal disadvantage is a shared national responsibility.

As a Local Government, some of the ways that Yarra can work towards improving this situation is by building relationships and networks to support vulnerable people, identifying opportunities and pushing for improvements.

Participants in our community consultation were very clear on areas we should focus on. Homelessness, housing, youth, justice and incarceration were all issues that participants repeatedly mentioned.

People were keen to see Aboriginal youth supported.

More work needed with early intervention and youth services. There is very little work being done to support Aboriginal families to avoid having children being put into out of home care.

Provide more opportunities for young kids to have a chance, to get the experience so they can get jobs. Something like Charcoal Lane.

Lots of talented kids out there but no chance to showcase talents – give them possibilities, show them people care (SNAICC rep would partner).

As part of our commitment to increasing Aboriginal employment, we will ensure that there is a youth focus built into our Aboriginal employment model. We will also explore ways in which we can provide other developmental or experiential opportunities that might lead to work opportunities. Council will also continue to build and explore relationships with organisations and services working with youth to see how we can build upon our existing commitments.

Consultation participants also raised the high rate of imprisonment as an urgent issue – the need for preventative measures as well as support and healing measures to be taken.

Need to have rehabilitation programs for those out of prison, to help with connection and employment opportunities.

Council will continue to develop relationships and knowledge about preventative programs, support services and healing programs through YASN, Billabong BBQ and informal networks. We will also work to support vulnerable people in and around Richmond, including people who inject drugs.

Housing and homelessness were also big issues raised in the consultation.

Support Council's homelessness worker with more funding and resources to address homelessness.

More effort to support vulnerable people and to address homelessness, substances abuse issues

Accessibility for our community to rent in Fitzroy and our community to buy housing in the areas.

Supporting Aboriginal people to access housing in Yarra is an increasingly challenging issue. Advocacy is our best tool. All advocacy work will be performed in consultation and with guidance from the Aboriginal community. Council will only act on an issue concerning Aboriginal community with permission and/or guidance from Aboriginal community. We will also build relationships with organisations and services who are working on Aboriginal housing and homelessness issues.

In the wake of Yarra's January 26 decision, we received both positive and negative feedback. The positive feedback was often heartfelt, appreciative and supportive. The negative feedback was frequently angry, irrational and racist. As a signatory the *UNESCO Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific*; the *Say No to Racism* campaign and the responsibilities inherent to Australia's role as a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, it is vital that Council acts to stamp out racism and its well-known impacts on communities and their wellbeing.

In places where there is racism and hatred we must advocate for understanding, compassion and connectedness. We can especially do this through our positive promotion of Aboriginal people, histories and experiences in our day-to-day communications and social media. Also by making information available to Yarra's CALD communities and through other recommendations adopted as part of Council's 'January 26 decision'.

Participants in the consultation were extremely happy with Council's 'January 26 decision' and were keen to see more leadership in this space.

 Cancelling Invasion Day was a good idea.

 Bringing in other councils (on January 26) is where I'd like Yarra to go – advocate for a minimum of flags at half-mast. Put steps to do this in the Plan. Let's bring it on!

 I'd like Council to bring in an action to spread through the metropolitan area – and eventually the country.

Council will continue its commitments to January 26 in line with the Council resolution of 15 August 2017.

Council will also continue to engage and support vulnerable people. Council currently has a number of successful ongoing models for this. Billabong BBQ provides a weekly support mechanism for the Parkies and other vulnerable community members. Council also provides funding for an outreach officer, who engages community members on a number of cultural and well-being focused activities. We will continue to convene the Yarra Aboriginal Support Network (YASN) – a monthly meeting of service providers, agency representatives and community members, held to co-ordinate services to the Parkies and respond to emerging issues. And council continues to support Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation (MAYSAR) as an Aboriginal controlled space that supports the broader Aboriginal community and vulnerable Aboriginal community members.

Priority 4. Organisational Development – Increasing Council’s capacity, confidence and connection through improved Aboriginal employment pathways, cultural awareness and internal coordination.

Commitments

Council will:

- 4.1 Improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal people at Council and in the broader community.
- 4.2 Build organisational capacity, confidence and cultural awareness to better serve the Aboriginal community.
- 4.3 Maintain clear, transparent and accountable processes in implementing and tracking commitments detailed in this plan and annual action plans.

Actions

Detailed actions for each of the above commitments can be viewed in annually produced action plans. An updated action plan will be produced for each calendar year of the Plan’s four-year lifespan (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022). Action Plans will be available on Council’s website and in printed hardcopies by request via the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer at the beginning of each year until the end of 2022. Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au, Phone: (03) 9205 5555.

Context

Council first recognised the need to develop its internal capacity for working with the local Aboriginal community in 2010. Until that point, we had relied almost exclusively on the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan Officer, to facilitate all engagement with the Aboriginal community – a big job!

In 2011, Council formed its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group – a dedicated group of staff members who would meet monthly to identify needs and opportunities, to collaborate and co-ordinate, and to think about how we can improve the ways in which we work with the Aboriginal community. Slowly but surely, this group has helped to develop the organisation’s capacity, leading to improved relationships between the Aboriginal community and many parts of Council.

You’re not just talking reconciliation. You’re doing it. You turned it from a noun to a verb.

One ongoing issue for improvement, however, which was repeatedly mentioned in the community consultation, was the need for more Aboriginal employment opportunities at Council and in the broader community.

Problems with Aboriginal employment, not enough Aboriginal people employed at Council. The work

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place needs to be an Aboriginal friendly environment. Don't wait until Aboriginal people are job ready, get them job ready while doing a work placement.

As part of implementation of our Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2015–2018, Council made efforts to increase Aboriginal employment but the model proved ineffective and yielded limited results. What we must now do is learn from the past and try some new approaches.

We will continue to employ an Aboriginal person as the Aboriginal Partnerships Officer and continue to seek guidance on our processes.

We will also:

- Apply internally for funding for two new dedicated part time positions for Aboriginal people,
- Review Council's employment diversity policy.
- Continue to develop culturally appropriate and flexible recruitment and selection processes.
- Continue to work towards flexible working arrangements (in line with the EBA).
- Promote and seek opportunities to broker Aboriginal employment opportunities in the broader community.

At the commencement of this Plan, Council's RAP group is stronger than ever, counting 20 staff members from across Council in its membership, including an Executive Sponsor and representation from all five Council divisions. The RAP working group allows staff to network, support each other, learn, collaborate, build confidence and identify issues.

Ensure all employees across the Shire were continually educated, audited, accredited in cultural safety; capacity building particularly around employment where every non-Aboriginal employee worked in a co-mentor partnership with Aboriginal people; address the structural arrangements that privilege whiteness to reflect cultural sovereignty.

Council acknowledges that up to a third of the work undertaken with the Aboriginal community is responsive in nature. It is a vital part of our work with a dynamic community. Having the RAP group allows Council to be more agile and responsive to emerging issues.

Another mechanism that ensures agility and responsiveness is the creation of annual action plans for each year of the four-year Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2019-2022. This is underpinned by ongoing consultation (formal and informal), progress reporting and constant evaluation.

I like that there is much more visibility of community and programs or initiatives in such a progressive electorate than others.

Provides opportunities for community to participate in decision making processes. Transparent processes/consultations.

Writing annual action plans ensures that Council projects remain aligned with emerging

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community issues. Actions for each year will be drawn from Council's ongoing relationships with the Aboriginal community, direct suggestions from Aboriginal community members and Council officer knowledge of local, state and federal level issues. Each Action Plan will be developed and implemented in consultation with the Yarra Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG). The Aboriginal Partnerships Officer is responsible for reporting to Council on the implementation of each Action Plan.

I have only just returned to live back in Melbourne however I have attended the Stolen Gen's marker launch this year and attended yesterday's community engagement forum. What is noticeable is Yarra's transparency and open willingness to do well in this space and to be supported by council. The forum also included many Aboriginal people with a good mix of council staff. It also seems as though Yarra have ensured there are Aboriginal voices at the decision making table. Thanks

We thank everyone who helped to shape this Plan by sharing their thoughts, ideas, knowledge and feedback.

Appendices

Census Information: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Yarra

IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE FOLLOWING CENSUS DATA: Because of the small number of people in Yarra who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Census, findings need to be interpreted with caution, particularly when broken down further.

This increase does not necessarily represent an actual increase in numbers but potentially more people choosing to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Census, or perhaps more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people completing the Census in 2016 than previous years. At a national level, a significant increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was seen between the 2011 and 2016 Censuses and which is explored here in a [publication](#) by the ABS.

It is worth noting too that the quantitative data regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Yarra is somewhat at odds with the qualitative data conveyed to us by those who participated in the community consultation.

Key facts

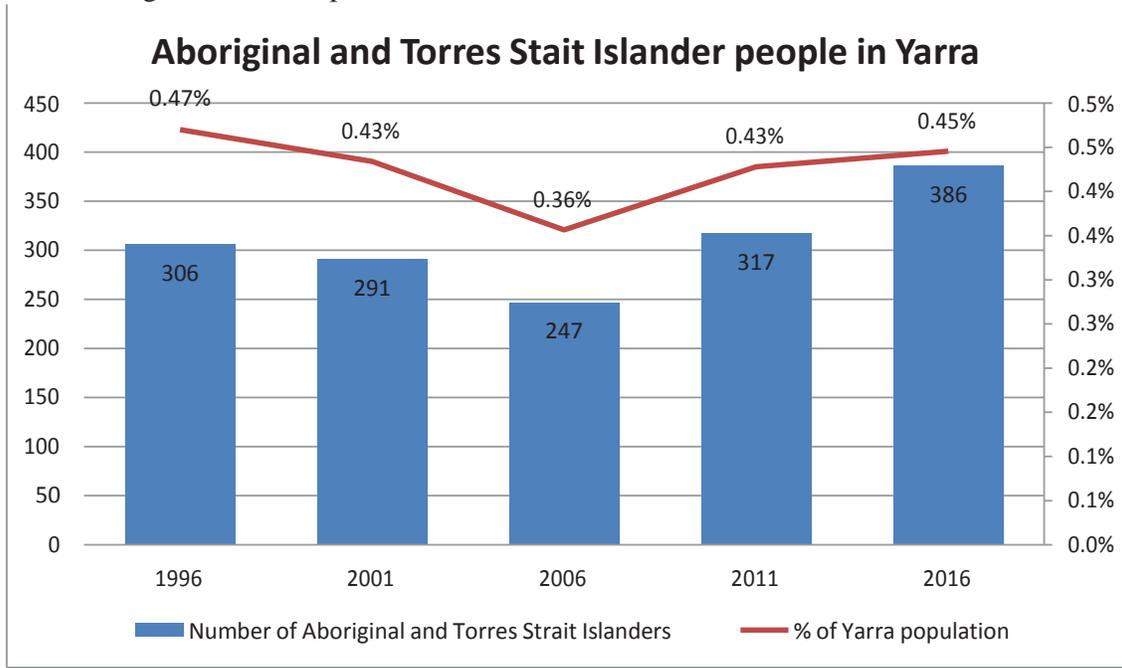
- 386 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in Yarra (as per 2016 Census)
- Highest number recorded in 20 years
- 1 in 4 live in social housing
- Lower labour force participation rate than general population
- 36% earn less than \$500 per week

Census results

In the 2016 ABS Census 386 people in Yarra identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander³. This is the highest number recorded over a 20 year period⁴.

³ Because of the small number of people in Yarra who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Census, findings need to be interpreted with caution, particularly when broken down further.

⁴ This increase does not necessarily represent an actual increase in numbers but potentially more people choosing to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Census, or perhaps more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people completing the Census in 2016 than previous years. At a national level a significant increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was seen between the 2011 and 2016 Censuses.



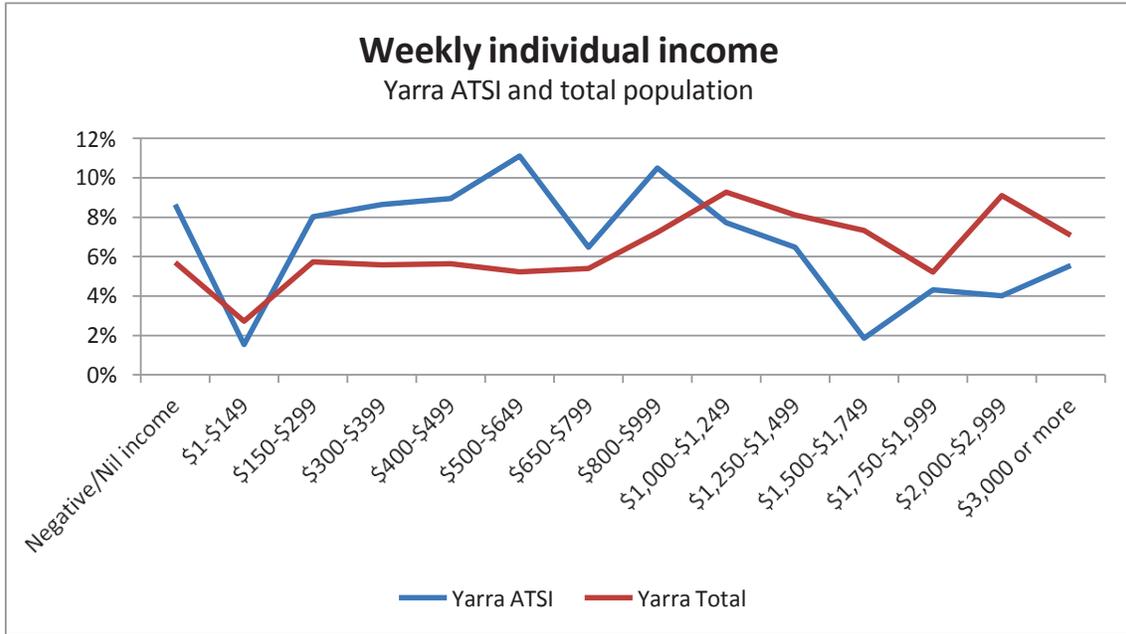
There were slightly more males than females (52% to 48% respectively) in 2016. The majority of those who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander were Aboriginal (356), with far smaller numbers identifying as either Torres Strait Islander (20) or both (10).

Based on the 2016 Census results, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were twice as likely to have a disability as the Yarra population as a whole (7% as compared to 3.5%).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Yarra had a labour force participation rate of 64% (as compared to 70% for Yarra on average).

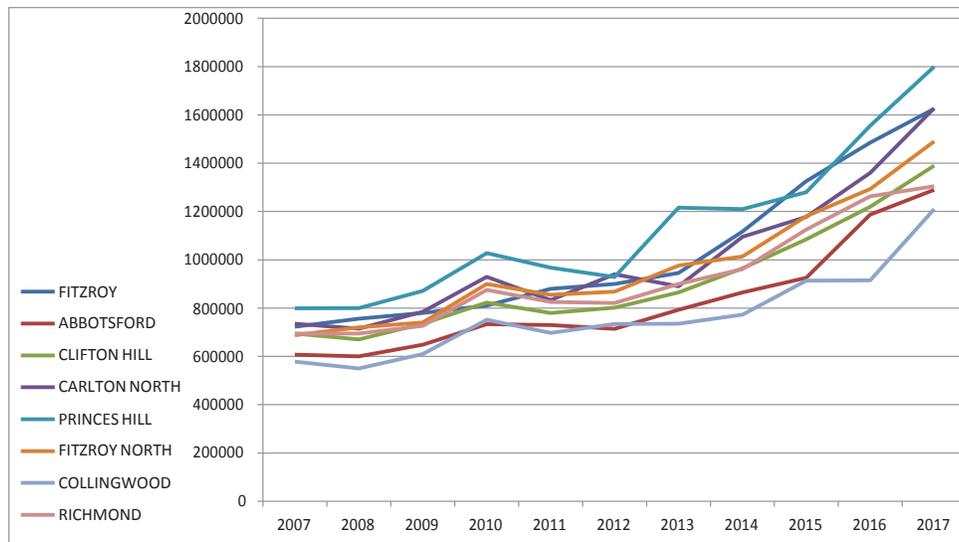
	ATSI population		Yarra Total
	n	%	%
Employed	196	94.2%	94.7%
Unemployed	12	5.8%	5.3%
Total labour force	208	100%	100%
Total labour force	208	64%	70%
Not in the labour force	105	32%	21.1%
Not stated	9	3%	9.2%
TOTAL PERSONS AGED 15+ YEARS	324	100%	100%

36% of those living in Yarra who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the latest Census earned less than \$500 dollars per week (total personal income). The comparison for Yarra broadly is 25%. The graph below shows the income bracket distribution for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Yarra as compared to the whole

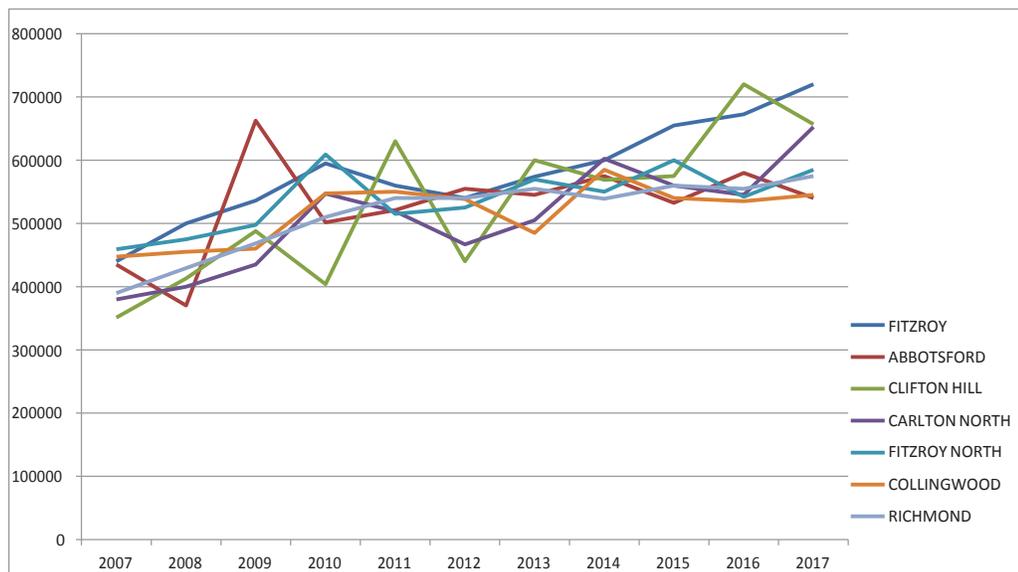


According to the latest Census, more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in social housing (24%) than own their home (23%). By contrast, across Yarra four times as many own a home (39%) as compared to living in social housing (9%).

Median House Prices in Yarra (2017)



Median Unit Prices in Yarra (2017)



Yarra Population and Household Forecasts

New population and household forecasts have been prepared for the City of Yarra, showing significant population growth for the municipality in the next 20+ years.

In Yarra, new dwellings are the major driver of population growth and overseas migration is one of the most important contributors of population change. Between 2018 and 2041, Yarra is expected to grow by over 60,500 people to a population of 157,600. The number of dwellings is forecast to increase from 46,213 in 2018 to 78,327 in 2041 (an increase of more than 32,000 dwellings).

Population growth will be largely driven by inflows of younger persons attracted to higher density housing, cultural amenities and employment. This means that the current age structure of Yarra is expected to remain, with continued high proportions of lone persons and couples without children in the 20-39 age range. It is important to note that significant numbers of children and older persons are also forecast, with greater implications for service demand and delivery in the area.