

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

LODDON ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2019-2022



LODDON
SHIRE

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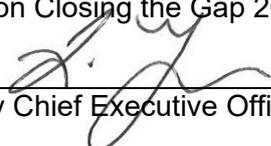
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Council Plan 2017-21
Council Plan 2021-25
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 - 1 January 2008
Equal Opportunity Act 2010
Local Government Act 2020
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010
Recognition and Settlement Agreement between Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the State of Victoria (Schedule 6: Local Government Engagement Strategy)
Korin Koin Balit Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-27
Racial and Religious Tolerance Amendment Bill 2019
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This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for Council to advance reconciliation activities across three themes: Opportunities, Relationships and Respect. It will provide opportunities to:

- raise awareness of reconciliation
- develop knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Loddon municipality.

It aims to be achievable and to provide a platform for ongoing reconciliation efforts.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

To support delivery of this initial Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan a budget provision of \$7,500 is required over two years.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

In acknowledging the sensitivity and complexities surrounding reconciliation and the historical treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by government agencies, Council will commit to reconciliation through implementation of the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan.

Should Council not fulfil the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan, the following risks are present:

- breach of Schedule 6 of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the Dja Dja Wurrung, of which Council is a party to
- the local and wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community may lose confidence in Council's commitment towards reconciliation
- compromise existing and future relationships with the traditional owners and our stakeholders
- reluctance by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to support Council in service delivery, local initiatives and future strategies
- community perception – questioning Council's commitment to reconciliation.

4 RECONCILIATION CONTEXT

4.1 What is reconciliation?

Reconciliation aims for all Australians to work together to address the underlying causes of division and inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-indigenous people. Reconciliation takes a holistic approach that encompasses rights, as well as so-called symbolic and practical actions. Through actions, it seeks to drive beneficial outcomes for everyone through a focus on the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-indigenous Australia. Reconciliation aims to reduce prejudice, discrimination and racism. In this context, it also seeks to recognise the rich history, cultures and rights of Aboriginal people in Australia.

4.2 Context of reconciliation and the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan

Council has demonstrated its commitment to reconciliation in its Council Plan 2017-2021 with its intention "to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan at the Reflect level". While it is still Council's

intention to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, after consultation with the Aboriginal community it was agreed that Council should develop a Community Partnership Plan, to focus on a plan that is achievable within the limited resources available.

In November 2017, Council adopted a “Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Policy”. The purpose of this was to set out the guiding principles in observing appropriate protocols when acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land at Council civic functions and business activities, and in Council publications.

Further to this, Council has been working to achieve beneficial outcomes for our local Aboriginal community, through the following:

- promotion of indigenous eco tours in Boort
- commitment to and undertaking Cultural Heritage Management Plans
- working with Dja Dja Wurrung to develop the canoe trail and promotional materials on the Loddon River and Serpentine Creek
- work on the Boort scar tree project as part of the Lake Boort Management Plan in conjunction with Parks Victoria
- flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag during NAIDOC and reconciliation weeks
- accessing Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises, trading as Djandak.

Council acknowledges it cannot achieve many reconciliation actions on its own, and accordingly has worked with the community and community service organisations to identify mutual joint projects.

4.3 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Loddon Shire

The traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans are the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people.

Dja Dja Wurrung territory traverses Central Victoria. Within Loddon Shire it extends from Boort in the north of the Shire, through to the east beyond Dingee, in the south at Bridgewater, Newbridge and Tarnagulla, and to the west of Wedderburn.

Barapa Barapa people have resided over extensive country, particularly in the southern parts of New South Wales and northern Victoria. Within Loddon Shire, the Barapa Barapa area includes part of the Boort area and all of Pyramid Hill in the north east of the Shire.

The 2016 Census data indicates that the Loddon Shire is home to 118 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is an increase of 14 people from the 2011 census. This equates to 1.6% of our overall population, which is double the Victorian average of 0.8%.

The medium age of Aboriginal people in Loddon Shire at the 2016 Census was 30 years as opposed to medium age of non-aboriginal people of 51 years¹.

According to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Department of Premier and Cabinet the Loddon municipality “has 1067 registered cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal cultural place, Aboriginal historical places, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, rock art, scarred tree, a shell midden and stone features.”²

¹ https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA23940

² <http://www.maggolee.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LGA-Profile-Final-Loddon.pdf>

4.4 Council's position

As a local government authority, Council is ideally placed to provide leadership on reconciliation as it builds relationships and delivers services at a local community level. Council's role and responsibility is across two implementation approaches, firstly by a whole Council approach and secondly as a whole community approach.

A whole community approach is needed to work together in partnership with traditional custodians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, non-indigenous residents of the shire and community partner organisations.

The Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan demonstrates Council's support for activities that will assist in bringing about positive change in the lives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

5 METHODOLOGY

This plan was developed after a thorough community engagement process, consultation with traditional owners of Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, community members, community services organisations and Loddon Shire Councillors and staff.

The process included:

- meetings with Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa
- surveying the community
- hosting of three community workshops
- roundtable discussion with Loddon community service providers
- forum with Loddon Shire Councillors
- workshop with Loddon Shire staff
- informal meetings with community members and organisations.

The plan was subsequently drafted and provided to the traditional custodians Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Clans, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders residents, interested non-Aboriginal residents, community service organisations and Council for comment and feedback.

6 LODDON ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Loddon Shire Council is committed to promoting reconciliation through respect, relationship building and promotion of opportunities with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encouraging our partners and the community to do the same.

This plan includes three themes:

- Respect
- Relationships
- Opportunities

The following tables detail activities over the two years of the action plan.

6.1 Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their culture, history, and experience, is fundamental to gaining a deeper cross-cultural understanding and developing equal and healthy relationships.

| Action | | Responsible Council Officer | Partners |
|--------|--|---|--|
| 1 | Council to develop and adopt a statement of commitment with our partner organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Shire | Director Community Wellbeing | Northern District Community Health (NDCH) Inglewood and Districts Health Service (IDHS) Boort District Health (BDH) |
| 2 | Conduct an audit on Aboriginal cultural inclusive practices | Director Community Wellbeing | Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC) |
| 3 | That the Aboriginal flag be flown at the Wedderburn and Serpentine Offices for the duration of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week | Manager Information and Business Transformation | Customer Service Team |
| 4 | Seek funding to undertake a project with traditional custodians and people with indigenous history to document local histories and the importance of country to Aboriginal people | Director Community Wellbeing | Marketing and Tourism Officer Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation Barapa Barapa Local people with knowledge of indigenous history |
| 5 | Develop guidelines and understanding of Aboriginal protocols to share with the community | Policy and Strategy Officer | Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa |
| 6 | Allocate \$1000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups or event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage a Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events | Manager Community Support | |
| 7 | In line with the Naming Rules for Place Names in Victoria consider traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names for new local roads, bridges and public spaces in relevant council areas in consultation with the Corporation | Director Operations | Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa |
| 8 | Include the traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names of towns and places with non-Aboriginal names, or Aboriginal meaning of place names with Aboriginal names on new township | Director Operations | Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa |

| Action | | Responsible Council Officer | Partners |
|--------|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | entry signage when renewed from time to time (subject to approval by VicRoads) | | |
| 9 | A review of the current Welcome to and Acknowledgment of Country Policy to be undertaken to include reference to the traditional custodians by name | Director Community Wellbeing | Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa |

6.2 Relationships

Meaningful relationship enable the Shire and its community to understand the experience, interests and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and work together for the wellbeing of our community.

| Action | | Responsible Council Officer | Partners |
|--------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 10 | Facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island residents, groups and organisations for Council and the community | Council's executive and leadership team | BDAC NDCH IDHS BDH |
| 11 | Assist community to establish a community reconciliation action group led by residents | Director Community Wellbeing | Interested community members |
| 12 | Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week | Director Community Wellbeing | |
| 13 | Raise awareness of this Loddon Aboriginal Partnership Plan within and externally to Council | Director Community Wellbeing | Council's Communications Officer |
| 14 | Training for Council staff (and offered to Councillors) in order to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people | Director Corporate Services | Manager of Organisational Development |
| 15 | Seek funding to offer cultural awareness training sessions to local community leaders to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people | Director Community Wellbeing | Interested community leaders |

6.3 Opportunities

Providing opportunities that foster wellbeing through social inclusion, employment, civic participation, and cultural expression.

| Action | | Responsible Council Officer | Partners |
|--------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 16 | Develop a joint procurement strategy with other councils to engage Aboriginal companies for contracts | Director Corporate Services | Manager Financial Services City of Greater Bendigo Mt Alexander Shire Council |
| 17 | Work closely with and engage Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises) to provide services to Council in line with Councils Procurement practices and strategies and where possible partner organisations | Director Operations | |
| 18 | Through the Loddon Youth Council implement a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Islander youth leadership and to routinely discuss and advocate for promotion of reconciliation | Manager Community Support | |
| 19 | Council staff to work with local kindergartens to include the integration of programs and activities for children that promote reconciliation into the offered curriculum. | Manager Community Wellbeing | Children and Youth Coordinator Loddon Shire cluster kindergartens |

6.4 Progress tracking and reporting

Council will continually evaluate progress and record initiatives of this partnership plan.

| Activity | | Responsible Council Officer | Partners |
|----------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 20 | Monitor the partnership plan annually | Director Community Wellbeing | Council staff |
| 21 | Engage the Community Reconciliation Action Group through discussions to ensure actions and activities are recorded and have achieved intended outcomes | Director Community Wellbeing | Community Reconciliation Action Group |
| 22 | Review the partnership plan following the initial two year implementation. Based on this review, update and proceed to next plan | Director Community Wellbeing | All community partners including Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Interested community members Councillors and Council staff |

7 COSTING AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS

Where an action has not been identified below, it is considered that it can be completed within existing Council resources.

| Action | Cost of project | Total expected funding | Net cost to Council | Proposed funding source | Completion timeframe |
|---|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Conduct an audit on Aboriginal cultural inclusive practices | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$2,000 | Council | June 2020 |
| That the Aboriginal flag be flown at the Wedderburn and Serpentine Offices for the duration of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$2,000 | Council | December 2019 |
| Work with traditional custodians and people with indigenous history to document local histories and the importance of country to Aboriginal people | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$0 | External | December 2020 |
| Allocate \$1,000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups and event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage an Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events | \$1,000 | \$0 | \$1,000 (annually) | Council | March 2020 (annually) |
| Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$0 | National Reconciliation Funding | May 2020 and July 2020 (annually) |
| Staff training program | \$1,500 | \$0 | \$1,500 | Council | June 2020 |

ACTION PLAN 2022

PURPOSE

This Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan 2019-2021 has now reached the end of its term. Due to a number of factors, including disruptions and service redirections resulting from lockdowns, Council has decided to extend this Plan to the end of 2022.

Annual Action Plans have been developed to guide Council staff on what needs to be done to achieve each strategy of the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan and ensure it is implemented efficiently and effectively. Progress against previous years' Action Plans were assessed and feasibility for delivery in 2022 determined in consultation with staff at departmental level. This Action Plan includes priority actions from the previous Action Plans that have not yet been completed. There are 12 items outlined within this Action Plan which Council will endeavour to deliver in 2022. There are also two progress and tracking items to ensure continual evaluation and monitoring of this Plan.

This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan 2019-2021.

ACTION PLAN

Priority area: Respect

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their culture, history, and experience, is fundamental to gaining a deeper cross-cultural understanding and | Investigate available, relevant guidelines and other resources in understanding Aboriginal protocols, to share with the community. | Director Community Wellbeing | Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities |
| | Allocate \$1000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups or event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage a Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events. Promote opportunity via social media. | Manager Community Support | Media Officer |

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| developing equal and healthy relationships. | Implement the new Welcome to and Acknowledgment of Country Policy, to include reference to Traditional Owners by name. | Director Community Wellbeing | Loddon Leaders |
| | In line with the Naming Rules for Place Names in Victoria consider traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names for new local roads, bridges and public spaces in relevant council areas in consultation with the Corporation. | Director Operations | Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities |
| | Include the traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names of towns and places with non-Aboriginal names, or Aboriginal meaning of place names with Aboriginal names on new township entry signage when renewed from time to time (subject to approval by VicRoads). | Director Operations | Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities |

Priority area: Relationships

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---|--|---|---|
| Meaningful relationships enable the Shire and its community to understand the experience, interests and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and work together for the wellbeing of our community. | Facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, groups and organisations for Council and the community. | Council's Executive and Leadership team | Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities BDAC NDCH IDHS BDHS |
| | Investigate current community reconciliation groups led by residents within the region and/or state, with a view to assess feasibility of establishing a group specific to the Loddon Shire. | Director Community Wellbeing | |

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. | Director Community Wellbeing | Manager Organisation Development |
| | Raise awareness of this Loddon Aboriginal Partnership Plan within and externally to Council. | Director Community Wellbeing | Loddon Leaders Media Officer |
| | Continue to provide training for Council staff, in order to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. | Director Corporate Services | Manager Organisation Development |

Priority area: Opportunities

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---|---|---|--|
| Providing opportunities that foster wellbeing through social inclusion, employment, civic participation, and cultural expression. | Work with consultant and other partner councils to meet objectives of the Aboriginal Business Capability Building Initiative, to increase the level of procurement of goods, services and works from Aboriginal businesses. | Director Corporate Services | Manager Financial Services Aboriginal Business Capability Building Initiative partner councils |
| | Implement the new Child Safe Standards 2022, standard number 1: <i>Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.</i> | Manager Community Wellbeing Manager Organisation Development | Child and Youth Coordinator Loddon Shire cluster kindergartens Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities |

Progress tracking and reporting

| Outcome | Action | Responsible | Partners |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Council will continually evaluate progress and record initiatives of this partnership plan. | Continue to monitor the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan in preparation for the development of the new Plan. | Director Community Wellbeing | All responsible Council staff |
| | <p>Engage a consultant to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, Council staff and key stakeholders to begin the development the new Plan.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan forms part of the Access, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy – due for development in 2022/23.</p> | Director Community Wellbeing | <p>Relevant Council staff</p> <p>Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities</p> <p>BDAC</p> <p>NDCH</p> <p>IDHS</p> <p>BDHS</p> |