

Report to the Future Melbourne (People City) Committee

Agenda item 6.2

Aboriginal Heritage Action Plan 2015–18

9 June 2015

Presenter: Ian Hicks, Manager Community Strengthening

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Future Melbourne Committee's endorsement of the Aboriginal Heritage Action Plan 2015–18 (AHAP).
2. Endorsed by Council in 2012, the first Indigenous Heritage Action Plan (IHAP) 2012–15 established an approach to the protection, maintenance and recognition of sites that are culturally important to Victoria's Aboriginal communities within or connected to the City of Melbourne, and which were identified in the Indigenous Heritage Study of 2010.
3. The AHAP will be the second such plan and reaffirms our *Statement of Commitment* to First Nations People by detailing a range of council-wide actions to build on the systems and processes established by the IHAP 2012–15.

Key issues

4. The IHAP 2012–15 instigated a number of important Council initiatives including the updating of Council's GIS portal with sites of Aboriginal heritage significance, facilitating upgrades to some significant artefacts in the City and the establishing the process for the Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheenner installation.
5. The AHAP aims to build upon the work to date and implement processes and systems that protect and celebrate aboriginal heritage through the concept of Aboriginal Melbourne.
6. This action plan focuses on three key themes:
 - 6.1. CONSERVATION: developing a stronger understanding of the significance, extent and condition of Aboriginal heritage places across the municipality, ensuring they are appropriately managed and maintained.
 - 6.2. CELEBRATION: of Melbourne as a place where people who live, work or visit can easily recognise, experience, understand and celebrate Melbourne as a place that was, is, and continues to be a significant place for Aboriginal people.
 - 6.3. COLLABORATION: working with key stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal Melbourne is conserved and celebrated by all.
7. The AHAP seeks to develop an enhanced community engagement and celebration of Aboriginal Melbourne through the digital environment, physical realm and in collaboration with the people of the city. The AHAP is intended to build the capacity of our volunteers and community in a way that informs and engages others in the story of Aboriginal Melbourne
8. The AHAP continues to facilitate the interpretation of Aboriginal heritage in various forms across the City and one of the key initiatives to achieve this is the proposed development of the 'Aboriginal Melbourne' website.

Recommendation from management

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the Aboriginal Heritage Action Plan 2015–18 and authorises the Director Community Development to make any further minor editorial changes.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. Draft Action Plan 2015-18

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. There are no 2015–16 budget implications resulting from this recommendation. The majority of actions outlined in the AHAP will be resourced from within the operational budgets of responsible branches. Future budget bids will be made in the relevant financial years for any initiatives requiring further resources, as identified during implementation of the action plan.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Stakeholder consultation

4. A workshop was held with key Aboriginal stakeholders, organisations and Traditional Owners on 30 March, 2015, to reflect on the status and achievements of the IHAP 2012-15 and seek feedback on any issues, ideas or actions that could be undertaken as part of the AHAP. This was followed by individual meetings with each of the relevant Traditional Owner groups.
5. The draft AHAP was then circulated to the key stakeholders, followed by a second workshop on the 13 May 2015 to review the draft AHAP and arrive at the final version attached to this report.
6. Key stakeholders engaged have included: Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Heritage Victoria, Ian Travers (Context consultants), Clare Land (Researcher), Meyer Eidelson (Melbourne Walks), Boon Wurrung Foundation, Wurundjeri Council, National Trust (Victoria), Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, Koorie Heritage Trust, Native Title Services Victoria.

Relation to Council policy

7. Council Plan 2013–17, Goal 2: A creative city '*Melbourne will be a place that inspires experimentation, innovation and creativity and fosters leaders of ideas and courage. It will build upon long-standing heritage and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture*'.
8. This report also responds to the Council Plan Year 2 Action to 'develop the Indigenous Heritage Action Plan 2015-18'.

Environmental sustainability

9. In implementing the AHAP, environmental sustainability issues and opportunities will be considered on a project by project basis.

CITY OF MELBOURNE

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE ACTION PLAN 2015-2018

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MESSAGE FROM THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land. For the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri), Boonwurrung, Taungurong, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wathaurung groups who form the Kulin Nation, Melbourne has always been an important meeting place for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

Today we are proud to say that Melbourne is a significant gathering place for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE

The landscape surrounding the place where the Birrarung (the Yarra River) runs into the Nerm (Port Phillip Bay) is Kulin country; a place now known as Melbourne; a place that Aboriginal people, particularly those of the Kulin Nation, have lived on, cared for, gathered on and undertaken cultural rituals on for at least 30,000 years. This connection to country has continued since the arrival of Europeans in a variety of traditional and contemporary ways. While there are many stories and places in Melbourne that contain evidence of this connection to country, this is not always something that is apparent to people who live, work or visit Melbourne.

Where once the Kulin Nation used local trees for the creation of canoes and shields, their presence is still felt through the scarred trees that stand proudly in Fitzroy Gardens and Yarra Park.

Where once the people of the Kulin Nation gathered on the banks of the Birrarung, its importance is honoured and shared with everyone in Melbourne at Birrarung Marr.

Where once the Kulin Nation gathered for ceremonies, political and social gatherings on the land now known as the Melbourne Cricket Ground, we see their descendants, and the descendants of many other Australians, playing a game whose origins come from the Aboriginal game Marngrook.

This place we call Melbourne is Kulin country, Aboriginal country – Aboriginal Melbourne.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Acknowledgement and Recognition

The City of Melbourne acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were the first people of this land and have strived to retain their culture and identity through the period of non-Indigenous settlement for more than two centuries.

The City of Melbourne acknowledges and respects the customs and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their special relationship with the land, waterways and sea.

The City of Melbourne acknowledges the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own values and customs, subject to Australian law.

The City of Melbourne recognises the valuable contribution to Victoria made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and will work towards a future of mutual respect and harmony.

The City of Melbourne recognises the value of the diversity and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the heritage of all Australians.

The City of Melbourne recognises that family life is the core of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community life and that these family relationships, links and customs involve particular sets of social and cultural obligations.

The City of Melbourne advocates in conjunction with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community:

- The ideal of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to redress their serious social and economic disadvantage
- Working together for a treaty or other instrument of reconciliation
- A commitment to the elimination of racism or discrimination ensuring the right of all our community to enjoy equal rights and be treated with equal respect
- Recognition and protection of and respect for Aboriginal sacred sites and special places
- Education of the broader community about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture and the impact upon it of non-Indigenous settlement of this country
- Advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of our community to ensure the principles and commitments of this statement are upheld.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to bring together relevant stakeholders to work together to ensure that the Aboriginal cultural heritage of Melbourne is appropriately recognised, conserved and celebrated by all.

This Action Plan builds on the achievements of the previous City of Melbourne Indigenous Heritage Action Plan 2012-2015, and focuses actions into three key themes:

- **CONSERVATION:** The City of Melbourne has a strong understanding of the nature, significance, extent and condition of Aboriginal heritage places across the municipality, and ensures they are appropriately managed and maintained.
- **CELEBRATION:** The City of Melbourne is a place where people who live, work or visit can easily recognise, experience, understand and celebrate Melbourne as a place that was, is, and continues to be, an Aboriginal place.
- **COLLABORATION:** The City of Melbourne works with key stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal heritage is conserved and celebrated by all.

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1. CONSERVATION

The City of Melbourne has a strong understanding of the nature, significance, extent and condition of Aboriginal heritage places across the municipality, and ensures they are appropriately managed and maintained.

ACTIONS	MEASURABLE	PARTNER	TIME FRAME
1.1 Compile all existing knowledge regarding Aboriginal heritage places across the municipality and ensure coordination with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.	1.1.1 Integration of Aboriginal Heritage GIS-linked, online and interactive database into CoM systems.	Context Officer of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV)	Year 1
	1.1.2 Updates made to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.	Internal partners	Annually
	1.1.3 Updates made to areas of cultural heritage sensitivity mapping.	Internal partners	Annually
1.2 Use multiple methods for capturing information about previously unrecorded or unknown sites, including voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP), community consultation, oral histories, and community forums.	1.2.1 Voluntary CHMPs undertaken on all "high impact" CoM building development projects, as defined by the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007</i>	Internal partners	Ongoing
	1.2.2 Advice provided to developers encouraging Voluntary CHMPs for all "high impact" building development projects as defined by the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007</i> .	Developers Traditional Owner Groups OAAV	Ongoing
	1.2.3 New sites added to the GIS database from information obtained in CHMPs	Internal partners OAAV	Ongoing
	1.2.4 Different Aboriginal cultural heritage types recorded (e.g. oral, archaeological, historical, social, political, contemporary) from	Traditional Owner Groups Aboriginal community OAAV	Ongoing

ACTIONS	MEASURABLE	PARTNER	TIME FRAME
	other sources.		
	1.2.5 New sites added to the GIS database from information obtained from other sources.	Internal partners	Ongoing
1.3 Manage and maintain all known sites and undertake any required works in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006	1.3.1 Development of maintenance schedules for all recorded sites	Internal Partners Traditional Owner Groups Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 2
	1.3.2 Development of protocols, policies and procedures to ensure appropriate and effective use of GIS database	Internal Partners Traditional Owner Groups Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 2
	1.3.3 CHMPs obtained for new development and re-developments which involve land disturbance.	Internal Partners Traditional Owner Groups Aboriginal community OAAV	Ongoing

2. CELEBRATION

The City of Melbourne is a place that people who live, work or visit can easily recognise, experience and celebrate Melbourne as a place that was, is, and continues to be, an Aboriginal place.

ACTIONS	MEASURABLE	PARTNER	TIME FRAME
2.1 Share and celebrate existing publicly acknowledged places around Melbourne	2.1.1 Promote, celebrate and acknowledge places around Melbourne through corporate channels such as social media; corporate newsletters; and corporate advertisement.	Internal partners	
	2.1.2 Melbourne's Aboriginal heritage, projects and events celebrated and promoted through the organisation's "Aboriginal Melbourne" Facebook site.	Internal partners	Ongoing
	2.1.3 Revise and re-print "Celebrate [Indigenous] Aboriginal Melbourne"	Internal partners	Year 1
	2.1.4 Information contained in the Indigenous Heritage Study 2010 published on CoM's Open Data Platform.	Internal Partners	Year 1
2.2 Increase the level of interpretation at key places in a culturally appropriate manner while also ensuring sensitive places are protected	2.2.1. Review of all existing interpretive signage at Aboriginal heritage places conducted	Internal partners Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 1
	2.2.2. Development of an Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation Policy	Internal partners Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 2

ACTIONS	MEASURABLE	PARTNER	TIME FRAME
	2.2.3. New interpretation signs at Aboriginal heritage places	Internal partners Traditional Owner Groups Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 3
2.3 Develop the “Aboriginal Melbourne” website – and/or interactive multimedia tool promoting Aboriginal heritage in Melbourne.	2.3.1. Development of agreed and culturally appropriate specification for website.	Internal partners Traditional Owners Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 1
	2.3.2. “Aboriginal Melbourne” website launched.	Internal partners Traditional Owners Aboriginal community OAAV	Year 2
	2.3.3 Develop an “Aboriginal Melbourne” platform suitable for use on mobile devices.	IT entrepreneurs Traditional Owners Aboriginal community	Year 2
2.4 Explore opportunities for Council to foster “Aboriginal Melbourne” ambassadors.	2.4.1 Development of the necessary tools and products to support City of Melbourne Tourism Volunteers to promote “Aboriginal Melbourne”.	Internal	Year 2
	2.4.2 Partnership opportunities with local tourism operators to promote “Aboriginal Melbourne”.	Traditional Owner Groups Tourism Operators	Year 3

3. COLLABORATION

The City of Melbourne works with key stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal heritage is recognised, conserved and celebrated by all.

ACTIONS	MEASURABLE	PARTNER	TIME FRAME
3.1 Work with Traditional Owner and Aboriginal community groups to acknowledge and protect Aboriginal heritage in a culturally appropriate and meaningful way	3.1.1 Number of times relevant Traditional Owner groups consulted regarding heritage matters	Internal partners Aboriginal community	Ongoing
	3.1.2 Number of times relevant Aboriginal community organisations consulted regarding heritage matters.	Internal partners Aboriginal community	Ongoing
	3.1.3 Understanding reached with traditional owner groups to ensure Aboriginal heritage at QVM is protected and acknowledged		
3.2 Work with neighbouring councils to ensure a seamless engagement with Aboriginal heritage across council boundaries	3.2.1 Undertake a review of Aboriginal heritage documents and activities of neighbouring councils	Internal partners Neighbouring councils Aboriginal community	Year 1
	3.2.2 Potential for an inner municipal 'Aboriginal Trail' investigated with the Cities of Port Phillip, Yarra, Maribyrnong and Stonnington.	Internal partners Neighbouring councils Aboriginal community	Ongoing
3.3. In alignment with the Arts Strategy 2014-17 acknowledge and make visible the city's Aboriginal heritage.	3.3.1 Develop a permanent arts installation that creatively interprets the story of Tunneminnerwait and Maulboyheenner.	Arts and Culture Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheenner Working Group	Year 1

APPENDIX

Aboriginal community involvement

Wherever possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be given opportunities to be deeply engaged on any issues relating to their cultural heritage. This document was produced in consultation with key Aboriginal community organisations, including the relevant Traditional Owner groups, the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages and the Koorie Heritage Trust.

Where it fits

This document is one part of the City of Melbourne's engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Other key documents and programs that should be consulted regarding this engagement are the Reconciliation Action Plan and the Indigenous Arts Program. In relation to Aboriginal heritage, these actions should be seen as supplementary to those included in the 'Action Programme' for the *Melbourne Heritage Strategy 2013* which aspires to a more holistic approach to heritage, including Aboriginal heritage values alongside those for non-Indigenous heritage.

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