

**Report to the Future Melbourne (Aboriginal City) Committee**

Agenda item 6.9

**Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan**

15 May 2018

**Presenter:** Leanne Mitchell, Acting Manager Social Investment

**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the draft Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan (AMAP) for public consultation (refer Attachment 2).
2. Council Plan 2017–21 has a goal for Melbourne to be a city with an Aboriginal focus.

**Key issues**

3. The AMAP covers the remainder of the term of the current Council and presents a set of community facing actions that will contribute to outcomes identified in Council Plan 2017-21.
4. The initiatives in this AMAP have been informed by community aspirations and a research survey undertaken in 2017-18 to understand current knowledge of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the City among key groups, including council staff, residents, visitors, students and businesses.
5. The AMAP complements Council's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-20, which focuses on transformative and sustainable change within the City of Melbourne as an organisation. This is a shift from previous City of Melbourne Reconciliation Action Plans and is supported by and on the advice of Reconciliation Australia.
6. The 21 actions within the AMAP position the City of Melbourne to:
  - 6.1. *acknowledge its Aboriginal history, heritage and identity* in ways such as supporting National Reconciliation Week activities and via information provided at Melbourne Visitor Centres
  - 6.2. *foster understanding about its Aboriginal heritage and culture* through projects such as the Aboriginal Melbourne digital mapping project and establishment of a bushfood and fibre garden
  - 6.3. *facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contribution to the city's cultural, social and economic life* by ensuring that Aboriginal representation is provided in all aspects of Council business and creating culturally safe spaces in the municipality for Aboriginal people.
7. Once endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee, feedback will be sought on the draft AMAP through public consultation and with Traditional Owners.

**Recommendation from management**

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
  - 8.1. Endorses the draft Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan for public consultation
  - 8.2. Authorises the Director City Communities to make any further minor editorial changes to the Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan prior to public consultation.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 14)
2. Draft Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan 2018-20 (Page 3 of 14)

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

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

### Finance

2. Associated costs have been included in the draft 2018–19 work area operational and capital budgets. The partnership with Traditional Owners, to establish an Aboriginal bushfood and fibre garden in a City of Melbourne park or garden is a capital budget action.

### 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. Once endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee, officers will seek feedback on the draft Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan (AMAP) through public consultation and consultation with Traditional Owners.

### Relation to Council policy

5. Council Plan 2017–21 has a goal for Melbourne to become a City with an Aboriginal Focus. This goal will see Melbourne acknowledge its Aboriginal history, heritage and identity. It was proposed that there be a 2018–19 Annual Plan initiative to implement an AMAP which will address priorities in Council Plan Goal 9.

### Environmental sustainability

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



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### Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

"The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

For 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."

DRAFT

Message from the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and Councillor Nicolas Frances Gilley

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## Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> Melbourne

The landscape surrounding the place where the Birrarung (the Yarra River) runs into the Nairn (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 in, work in 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.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document the term “Aboriginal” is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal people

### Acknowledgment and Recognition

- The City of Melbourne acknowledges that Aboriginal peoples were the First Peoples of this land and have strived to retain their culture and identity through the period of European settlement for more than two centuries.
- The City of Melbourne acknowledges and respects the customs and traditions of Aboriginal peoples and their special relationship with the land, waterways and sea.
- The City of Melbourne acknowledges the right of Aboriginal 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 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 cultures to the heritage of all Australians.
- The City of Melbourne recognises that family life is the core of Aboriginal 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 community:

- The ideal of reconciliation with Aboriginal 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 heritage and cultures and the impact upon it of non-Indigenous settlement of this country.
- Advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal members of our community to ensure the principles and commitments of this statement are upheld

## A city with an Aboriginal focus

Aboriginal culture, knowledge and heritage will enrich the city's growth and development. For the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurong, Dja Dja wurrung and Wathaurung people which make up the Kulin Nation, Melbourne has always been and will continue to be an important meeting place and location for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

For thousands of years, before Europeans first set foot on the banks of the Yarra River, the place we have come to know as Melbourne has been an important meeting place for the members of the Kulin nation. Today, this deep connection is as strong as ever, and many people regard our city as the heart of the Aboriginal Victorian community.

The City of Melbourne is committed to taking a lead role in reconciliation. Reconciliation is about building positive, respectful relationships and creating stronger ties between Aboriginal people and the broader community.

Reconciliation involves learning about and acknowledging the past so that we may grow stronger together as a community. It means working to ensure that Melbourne is an inclusive city for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by closing the gap of disadvantage experienced by generations since European settlement. It is about honouring the unbroken relationship of the Aboriginal community to Melbourne, past and present, and their values and customs, and supporting this relationship into the future.

The City of Melbourne was the first local government in Australia to have a Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. As a capital city, our vision for reconciliation is to lead by example. We want to show how true reconciliation can happen, working in partnership with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal partners and with organisations such as Jawun and Supply Nation.

By sharing stories about the history of our place, including the heritage and culture woven into that history, the City of Melbourne can help create a city that takes pride in the contribution Aboriginal people have made and continue to make. The City of Melbourne is committed to ensuring that the Aboriginal cultural heritage of Melbourne is appropriately recognised, conserved and celebrated by all.

By creating more job opportunities for Aboriginal people and supporting Aboriginal businesses, the City of Melbourne, together with the broader community, can improve economic outcomes for Aboriginal people. Since 2008, a total of 27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have undertaken traineeships at the City of Melbourne.

We have also sought to enhance respect for Aboriginal peoples through permanently raising the Aboriginal flag on Melbourne Town Hall, the naming of Buluk Park to acknowledge the significance of the area as a gathering place and through representation in arts and cultural events.

However, much more remains to be done, especially given the significant social, economic and health inequities still borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In partnership with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal peoples, Melbourne has an opportunity to strengthen its reputation locally, regionally and globally and develop a mature identity as a city with an Aboriginal focus, that:

- Acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were the First Peoples of this land and respects their customs, traditions and their special relationship with the land, waterways and sea.
- Acknowledges the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own values and customs, subject to Australian law.

- Recognises the valuable contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the diversity and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the heritage of all Australians.
- Supports the ideal of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to redress their serious social and economic disadvantage.
- Recognises, protects and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and cultures and understands the impact of non-Aboriginal settlement of this country.

### About the Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan

The City of Melbourne's planning framework includes a 10-year document – Future Melbourne 2026 – that states the community's long term vision and goals and a four year Council Plan.

**Future Melbourne 2026** represents the Council and community's aspirations. It is a resource for Council to use when it develops its four-year Council Plan and a basis for other groups and organisations in the city to chart a common course into Melbourne's future. It was refreshed in 2016 with significant input from broad sections of the community, including residents, workers and business owners. Within this plan, the Council introduced and later adopted Goal 9: A City with an Aboriginal Focus. Embracing Aboriginal culture, knowledge and heritage will enrich the city's growth and development.

This Goal has four priorities:

- **Priority 9.1 - Acknowledge our Aboriginal identity**

Melbourne will proudly acknowledge its Aboriginal identity across all areas of the municipality and by 2026 there will be a treaty with the Kulin Nation.

- **Priority 9.2 - Educated about our Aboriginal culture**

Melbourne's community will be well educated about the municipality's Aboriginal culture, knowledge and heritage.

- **Priority 9.3 - Prosper from our Aboriginal focus**

Melbourne will be a city with economic opportunities created collaboratively with Aboriginal people. The promotion of international recognition for Aboriginal culture in Melbourne will bring economic benefits to the municipality.

- **Priority 9.4 - Engage Aboriginal people in urban land management**

Aboriginal experts will be consulted and involved on sustainable land management practices and implementing 'caring for country' principles in the management, planning and development of Melbourne's land.

In developing its four-year **Council Plan 2017-21**, Council considered the community's goals and aspirations set out in Future Melbourne 2026. The Plan identified three outcomes to work towards in 2017-21:

- Melbourne acknowledges its Aboriginal history, heritage and identity.
- Melbourne fosters understanding about its Aboriginal heritage and culture.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contribute to the city's cultural, social and economic life.

The **Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan** covers the term of the current Council and presents a set of actions that will contribute to the outcomes identified in Council Plan 2017-21. These community facing initiatives have been informed by community aspirations and a research survey undertaken in 2017-18 to understand current knowledge of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the City, categorised by council staff, residents, visitors and students and business. It is anticipated that outcomes will be reported on this plan prior to the end of this current Council term.

The Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan complements Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-20 which focuses on transformative and sustainable change within our organisation; including 100 per cent staff participation in Aboriginal cultural awareness programs; 2.5 percent Aboriginal employment; and 1 per cent Aboriginal procurement spend.

## Aboriginal Melbourne Action Plan

### COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME: Melbourne acknowledges its Aboriginal history, heritage and identity.

#### Council Plan Priority

#### Actions

#### Year

1. Advocate the ideal of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including through a treaty or other instrument of reconciliation.

1.1 Deliver the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-20. This third tier Reconciliation Action Plan will see Council embedding reconciliation in all of our business as "business as usual" and focus on long term strategies and working towards defined targets in Aboriginal employment, procurement, and staff participation in Aboriginal cultural awareness programs.

Year 1 and 2

1.2 Closely monitor the Victorian Government's process towards a Treaty and be involved as required, taking into account Council's relationship with Traditional Owners.

2. Promote community understanding of reconciliation including as part of National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

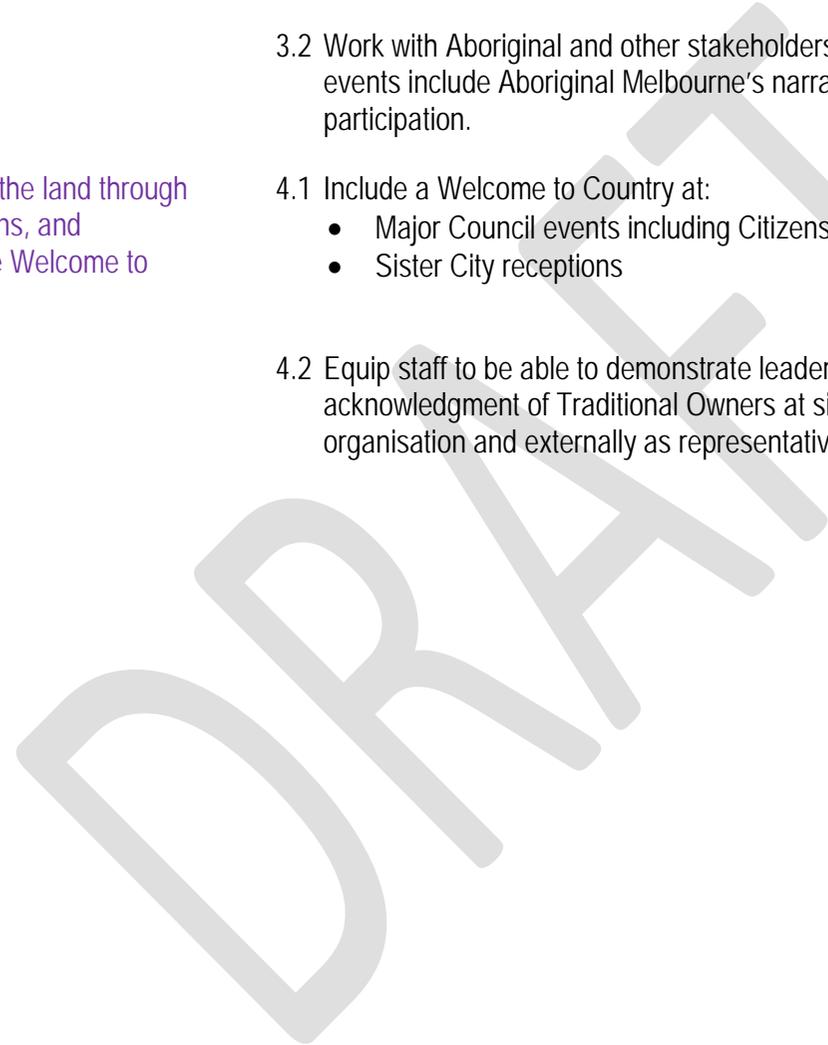
2.1 Encourage public participation in NRW activities to build and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal people and other Australians through the delivery of external events and activities.

Year 1 and 2

2.2 Support external NRW events within the municipality through City of Melbourne grants and sponsorship programs

Year 1 and 2

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|---|---|--------------|
| 3. Promote Aboriginal experiences for the public to celebrate Melbourne as an Aboriginal place.   | 3.1 Ensure that Melbourne Visitor Centres are able to present and offer a range of information for visitors to learn about Melbourne's Aboriginal heritage and take part in Aboriginal experiences within the municipality.         | Year 1 and 2 |
|   | 3.2 Work with Aboriginal and other stakeholders to ensure all Melbourne settlement events include Aboriginal Melbourne's narrative and Traditional Owner participation.   | Year 1 and 2 |
| 4. Recognise Traditional Owners of the land through public events and commemorations, and opportunities for Elders to provide Welcome to Country. | 4.1 Include a Welcome to Country at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Major Council events including Citizenship Ceremonies</li><li>• Sister City receptions</li></ul>   | Year 1 and 2 |
|   | 4.2 Equip staff to be able to demonstrate leadership in reconciliation through the acknowledgment of Traditional Owners at significant meetings within the organisation and externally as representatives of the City of Melbourne. | Year 1 and 2 |



COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME: Melbourne fosters understanding about its Aboriginal heritage and culture.

Council Plan Priority

Actions

5. Educate the broader community about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.

5.1 Protect, promote and celebrate places and stories of Aboriginal cultural significance by conducting a whole of municipality Aboriginal social historical study. Year 1

5.2 Support greater learning and understanding of Melbourne's Aboriginal heritage, culture and community by continuing to update and improve the Aboriginal Melbourne digital mapping project. Year 1 and 2

5.3 In partnership with Traditional Owners, establish an Aboriginal bushfood and fibre garden in a City of Melbourne park or garden. Year 2

5.4 Undertake research to measure the change in Melbourne city users' knowledge and understanding of Melbourne's Aboriginal heritage and culture from baseline data collected in 2017. Use this to inform the planning and delivery of City of Melbourne programs. Year 2

6. Protect, recognise and promote Aboriginal culture, heritage and place.

6.1 Research Melbourne's Stolen Generation story, with recommendations about how best to commemorate the Stolen Generation through memorials or markers. Year 1

6.2 Identify opportunities for the naming/renaming of spaces to reflect the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area. Year 1

6.3 In consultation with local Traditional Owner groups conduct research into "caring for country" knowledge and practices, and how they may be applied to the work of council in areas such as: urban design, sustainability, parks and gardens. Year 1 and 2

COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contribute to the city's cultural, social and economic life.

Council Plan Priority

7. Provide opportunities which support cultural, social and economic development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (also a health and wellbeing priority).

Actions

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|-----|---|--------------|
| 7.1 | Establish a governance process that ensures that Aboriginal representation is provided in all aspects of business. This would include the opportunity for engagement and representation of Aboriginal views in Council projects or plans. | Year 1       |
| 7.2 | Explore the opportunity to establish an Aboriginal Residents Network to provide opportunities for Aboriginal residents to come together and discuss what's important to them.   | Year 1       |
| 7.3 | Explore the feasibility of a permanent outdoor ceremonial site for local Traditional Owners.  | Year 2       |
| 7.4 | Work with external stakeholders to identify opportunities to create culturally safe places for Aboriginal people.   | Year 1 and 2 |
| 7.5 | Continue to partner with the Victorian NAIDOC Committee to deliver the NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony at Federation Square.   | Year 1 and 2 |
| 7.6 | Host the 2019 YIRRAMBOI Festival, presenting the continuous cultures and diverse contemporary practice of First Nations artists.  | Year 1       |