

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Reconciliation Reference Group

Terms of Reference

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1. Purpose

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG), has been established to uphold the rights to truth, justice, equality, and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It will provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led, advice to Council on Council's development of its third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. It will further support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to have a voice in relation to matters that affect them.

It will act as a mechanism of consultation within the Reconciliation Action Plan framework.

It will ensure self-determination, in relation to decision making and add value to other forms of community engagement used by Council to consult with and engage on issues relating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local communities.

In fulfilling its purpose, The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group will exercise a collaborative approach, along with Council's consultation and engagement with Traditional Custodians Bunurong Land Council, in engaging and supporting the delivery of Council's third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

2. Objectives

The objectives of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group are to:

1. To support and embed self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in ensuring the voice Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community is within Council's decision-making processes, relevant to Council's development of its third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.
2. To support and develop a shared understanding among all City of Greater Dandenong residents of the impact of colonisation, as well as the diversity, strength, and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' cultures.
3. Guide, consider and provide advice on the development of Council's third Innovate Reconciliation Action.
4. Consider and provide advice on the impact of key government initiatives, issues, and programs, so Council can advocate to all levels of government.
5. Seek to address issues impacting all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
6. Identify, and where appropriate, implement, effective ways to support engagement, interaction, and capacity-building with the Greater Dandenong community.
7. Offer advice and support to Council on implementation of its third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

8. Celebrate and promote the achievements of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and residents, and the work of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG)
9. Develop strategic partnerships in the community, to strengthen and support self-determination, to support the future implementation of Council's Third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.
10. Act in a primary partnership role with Council and the community, endeavouring to increase the understanding across the wider community of the opportunities and challenges for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community and the wider community.

3. Membership Criteria

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG), will consist of a minimum of six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and will include representatives from the following:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working and or studying within the City of Greater Dandenong, those with links to Bunurong Country and or Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people, who would like to support the development of Greater Dandenong Third Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Up to five members from relevant community groups and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations.
- Coordinator of Community Advocacy, Strategic Growth and Advocacy department.

Council staff will provide administrative support and Council officers, and staff will act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Membership of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG), is via an Expression of Interest, with all members to be over the age of 18 years.

Members of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG) may resign at any time. Vacancies which arise due to resignation or inability to attend all meetings shall be advertised through a time limited Expression of Interest process on Council's website.

A request received by Council for membership in addition to the appointed members will only be considered if a vacancy exists. The selection of members will be upon review and assessment of the Executive Manager Strategic Growth and Advocacy, in collaboration with Coordinator Community Advocacy.

4. Term of Appointment

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG) selection and appointment is for a time limited tenure from January 2025 until the ratification and launch of Council's Third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan at the end of November 2025.

The ongoing functions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG), to be reviewed at the end of November 2025.

5. Role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

- Committee members will be expected to demonstrate their commitment and due diligence by the preparation for, attendance at, and active participation in, meetings and other activities. This also includes providing written feedback and endorsing minutes from previous meetings.
- It is required that each member of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group (RAPRG) will attend all meetings for the purpose of the redevelopment of Council's Third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.
- At all times, act in the best interests of Council and the community.
- Act with integrity, confidentiality, and objectivity.
- No members will disseminate, disclose, or share confidential or personal information that is discussed at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group meetings.

Chairperson Role

- The chair will be nominated by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group and supported and or co-chair will be Council's Coordinator Community Advocacy. In the absence of the Chair, the Chair will nominate an appropriate replacement.
- The Chair is responsible for guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available and reviewing and approving the draft minutes before distribution.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Role

Councils' Internal Reconciliation Action Plan working group, will connect with and support the implementation of feedback and determined actions and deliverables within Council's third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, as guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group

and Bunurong Land Council as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the City of Greater Dandenong sits.

The Internal Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, or the Reconciliation Action Plan Advocate at Council, will regularly liaise with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group, in supporting feedback and updates pertaining to the Reconciliation Action Plan development.

6. Selection Process

Call for Expression of Interest and Nominations

Membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group will be achieved by calling for nominations. For the initial intake, an advertisement will be placed in the local media and on Council's website. Specific representatives may also be invited to nominate.

Applicants can verbally contact the Reconciliation Action Plan Advocate to express their interest in the opportunity. This process is to ensure access and barriers for community are alleviated and they are supported to make application.

7. Meetings

Greater Dandenong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group will be required to participate in three scheduled meetings 2025. Nominally scheduled for March, July, and September.

It is imperative that all members can attend all scheduled meetings. These meetings will be in person meetings, unless advised otherwise.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group members will receive sittings fees for their commitment, participation, and reimbursement of travel expenses, in attending all meetings.

8. Reporting of Minutes

All meetings will have an agenda. Minutes of the meeting will record attendees, apologies, decisions, and actions.

The Chairperson will oversee the preparation of the agenda in consultation with Council staff. Any member may submit agenda items prior to the finalisation and distribution of the agenda.

Council staff will provide administrative support and service expertise to the Advisory Committee and will ensure the timely preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes.

Administrative Support and Distribution of Agendas and Minutes

The management of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group will be overseen by the Coordinator Community Advocacy, Strategic Growth and Advocacy department.

Administration support will be provided by Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Advocate and or Council business support officers. Council staff will assist the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group to function efficiently and effectively, including but not limited to servicing all scheduled Reference Group meetings and the timely preparation and distribution Agendas and Minutes.

All Reference Group Members can submit an Agenda item in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Agenda items must be submitted to Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Advocate and or Council business support officers, no less than five (5) working days prior to the finalisation and distribution of the agenda.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Advocate and or Council business support officers will be responsible for coordinating the preparation and distribution of Agendas.

Agendas will be made available to Reference Group Members no less than five (5) working days prior to a scheduled reference group meeting.

Minutes will be distributed in a timely manner to all members to ensure accuracy prior to formal endorsement by the reference group at a subsequent meeting.

Attendance and Record of Minutes

All attendance, apologies, conflicts of interests, recommendations and outcomes will be recorded in the Minutes of all meetings held.

The meeting will be recorded for minute taking purposes.

9. Evaluation and Review

A review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, will be undertaken before the end of the tenure, to determine if this reference group, will continue. The decision making and assessment of organisational needs, will be undertaken and as advised by the Executive Manager, Strategic Growth and Advocacy.

Such decision making will review and consider the purpose, membership and operations of the reference group to remain effective and in line with Council objectives.

10. Policy Adherence

Confidentiality

Information discussed, received, used, or created by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, deemed confidential, must not be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the committee.

Any member who discloses information that they know or should know to be confidential will be found in breach of the Terms of Reference.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, must act in accordance with Council's Transparency Policy and the Public Transparency Principles as outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*

Freedom of Information

All documents produced by or relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, that are not publicly available or deemed confidential are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Breaches

The City of Greater Dandenong by resolution of Council may terminate a reference group member's appointment for breaching the Terms of Reference set out in this document and/or Council's Code of Conduct – Staff/Councillor.

All members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, will be required to accept and sign the Terms and Conditions statement.

Conflict of Interest

Any matter deemed by a member to represent a Conflict of Interest shall be reported to the Chairperson either prior to a meeting or before the specific item is discussed.

Media Protocols

All Reference Group members must act in accordance with Council's Media Policy and refer all media enquiries to Council's Media and Communication Department for a response.

The mayor of the day remains the spokesperson for all Council activities, reference group members are not to represent the reference group or Council to the media or on social media, unless approved by the Manager Media and Communications.

Terms and Conditions

All members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, will be required to accept and sign the agreed Terms and Conditions as part of their membership.

Disclosure of Personal Details

In accordance with Council's Transparency Policy, members name, qualifications and current reference group position will be listed on Council's website.

Code of Conduct

All members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, will be required to abide by Council's Code of Conduct - Staff (which includes volunteers) or Code of Conduct - Councillors.

Authority Constraints

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group, has no authority to:

- Act on decisions or advice without Council Approval
- Expend money on behalf of Council
- Commit Council or its resources to any arrangements
- Consider any matter outside its area of reference
- Direct Council Officers in the performance of their duties.

11. Contact Details

Peter Johnstone
Coordinator Community Advocacy
City of Greater Dandenong
225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong
PO Box 200
Dandenong 3175
Tel: 8571 1624
council@cqd.vic.gov.au

Terms and Conditions

I agree to:

- Attend Reference Group meetings and provide apologies in advance where attendance is not possible.
- Act in an advisory capacity by disseminating authorised information within the community and provide insight and advice into community perspectives.
- Seek at all times to obtain and represent the views of the broader community.
- Respect the ideas and beliefs of all members and provide an atmosphere where all members feel comfortable to participate.
- Contribute in a positive way to finding solutions to issues or concerns.
- At all times act in good faith, with honesty and integrity and apply the skills and expertise I possess with diligence and care.
- Represent the views of my organisation, interest group or community and not individual views at odds with my organisation or group.
- Notify Council of any potential conflict of interest that may arise with respect to my participation on the Reference Group.
- Allow Council to promote my participation in the Reference Group to facilitate community feedback and participation.
- Not disseminate confidential information that is discussed at the Reference Group meetings as advised by the Reference Group chair.
- At all times act in accordance with the Agreed Meeting Etiquette.
- No members will disseminate, disclose, or share confidential or personal information that is discussed at The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group
- No members should make public comments regarding what is discussed at The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group
- As per Council's Media Policy, the Mayor and the CEO are the official spokespeople on behalf of Council and any public comment that the Reference Group wishes to make should be discussed with Council's Media and Communications Unit in the first instance.
- Give consent for my name and email address to be made available in the public realm as a direct result of my involvement on The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Reference Group

Greater Dandenong City Council is required to comply with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) in relation to the collection, use, storage, security, and disclosure of personal information. If you have any questions or concerns about how Council handles your personal information, please contact Council's Privacy Officer on 8571 5100 a copy of Council's Privacy and Personal Information Policy is available on Council's website www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au.

Modification or withdrawal of consent may be made in writing at any time to Council's Privacy Officer, however any changes to the use of your name or email will only apply from the date Council receives your withdrawal or modification of the consent, any information published prior is unable to be withdrawn from publication.

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Date: _____