

# Marrageil Strategy 2024 -2031

Aboriginal Self-Determination  
Banyule City Council



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## Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

Banyule City Council proudly acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land which Council operates on. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

## Uluru Statement from the Heart

Banyule City Council is also proud to acknowledge our commitment to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. Council is committed to taking practical action to advance its core components: Voice, Treaty and Truth Telling.

## Diversity Statement

Banyule is a diverse community, made up of people from different cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, ages, sexualities, genders, and identities. We are committed to inclusion, access, and equity for everyone. These principles foster cohesiveness, empower people, and improve the wellbeing of the Banyule community.

Image: Spring Outdoors 2023 (Jamie Robertson)

Cover Image: Murrundaya Yepengna Dance Troupe, Malahang Lantern Festival 2023 (Fresh Photography) Cover Image: Malahang Lantern Festival 2023 (Fresh Photography)

# Executive Summary

Banyule City Council is located on the Traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and is neighbouring to many Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and other Aboriginal Organisations. Banyule delivers many services to the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, families and people.

Banyule City Council believes that the engagement and recognition of First Nations history, heritage and culture is of vital importance and despite good intentions, Council recognises that much more can, and needs to be done to improve local knowledge, enhance engagement and strengthen partnerships with the local Aboriginal organisations and communities.

The following document has been created to provide a genuine and authentic roadmap to building better relationships between the Council and Traditional Owners and First Nations People – by working together to promote and support Aboriginal culture in every aspect of community life.

The development of the seven-year Aboriginal Murrageil Strategy will significantly contribute to creating a safe and equitable environment for local First Nations community members to thrive in their daily lives. Considerations have been given to the historical knowledge that colonisation has intergenerationally impacted all First Nations people and Council acknowledges its role in needing to support the community to feel more included and provide services and employment that are culturally safe.

Council acknowledges Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to make decisions for themselves, their families, and their communities. Victoria leads the nation in progress towards self-determination, and this approach recognises that all levels of government must change the way they work and engage with Aboriginal people.

First Nation people's values and ways of life guide self-determination as the way to achieve economic, social, and cultural equity. It's the key to better outcomes for First Nations people, and to stronger, safer families and communities.

**The Strategy's main aim is for Council to recognise and enable Aboriginal self-determination. It acknowledges the four enablers needed to achieve self-determination, set out in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (VAAF) and the Self-Determination Reform Framework:**

- Prioritise culture;
- Address trauma and support healing;
- Address racism and promote cultural safety; and
- Transfer power and resources to communities.

## Traditional Owner Message

As the Traditional Owners of the area, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, we acknowledge that Banyule City Council has consulted with us widely in producing this document and they have shown respect and understanding regarding working with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is proud to be associated with like-minded people at Banyule City Council who understand that we must accept and acknowledge the wrongs of the past, so we can all move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation.

Local governments are in a unique position, and they also have a responsibility to care for the Country and the people within their municipality to form a real community that is inclusive and respectful for all, but particularly to those who are the First Peoples of this Country.

We are pleased to have had involvement in Banyule City Council developing the Murrageil Strategy, and we compliment the Councillors and Council staff involved in the production of it.

'Murrageil' meaning 'Powerful' in Woi-wurrung is given to Council to name the Strategy by Aunty Gail Smith as a reflection of the strength it provides to First Nations communities.

Sincerely,  
Wurundjeri's consultation team Elders,  
Aunty Gail Smith and Aunty Julieanne Axford

## Mayors Message

I am pleased to present the Murrageil Strategy, which outlines our vision to support putting local Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people's voices as the driver of Council's longstanding Reconciliation commitment.

Banyule City Council is committed to contributing to a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

This Strategy defines this commitment and outlines how we will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create shared goals to develop meaningful pathways towards self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

First Nations people still face many barriers to self-determination. Reconciliation can't be achieved until shared history is understood, barriers to self-determination are identified and removed, and First Nations people have control of decisions that affect their lives.

Reconciliation is a journey we must all travel and Council is strongly committed to addressing the work that still needs to be done as a nation, across all sectors of society and as individuals. We recognise the path towards Reconciliation requires emphasis to be placed on self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We understand that a strong sustainable, and well-resourced First Nations community is the key to delivering improved health, justice, education, and employment outcomes. It's the only way economic, social, and cultural equity will be achieved.

Council plays a vital role in facilitating, supporting, and implementing Victoria's groundbreaking self-determination policy reforms. The Strategy values and emphasises shared roles and responsibilities, and the need for partnerships between local government and Aboriginal Victorians based on sharing, listening, care, trust, truth-telling, and understanding.

Mayor  
Tom Melican

# Glossary

## Terms used in the Strategy:

The Strategy uses First Nations to include all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who aren't necessarily also Traditional Owners of Victorian land.

**Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)** are incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Commonwealth), *Corporations Act 2001* (Commonwealth) or *Co-operatives Act 1996* (Victoria). Boards of Aboriginal people manage them for the sole purpose of serving the local Aboriginal community. ACCOs serve their communities by delivering social, health, and housing services, among other support and service functions.

**Aboriginal Victorians** refers to members of Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs); Registered Aboriginal Parties; Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs); and Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs) in Victoria. The term also includes any other members of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

**First Nations people or First Peoples** refers to peoples or nations of people connected to an area before colonisation. While these terms have some general acceptance, some individuals or groups of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples may not prefer them.

**Gathering Places** are community-owned and operated places that provide opportunities for people to connect and deliver services.

**Self-determination** is defined under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the ability for Indigenous people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

**Traditional Owner** means the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters with unique roles in caring for Country and a deep spiritual connection to it. The term "Traditional Owner Group" is defined in section 3 of the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic).

**A Traditional Owner Corporation (TOC)** is an incorporated group representing Traditional Owners' interests in a particular area. On behalf of the Traditional Owners it represents, a TOC may hold rights under the *Native Title Act 1993* (NTA), the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AHA), and/or the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (TOS Act), or have no formal agreements in place.

# Historical Context

Council historically has a longstanding commitment to Reconciliation and to the First Nations history of Banyule. Below is an overview of 25 years of this commitment.

Council's 2020-2022 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) had a total of 104 actions. Of these actions 75 have been completed, 11 are ongoing and 8 have been deemed no longer suitable for implementation. A total of 10 actions have been included within the new Strategy.

Throughout the delivery of the RAP and despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Council has demonstrated ongoing commitment to Reconciliation and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve RAP goals and our vision for a just, equitable and reconciled Australia. The RAP Final Report was presented to Council in February 2023.

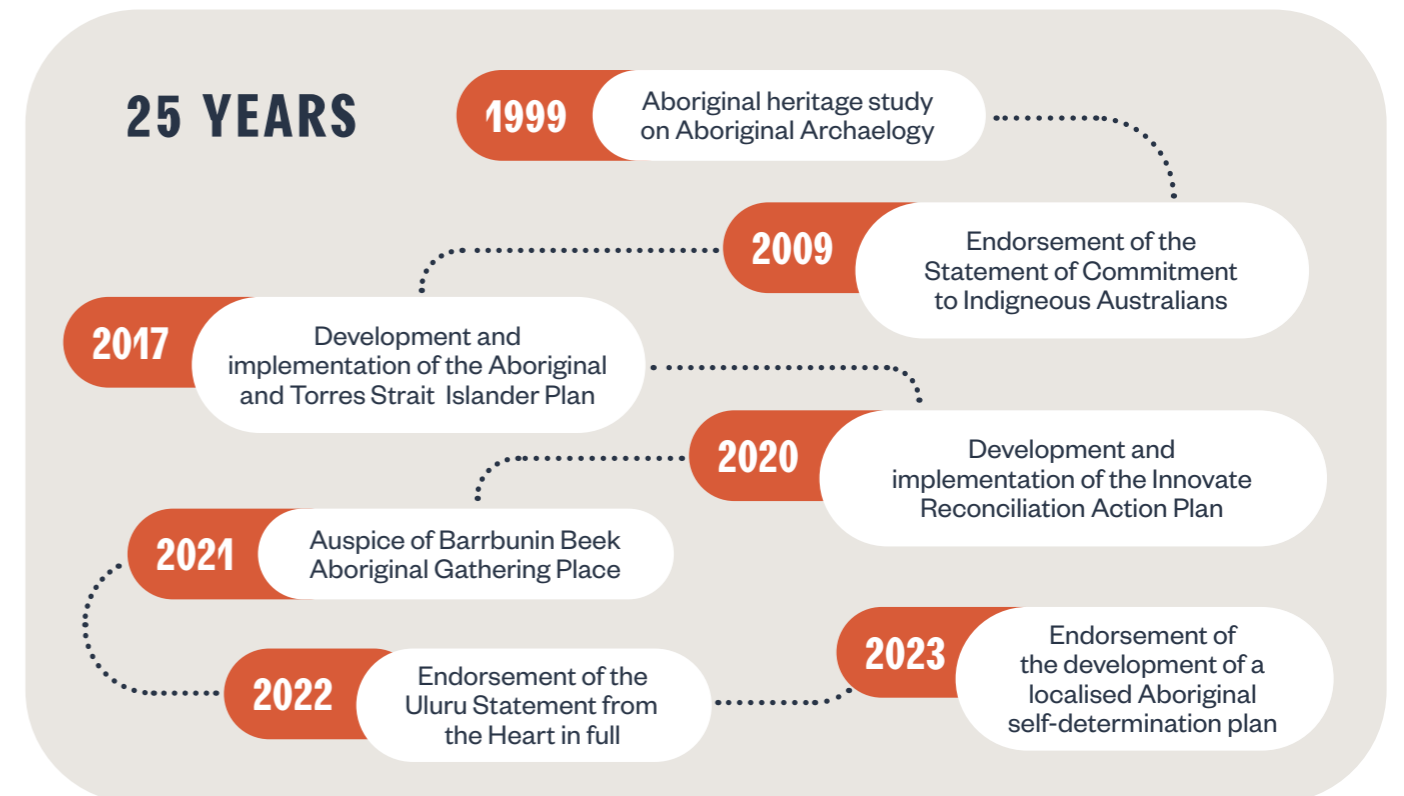
The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020-2022 emphasised the crucial role of putting local First Nations community members' voices at the centre of all Reconciliation efforts in Banyule. This included building meaningful relationships with local members and Aboriginal organisations as partners to contribute to strong, healthy and inclusive communities.

Initiatives and actions focused on education, celebration and truth-telling about First Nations history and positive contributions to generate a shared sense of belonging and pride in First Nations culture.

There was an increase in educational opportunities for both the community and Council Officers over the life of the Plan. A significant investment was made in the space through the formation of the RAP Advisory Committee, to begin to advise Council on relatable topics, the appointment of the Barrbunin Beek Gathering Place Coordinator and the renovations of the Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place, enabling a greater diversity and number of cultural opportunities.

With Council's continued focus on community connections and social value, the Marrageil Strategy will integrate First Nations culture more strategically into the whole-of-council services it provides.

The proportion of First Nations residents in Banyule is similar to Greater Melbourne (0.7%).



# Strategic Context

## United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Self-determination initiatives honour the norms set out in UNDRIP and Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

Self-determination is defined under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the ability for Indigenous people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

## Victorian Treaty

Treaty initiatives in Victoria are being led by the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria in partnership with the Victorian State Government, Victorian Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. Treaties will provide a solid foundation for new and mutually beneficial relationships – based on self-determination – between all levels of government, Aboriginal Victorians and the broader community.

This Strategy will provide significant assistance to Banyule City Council in its inevitable Treaty preparations. The Strategy facilitates the necessary flexibility to evolve as a result of any future Treaty agreements, which will be readily addressed through the Strategy's regular review, ensuring that at every stage it reflects, enables and facilitates any Treaty outcomes.

## Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy is an important resource for Victorian councils. It serves as a practical guide for councils across Victoria and will help embed the voices and priorities of Aboriginal communities at a local government level.





### It is centred on seven strategic pillars:

- Culture, respect and trust
- Awareness and engagement
- Accountability and direction
- Governance and participation
- Economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Resourcing and funding

The Strategy recommends actions for Local Governments, the Victorian State Government and Aboriginal communities that progress Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation. It has been developed to support the alignment of the Local Government sector with the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023, the Victorian Treaty process, the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

The Strategy includes a clear framework for shared decision-making processes and actions for Aboriginal Victorians working together with local government based on mutual control, shared power and decision-making, fairness, respect, and trust..

**The Strategy acknowledges the four enablers needed to achieve self-determination, set out in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (VAAF) and the Self-Determination Reform Framework:**

-  Prioritise culture;
-  Address trauma and support healing;
-  Address racism and promote cultural safety; and
-  Transfer power and resources to communities.

## Uluru Statement from the Heart

On 05 December 2022, Council unanimously endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, Voice, Treaty and Truth. The Uluru Statement is an invitation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”.

Council decided it could play a role in facilitating discussion and information sharing around the Statement's key principles: Voice, Treaty and Truth. In the lead-up to the October 2023 Referendum on a Voice to Parliament, Council's clear commitment was to information sharing and education so that Banyule residents would be equipped to make an informed decision when deciding how to vote. Council will continue to play its chosen role to educate and share information about all elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Council acknowledges the national outcome of the Referendum for an enshrined First Nations Voice. However, this Strategy aims to embed the principle of a First Nations voice through its Reconciliation ambitions.

Image: Smoking Ceremony  
(Reconciliation Action Plan)

# Banyule Vision and Relevant Priority Themes

**“We in Banyule are a thriving, sustainable, inclusive and connected community. We are engaged, we belong, and we value and protect our environment.” – Community Vision 2041**

This Strategy’s focus areas have been strategically aligned to all six Council Plan priorities.

Banyule has an integrated strategic approach to planning and delivering service outcomes for the community and to meet requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Marrageil Strategy, like all organisational policies, strategies and plans (grey icons in this infographic) are guided by the Banyule Community Vision 2041 and work to achieve the objectives of the Council Plan.

The Aboriginal Self-Determination Strategy will embed a cultural framework for all Council departments to implement within their scope of work. This will be reflected through an annual action plan addressing the strategic objectives (priority themes) of the current and successive Council Plans.

Other corporate documents that integrate with the Marrageil Strategy include: Heritage Strategy, Inclusive Banyule 2022 – 2026, Economic Development Plan, Public Open Space Plan, Child and Youth Framework 2021-2031, Social Infrastructure Framework, Community Infrastructure Plan, Graffiti Strategy, Social Enterprise Strategy, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Public Realm Strategy, Biodiversity Plan, Climate Action Plan, Urban Forest Strategy, Ageing Well in Banyule, Resilient and Safe Banyule and the Creative Banyule Strategy.

## Stakeholders

Banyule City Council would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of the Marrageil Strategy. With honourable mentions to the:

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Land Council
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Land Council Cultural Consultations Unit
- Banyule City Council Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group
- Banyule City Council Self-Determination Working Group
- Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee
- Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- Local Reconciliation groups

We would not have been able to achieve this instrumental strategic document to support the advancement of reconciliation in Banyule City Council without you. We extend our greatest gratitude to you all.



**Background image:**  
Eucalyptus Camaldulensis  
(Practical Ecology)

# Strategy on a page

|                               |  |   |   |   |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Vision</b>                 | <b>At the heart of our reconciliation vision is the belief that including First Nations voices, values and principles into everything we do, will lift up the lives of the First Nations community and our whole community.</b>  |   |   |   |  |  |
| <b>Council Priority Areas</b> | Our Inclusive & Connected Community  | Our Sustainable Environment   | Our Well-Built City   | Our Community Assets & Facilities   | Our Thriving Local Economy   | Our Trusted & Responsive Leadership  |
| <b>Marrageil Focus Areas</b>  | Lift up the social connection, health and wellbeing of First Nations people.   | Put Caring for Country principles at the centre.  | Celebrate, protect and share Aboriginal history, heritage and culture.  | Enhance First Nations inclusion and cultural safety.  | Increase economic opportunities for First Nations people.  | Improve First Nations self-determination through engagement and representation.  |
| <b>Marrageil Objectives</b>   | <b>Increase community participation and meaningful and transparent engagement:</b> Through dedicated engagement forums with early, genuine and transparent engagement about what can and cannot be influenced.   |   |   |   |  |  |
|                               | <b>Grow trusted partnerships and shared decision-making:</b> Through a shared decision-making framework of co-design, co-approve, co-present and co-decide.  |   |   |   |  |  |
|                               | <b>Add value and enhance outcomes:</b> Through the areas of social, economic or environmental impact.  |   |   |   |  |  |
|                               | <b>Add value and enhance outcomes:</b> Through the six Council priority areas.   |   |   |   |  |  |
| <b>Key Outcomes</b>           | Formal relationship with Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place as an incorporated enterprise.<br><br>Increased First Nations community members accessing Council services.<br><br>Enhanced community knowledge of Traditional Owners values, principals and history. | Formal relationship and commitment with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap team.<br><br>Enhance Traditional land practices used in all Council land management and maintenance.<br><br>Caring for Country principles embedded in Council core business | Increased visual representation of Aboriginal culture through Council's events and programs.<br><br>History and culture of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and First Nations communities is better understood and celebrated. | Council buildings and infrastructure are culturally safe.<br><br>First Nations staff are culturally safe when at work.<br><br>Woi-wurrung language is valued and amplified. | Increase total Council expenditure on First Nations businesses.<br><br>Enhanced First Nations employment at Council.<br><br>More First Nations community members access Council grant and funding opportunities. | Increased Traditional Owner engagement and knowledge of Council planning processes.<br><br>Greater First Nations voices consulting on Council business and decisions.<br><br>Formal practices embedded to engage with local First Nations community. |

**Focus Area:**

# Lift up the social connection, health and wellbeing of First Nations people.

Banyule City Council has an important role in supporting First Nations people's health and wellbeing including social connection. It does this through supporting public health and community development programs in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum (AHWPF) is the agenda-setting and decision-making body for Aboriginal Health in Victoria. The AHWPF has a number of strategic reform priorities with a focus on prevention.

We acknowledge that to ensure our plans and services are inclusive and respectful, it's vital First Nations voices are listened to and included. This means ensuring effective liaison between local Aboriginal-controlled health and wellbeing services including Barrbunin Beek

Aboriginal Gathering Place. This is to draw on Aboriginal health, community leaders and Elders' expertise and knowledge when designing and delivering services. Any health and wellbeing services provided to First Nations people, are to be culturally safe and free from racism.

We recognise that First Nations people's health and wellbeing is foundational for thriving Aboriginal communities. That's why we must develop strong partnerships with Aboriginal organisations and communities. Those partnerships are integral to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Particularly for First Nations women who are disproportionately over-represented in family violence statistics and have poorer employment outcomes.

| Key Objectives   |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |

| Key Commitments  |
|--|
| Work with Aboriginal Victorians to evolve safe forums for sharing experiences and truth-telling including topics such as history, principles and values of First Nations peoples   |
| Develop best practices by working with First Nations communities to deliver shared health and wellbeing outcomes. Ensuring all health and wellbeing services provided to First Nations people are culturally safe and free from racism |
| Increase awareness of Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities  |
| Support Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place as the local space for First Nations residents and users   |

| Closing the Gap Objectives  |
|---|
| people enjoy long and healthy lives;  |
| people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing;                             |
| children are born healthy and strong;   |
| children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education; |
| children thrive in their early years  |

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Enablers



Reference page 6 for descriptors

**Focus Area:**

# Put Caring for Country principles at the centre.

'Caring for Country' can be understood generally as First Nations peoples' approaches to land and water management, although with some central distinctions. 'Country' is a term First Nations people use that can be described as the lands with which First Nations people have a traditional attachment or relationship. Care for this country is based on the laws, customs and ways of life that First Nations people have inherited from their ancestors and ancestral beings.

Caring for Country also has benefits for the social-political, cultural, economic, and physical and emotional wellbeing of First Nations people. For First Nations people, it is increasingly documented that Caring for Country is intricately linked to maintaining cultural life, identity, autonomy and health.

We acknowledge that Caring for Country does not only benefit the environment within Banyule but also the health and wellbeing of First Nations people.

| Key Objectives   |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |

| Key Commitments   |
|---|
| Enhance relationship with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporations, Narrap, land management team |
| Embed Caring for Country principles across all of Council core business                         |
| Increase education to the community about Traditional knowledge of land management practices    |

| Closing the Gap Objectives   |
|--|
| people enjoy long and healthy lives;   |
| people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing;  |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported, and flourishing;   |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters |

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Enablers



Reference page 6 for descriptors



**Focus Area:**

# Celebrate, protect and share Aboriginal history, heritage and culture.

Council acknowledges that Aboriginal Self-determination is enabled through cultural strength. Cultural strength is enabled through cultural practice, kinship ties, connection to land and Country, art, song, dance, healing, spirituality, empowerment, heritage, identity (belonging) and self-determination.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* protects Aboriginal Victorians' cultural rights. The most fundamental of those rights is to enjoy and express language, culture, customs, and heritage without discrimination.

It's also why local councils must:

- understand the truth of Aboriginal Victorians' history; and
- prioritise and celebrate Aboriginal culture to earn First Peoples' respect and trust.

Council also understands that through celebrating First Nations history, heritage and culture, it provides an opportunity for all of the Banyule community to learn and build a connection between First Nations people and the broader community.

**Key Objectives**

|  |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |
|--|---|--------------------------------|

**Key Commitments** | **Closing the Gap Objectives**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Implement Cultural Awareness training and education programs across Banyule</p> <p>Increase opportunities for Traditional Owners and other First Nations-led storytelling and history experiences in Banyule</p> <p>Embed Council's commitment to the principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart</p> <p>Amplify communications, sharing and celebrating local knowledge of the First Nations community</p> | <p>people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing;</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported, and flourishing</p> |
|---|---|

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Enablers    *Reference page 6 for descriptors*

**Focus Area:**

# Enhance First Nations inclusion and cultural safety.

Banyule City Council has a direct role in ensuring all services it provides to community are safe from racism and discrimination. This also includes ensuring the community feels culturally safe when using Council services and accessing public buildings.

Racism-free services are those in which people feel safe, where they can freely affirm their identity, and where their needs are met. Local programs and services that Aboriginal people access must be inclusive, respectful, responsive, and relevant – and must be informed by culturally safe practice frameworks. It is also important that local councils are culturally safe places for Aboriginal people to work.

Whether through Aboriginal organisations or mainstream services, it's vital Aboriginal Victorians can access culturally safe and culturally responsive services whenever they need them.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* protects Aboriginal Victorians' cultural rights. The most fundamental of those rights is to enjoy and express language, culture, customs, and heritage without discrimination.

It's also why local councils must:



- build cultural integrity;
- improve cultural safety;
- understand the truth of Aboriginal Victorians' history; and
- prioritise and celebrate Aboriginal culture to earn First Peoples' respect and trust.

**Key Objectives**

|  |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |
|--|---|--------------------------------|

**Key Commitments** | **Closing the Gap Objectives**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Ensure all Council buildings and infrastructure are culturally safe</p> <p>Embed internal practices to support First Nations employee cultural safety</p> <p>Develop cultural safety education resources for local sporting organisations and schools</p> | <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported, and flourishing</p> <p>Children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education</p> |
|--|--|

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Enablers   *Reference page 6 for descriptors*

**Focus Area:**

# Increase economic opportunities for First Nations people.

We as a local government offer a range of services that can increase First Nations peoples' economic participation. This is directly achieved through our Inclusive Employee Program, First Nations Employee Program, our role as economic planners, service providers, planning authorisers and asset managers.

Economic participation and self-determination are interdependent. Supporting Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs – and promoting their participation in local economic activities – is a critical pathway towards self-determination.

Through education, training, traineeships, and cadetships, supporting Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs also helps address the historic marginalisation of First Nations people from dynamic and equitable participation in local economies.

Aboriginal economic participation encompasses a broad range of activities. These involve individuals, families, and communities using their skills, knowledge, and assets to achieve economic independence based on their cultural values and ways of life.

We have recognised that First Nations people are active economic participants who have a right to full consideration in councils' efforts to foster and grow strong and sustainable local economies. This is why we must develop stronger policies and pathways that ensure Aboriginal businesses and communities are integral participants in their local economies.

| Key Objectives   |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |

| Key Commitments   | Closing the Gap Objectives  |
|---|---|
| Implement First Nations KPI's within Social Enterprise and procurement strategies<br>Implement First Nations KPIs within the Employment Strategy<br>Invest in Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place, self-determination ambitions<br>Strengthen relationships with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations<br>Increase opportunities for the First Nations community to access Council grants | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth engaged in employment or education.<br><br>Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. |

**Focus Area:**

# Improve First Nations Self-Determination through engagement and representation.

We acknowledge that open, proactive, and ongoing dialogue between First Nations people and Council that is purposeful, meaningful, thoughtful, fosters understanding and is mutually beneficial, is core to supporting self-determination.

We heard that through building and sustaining positive, open, and ongoing communication and engagement, we will begin to move beyond understanding.

Through collaborating with First Nations people, Traditional Owner groups, neighbouring councils and other councils that share Traditional Owner boundaries, we will begin to have an agreement about priorities and mutual decision-making opportunities.

An increase in Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander community members employed by Council would also be a greater reflection of the community Banyule City Council serves.

We acknowledge that Closing the Gap Priority reform number one "Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making" identifies that for effective and real change, governments need to work collaboratively and in genuine, formal relationships with First Nations people, as they are the essential agents of change

| Key Objectives   |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Increase Community Participation and Meaningful Engagement | Grow Trusted Partnerships and Share Decision-Making | Add Value and Enhance Outcomes |

| Key Commitments  | Closing the Gap Objectives  |
|--|---|
| Explore new ways of working with First Nations communities that create greater mutual decision-making and reflect Aboriginal cultural values and practices.<br><br>Work directly with First Nations community and stakeholders in delivering programs that support the health, wellbeing, self-determination, and connectedness of the community.<br><br>Increase formal opportunities for local First Nations community members to have a voice on Council matters. | People enjoy long and healthy lives.<br>People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.<br>People maintain distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical, and economic relationships with their land and waters.<br>Cultures and languages are strong, supported, and flourishing |

# Closing the GAP

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which came into effect in July 2020, was developed in partnership between all governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations.

The National Agreement aims to “overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians”.

To transform the way governments work, four priority reform areas underpin the Agreement:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision-making.
- Building the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.
- Transforming government organisations.
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

Local government has a responsibility under the National Agreement to actively support Closing the Gap implementation. Victoria’s Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Implementation Plan were released in 2021. Victoria’s Implementation Plan sets out the work Victoria will undertake from 2021 to 2023 to overcome the entrenched inequality too many Aboriginal Victorians face. It focuses on shared decision-making with the Aboriginal community, investment in Aboriginal organisations, and transforming government and mainstream organisations to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Closing the Gap Implementation Plan seeks the following outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- People enjoy long and healthy lives.
- Children are born healthy and strong.
- Children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education.
- Children thrive in their early years.
- Students achieve their full potential.
- Students reach their full potential through further education pathways.
- Youth are engaged in employment or education.
- Strong economic participation and development for people and communities.
- People secure appropriate, affordable housing aligned with their priorities and needs.
- People, including young people, are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
- Children are not over-represented in the child protection system.
- Families and households are safe.
- People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.
- People maintain distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical, and economic relationships with their land and waters.
- Cultures and languages are strong, supported, and flourishing.

This Strategy is strongly aligned with the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and will help achieve these outcomes by building better relationships between the Council and its Traditional Owners and First Nations People to promote and support Aboriginal culture in every aspect of community life.



## Reporting and Monitoring Cycle

This Strategy will be reviewed at the conclusion of its lifespan in July 2031. It is anticipated that the action plan will be monitored, reviewed, and revised every 12 months and a report will be presented to Council. A final report will be presented to Council at the conclusion of the Strategy.

This will be prepared by the First Nations Unit. The Strategy will be completely reviewed after 7 years, and a new strategy is to be developed.

Image: Djirri Djirri Dancers, Malahang Festival 2019 (Glitch Media)

# Community Engagement approach and processes

Banyule City Council undertook three stages of strategy development over 9 months, including:

## 1. Research and analysis

Collated and reviewed organisation, state and federal policies, current research and relevant reports for the Aboriginal Affairs sector.

### Key documents reviewed included:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework
- Victorian Treaty Framework
- The Yoorrook Justice Commission Findings
- Closing the Gap Agreement
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Native Title Act 1993*
- *Public Health And Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

## 2. Identification of emerging themes

A series of workshops were conducted with an internally elected working group and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee and Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee to establish proposed strategic focus areas, influenced by the research, to support the objectives of the Banyule Community Vision 2041.

### The following key themes emerged through the research and analysis:

- First Nations representation
- Education for the broader community
- Investment in health and wellbeing
- Formal relationship with Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place
- Visibility of culture, history and principles
- Cultural awareness and safety

From here, we developed a draft vision, focus areas and key commitments within the Strategy.

## 3. Community engagement

Developed a community survey and facilitated a series of workshops with local First Nations community members, through the Wurundjeri Corporation, RAP Advisory Committee, Barrbunin Beek Committee, and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This also included consultation with other key stakeholders and the broader community.

### What we heard through the consultation:

- Education for the broader community
- Embedding and sharing Traditional Owner environmental knowledge
- Visibility of culture, history and principles
- Cultural awareness and safety
- Community events

## 4. Refinement and exhibition

Based on feedback and findings, the Strategy was refined and shared on Shaping Banyule for public exhibition. Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee was also privately consulted to inform the final Strategy.



Image: Spring Outdoors 2023 (Jamie Robertson)



**Banyule**  
City Council