



INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

May 2018 - April 2020

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE

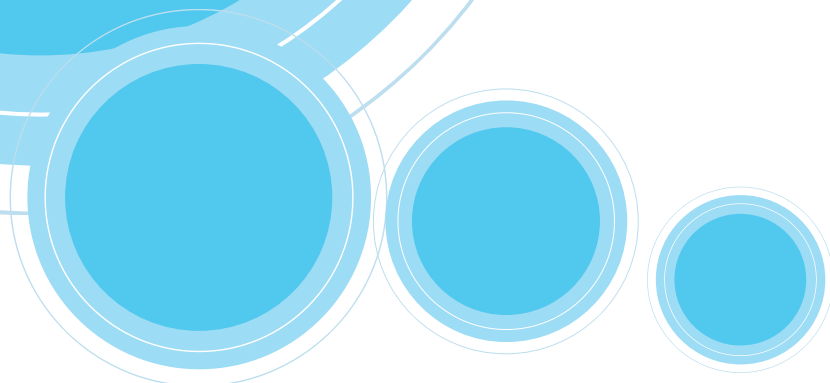


RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE



CESSNOCK
CITY COUNCIL



Page of Contents

CONTENTS

PAGE OF CONTENTS	2	RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN.....	17
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY.....	3	RELATIONSHIPS	18
MAYOR FOREWORD.....	4	RESPECT.....	23
MESSAGE FROM THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMITTEE ..	5	OPPORTUNITIES	29
OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION.....	7	GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING	34
OUR BUSINESS	8		
OUR RAP	10		
CONSULTATION.....	13		
PARTNERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES	14		

*Front cover artwork and content provided by Mr Craig Layer, member of the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee
"Eagles View"*

"Eagles View" takes us on a journey as the majestic Wedge Tailed Eagle, the totem of the Wonnarua people surveys his broad territory.

The centre of his territory is close to a waterhole that attracts other animals and prospective prey and is linked to the four corners of his territory which lies within the surrounding mountain ranges.

Symbolically, the eagle represents the way in which the Wonnarua people are intrinsically connected to their country and one another. Each circle represents a clan group within the nation, and the travel lines their connection to one another.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was adopted by Cessnock City Council on 16 May 2018.

Acknowledgement of **Country**

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who now live within the Cessnock local government area.

Mayor Foreword

COUNCILLOR BOB PYNSENT

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CESSNOCK

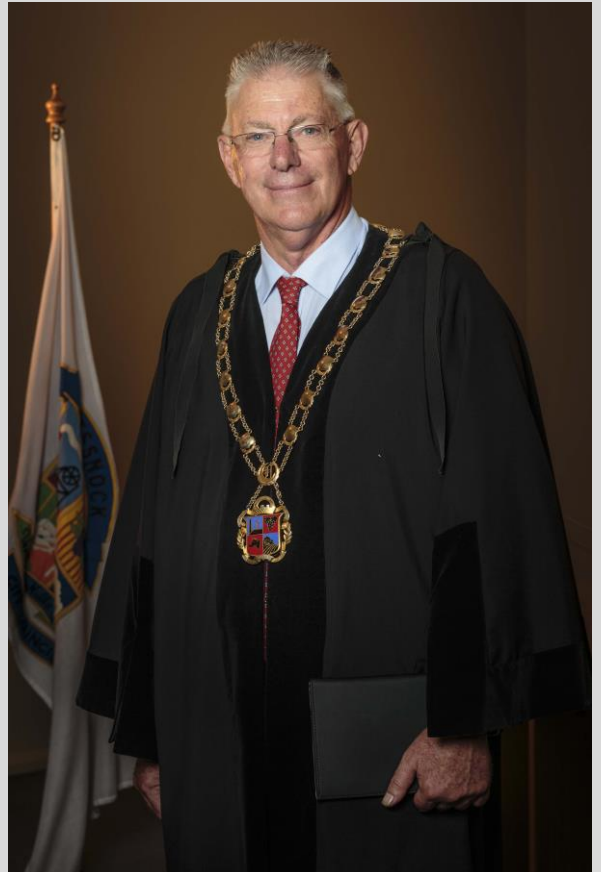
It is with pleasure I present Cessnock City Council's second Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is of great importance to the Cessnock Local Government Area. Over recent years, Council has implemented a range of reconciliation programs through its Reflect Plan. The Innovate Plan is an opportunity to build on our previous work and progress into the future.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee has guided our Innovate Plan, this involved hearing from people who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander living or working in the Cessnock Local Government Area. The time generously provided by all people contributing to the development of this Plan is greatly appreciated.

The Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to reconciliation and provides a documented framework for the role it can take.

Council looks forward to developing and maintaining strong working relationships with the community in delivering all of the Plan's actions.



Message from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee

Cessnock Local Government Area majority lies upon the Traditional Custodian country of the Wonnarua Nation and also includes Darkinjung and Awabakal lands.

In 2013, Council advertised for interested community members to form the Aboriginal Advisory Committee with the view to acknowledgement, respect and include local Aboriginal history, cultural heritage and Aboriginal peoples' in the development of an innovative progressively inclusive plan for Council to implement.

The Committee was formed and issues that were long standing were successfully addressed. One such issue was employment and inclusiveness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Council.

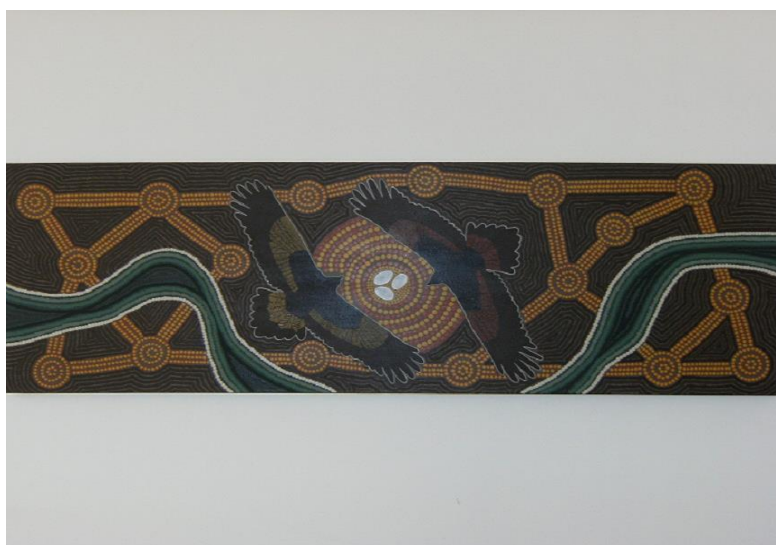
The Committee recommended to Council that a RAP would be advantageous to the Council's reconciliation commitments and for it to be translated into actions that would be meaningful and measurable by using a template developed by Reconciliation Australia.

Unfortunately, during the development and implementation of the Reflect RAP, the Committee and Council lost two of their number. We would like to acknowledge Uncle Les Elvin and Mr Simon Eade for their invaluable input, guidance and the beginnings of the framework to make a difference.

With the completion of the Reflect RAP, the journey of developing the Innovate RAP was begun in 2016. With a new energy, the Committee in 2017 had a name change to the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee". Thereafter to include all our Traditional Peoples.

This second RAP has a focus on undertaking the development of a culturally supportive working environment; provide career pathways and avenues for professional development within the Council to support, recruit and retain, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff; and to also educate all staff members on culturally appropriate conduct, unity, inclusiveness and history of Aboriginal Australia.

The Committee determinedly has worked tirelessly to develop the Innovate RAP and looks forward to its implementation over the next two years.



*Artwork by Mr Craig Layer
Member of the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Committee*



*Uncle Perry Fuller
Event held at Cessnock Performing Arts Centre*

Our Vision for **Reconciliation**

Our vision for reconciliation is for Cessnock City Council to build unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and respect their connections to lands, waters, places and cultures. In particular, Cessnock City Council recognises the people of the Wonnarua Nation and the neighbouring Nations of Darkinjung and Awabakal. We will work to support the national objectives of closing the social, economic and health gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community and achieving reconciliation in Australia. We will ensure reconciliation is alive in our organisation by increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and current issues, by being accountable and taking responsibility for change. By walking together along our two paths, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other community members will work with Council to build a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Cessnock City Council

Local government has been in operation in the Cessnock area since 1906 when the Shire of Cessnock held its first meeting. During the following years there were several amalgamations and splits as new Shires were formed and reshaped until Cessnock was declared a City in 1958. Now called Cessnock City Council (Council), it comprises two areas, they being the elected representatives (Councillors) and the administration (staff).

Councillors are elected by residents of the local government area every four years, with the Mayor being elected by popular vote. In the Cessnock local government area there are four wards where three Councillors are elected to represent the interests of those who live in each ward while the Mayor is elected to represent the whole community. Cessnock City Council therefore has the Mayor and 12 Councillors making up the Council. The administrative section of Council is led by the General Manager. The General Manager is responsible for the efficient, effective and sustainable operation of the Council in providing services and facilities for the community. The General Manager is also responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Councillors are implemented.

Council delivers a number of services to the Cessnock local government area. These services include: community events; libraries; performing arts centre; youth centre, community planning; recreation and community facilities; cemeteries; waste services; construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges, drainage and civil infrastructure; road safety programs and facilities; parking enforcement; animal management; strategic land use planning; natural environmental planning and management; development planning and assessment; building compliance and safety; public health inspections; regulation enforcement programs; environmental pollution monitoring & enforcement; on-site sewage management system inspections, and emergency management.

The local government area comprises an area of 1,966 square kilometres in the Hunter Valley Region of NSW. The local government area is predominantly situated on the lands of the Wonnarua Nation and within its boundaries are many significant Aboriginal sites. Wonnarua means “land of hills and plains”. The local government area is home to many localities and places with Aboriginal names and histories. Mount Yengo, located in Yengo National Park, is of particular significance to Aboriginal peoples. It is the place from where Baiame jumped to return to the spirit world after he had created the lakes, rivers, mountains and caves in the area. When Baiame jumped towards the sky, he flattened the top of Mount Yengo, and that flat top can still be seen today.

Mount Yengo and its surrounds are home to many important sites of Aboriginal spiritual and cultural association. The Wollombi Valley is also home to many other significant sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Towns, villages and localities in the local government area bearing Aboriginal names include Kurri Kurri (meaning “the beginning” or “the first”), Wollombi (“meeting place” or “meeting of the waters”), Congewai, Nulkaba, Laguna and Kalingo.

European settlement since the 1830s has seen the establishment of pastoral lands, the coal mining industry, the viticulture industry and more recently, tourism. Whilst mining was the principal industrial base and source of employment in the Cessnock area for the first half of the twentieth century, changes to the mining industry, including automation and the introduction of sophisticated computerised equipment, led to the closure of the vast majority of mines in the area. The decline of mining has been paralleled by growth in the wine industry. The Hunter Valley vineyards in the Cessnock local government area is Australia’s oldest wine region and one of the most famous, with around 4,500 acres under vine. The vineyards of Pokolbin, Mount View and Allandale, with their rich volcanic soils tended by entrepreneurial vignerons, are also the focus of a thriving tourism

industry. As well as vineyards and wineries there are fine restaurants, motels, cabins, guest houses, concerts and galleries. Wine-related tourism has also created opportunities for other attractions, such as the historic Marthaville Arts and Crafts Centre, Wollombi Village, the Richmond Main Mining Museum and the Richmond Vale Railway. Other primary industries in Cessnock City include beef and poultry. Light and secondary industry were a feature of the City's recent economic development, with the processing of explosive equipment and mining support services now a significant source of employment in the area.

The 2016 estimated resident population of the Cessnock local government area is 56,762 (ABS, 2016). In the 2016 Census, 4,007 people identified

as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, representing 7.2% of the total population. This is considerably higher than the Australian and NSW state populations and is 2.8% and 2.9% respectively. It is also higher than the NSW regional population and was recorded at 5.5% (ABS, Census 2016).

As at June 2017, Council employed 344 staff (294 full time equivalent staff). Cessnock City Council Equal Employment Opportunity data indicates that 7 employees (2.3% based on 81% of employees responding to an Equal Employment Opportunity questionnaire) identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Our RAP

Background

In April 2014, Council following a recommendation from its then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, resolved to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

With encouragement and support from the previous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, Council developed a Reflect RAP. The one year Plan was adopted by Council on the 9 December 2015 and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia on the 14 December 2015. The adoption and implementation of the Reflect RAP provided Council with a framework to guide its developing relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in particular those people who live within the Cessnock local government area.

This one year Reflect RAP has now concluded. The outcomes and achievements of the Reflect RAP have been evaluated and all 13 actions listed were addressed. In summary, the outcomes of the Reflect RAP include:-

- An internal working group was established and met 6 times to monitor and track the implementation of the Plan.
- For National Reconciliation Week 2016, an Elders Morning Tea was held in the Council Administration Building, attended by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Councillors, Council Executive and key Council staff. The event also included an Aboriginal Cultural performance.
- A cultural awareness training program was delivered to Council's Executive, Reconciliation Working Group members, RAP Champions, Program Managers and key staff late 2016 and early 2017. The training was delivered by a Wonnarua man from Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation and was attended by 48 staff.

- The NAIDOC Week 2016 Calendar of Events listed 16 local activities and was widely promoted within the community. Events were organised and hosted by a range of organisations across the Cessnock local government area including Council. Over 2,700 community members participated in events during the week.
- Council resolved to install two additional flag poles in the carpark area of the Council Administration Building, allowing Council to fly the Torres Strait Islander Flag alongside the National and Aboriginal Flags. The flag poles have been installed allowing Council to fly the Australian Flag, Aboriginal Flag and now the Torres Strait Islander Flag.
- Three portable flag poles (1.8 metres high) were purchased to display at indoor events: the Australian Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag. The flagpoles have been made available to staff for display at Council events and engagements. To date, the Flags have been used by Council staff at NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week events, community consultations, a service provider forum, and the Cessnock City Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.
- Council's website has been updated to include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities page. The page provides information on Councils Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee, RAP, NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, and provides a guide to the appropriate delivery of a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country.
- In raising awareness amongst Council staff for the Reflect RAP and NAIDOC Week, a Council staff BBQ was held to coincide with the 2016 NAIDOC Week celebrations. The staff BBQ included Bush Tukka food, and

resources providing information about the history of the Aboriginal Flag, Torres Strait Islander Flag and local sites of cultural significance, including the Baiame Cave and Mount Yengo and were made available to staff.

- Council was successful in being awarded Scholarship funding under the 2016/17 Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program for a School Based trainee. The student commenced their school based traineeship with Cessnock City Council in February 2017.
- A further scholarship funding application was submitted for the 2017/18 funding round of the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program. This application was also successful in gaining funding for a School Based Trainee.
- Council has captured baseline data on current Council employees that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- The Les Elvin Kungerra Art Gallery at the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre continues to operate and provides a permanent exhibition space for local Wonnarua people to display, market and sell their arts and crafts.
- The Cessnock City Council Workforce Plan 2017-21 which forms part of Council's Resourcing Strategy includes employment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Human Resource policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants, participating in our workplace.
- Council's Procurement Policy has been reviewed to ensure it encourages the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Council completed and submitted to Reconciliation Australia the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. The questionnaire advised Reconciliation Australia of Council's progress in actioning the RAP.

- The progress of the RAP was regularly reported at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee meetings.

The Innovate RAP will provide further opportunities for Council to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to reconciliation at a local level. This second stage RAP enables the development of further actions that improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and raise awareness within the organisation and the wider community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the issues that are of concern to residents.



Above:
2017 National Reconciliation Week
Event held at Cessnock City Council

From left to right, Susan Mulyk*, Craig Layer*, Councillor Rod Doherty*, Auntie Cynthia Morris, Sonia Sharpe*, Mayor of the City of Cessnock Bob Pynsent*, Michelle Earl*, Tracy Skene*, pictured centre is Uncle Perry Fuller.

***Denotes a member of the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.**

The event included an Aboriginal Artwork Display and a Didgeridoo performance from Uncle Perry Fuller.

Summary of achievements from our Reflect RAP

- All 13 actions listed in the Reflect RAP were addressed.
- Two additional flag poles in the carpark area of the Council Administration Building were installed allowing Council to fly the Torres Strait Islander Flag alongside the National and Aboriginal Flags.
- An Elders Morning Tea was held during National Reconciliation Week 2016.
- 16 activities were listed in the NAIDOC Week 2016 Calendar of Events.
- 48 Council staff participated in cultural awareness training.
- In raising awareness amongst Council staff for the Reflect RAP a staff BBQ was held to coincide with the 2016 NAIDOC Week celebrations.
- Three portable flag poles (1.8 metres high) were purchased to display the Australian Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag at indoor events.
- Council's website was updated to include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities page.
- Council was successful in being awarded Scholarship funding under the 2016/17 Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program for a School Based Trainee.
- The Les Elvin Kungerra Art Gallery continues to be hosted at the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre.
- Council's Procurement Policy was reviewed to encourage the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Human Resource policies and procedures reviewed to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants, participating in our workplace.

Consultation

Developing the Innovate RAP

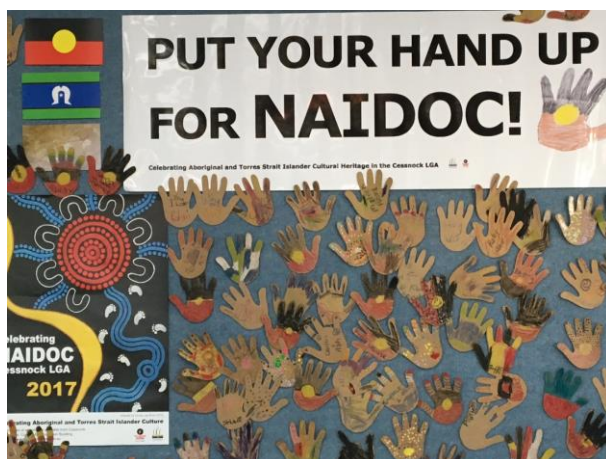
The development of the Innovate RAP has been guided by Cessnock City Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee (established 2017). The Membership of this Committee of Council comprises six Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community representatives, three councillors and is attended by a number of Council staff. This Committee is in addition to the RAP Working Group who also guided the development of the Innovate RAP.

In consulting with the community a meeting was held on the 19 October 2016 and attended by peoples who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The aim of the meeting was to consider ideas for the Innovate RAP. Approximately 30 people attended including community members and Council staff with responsibility for implementing the RAP. The ideas raised at the meeting have been considered and included in the Innovate RAP.

Our RAP is championed by the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee and numerous business units within Council. These business units within the organisation that champion the Innovate RAP and also contributed to its development include community and cultural engagement, human resources, economic development, recreation

services, finance and administration (purchasing/procurement). All of these business units are included in the RAP Working Group and is made up of Council staff with responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Innovate RAP. The RAP Working Group membership includes the Community and Cultural Engagement Manager, Human Resource Manager, Economic Development Manager, Finance and Administration Manager, Open Space and Community Facilities Manager or their delegate and a community representative from the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee. Staff that are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons are encouraged to join and participate in the RAP Working Group.

In accordance with Council's adopted 2017/18 Operational Plan, the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the RAP is with the Community and Cultural Engagement Manager. Within the Operational Plan, the Community and Cultural Engagement Manager role is accountable for the action '1.1.1b Commence implementation of the Innovate RAP'. The Community and Cultural Engagement Manager attends both the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee and the RAP Working Group.



*'Put Your Hand Up For NAIDOC'
A local promotional campaign
encouraging all people to get
involved in NAIDOC Week*

Partnerships & Activities

Our Partnerships & Current Activities

Council endeavours to build productive working relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to effectively engage and to understand the issues of interest to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council currently liaises with key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations around a range of Council programs, activities and engagements, in particular National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and/or cultural learning. These organisations include; Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council, Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre, Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation (Black Creek in Wonnarua language), Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation as well as relevant staff in other government and non-government agencies.

As part of National Reconciliation Week 2016 and 2017, Council hosted an Elders Morning Tea attended by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, Councillors, Council Executive and key staff. A cultural performance formed part of the event. To assist with 2017 National Reconciliation Week activities, Cessnock City Council was awarded \$5,000 of funding from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The funding was also used to produce educational and engagement materials that were distributed throughout the community. The procurement of the printing was an Aboriginal Business listed on the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce website.

NAIDOC Week 2017 included a range of activities organised and hosted by the Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation (Black Creek in Wonnarua language), Barkuma

Neighbourhood Centre, Cessnock City Libraries, Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service, Hunter New England Health and the Samaritans Information and Neighbourhood Centre Cessnock. Cessnock City Council was awarded \$2,000 of funding from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to assist with 2017 NAIDOC Week.

Council for some time now has been delivering an Acknowledgment of Country at the beginning of its Council meetings and at civic events. A form of words for delivering an appropriate Acknowledgment of Country was prepared in consultation with the previous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. An Acknowledgement of Country has also been made available for all staff to include as part of their Council email signature block.

In 2015, Council adopted the 'Consultation Protocol for the Referral of Matters to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee'. The protocol provides a framework to assist Council staff in the identification of the type of matters that are to be referred to the Committee for consultation. An example of this is the Bridges Hills Skate Park. In 2015, Council was successful in obtaining \$950,000 through the National Stronger Regions Fund to deliver the Cessnock Civic Precinct Revitalisation Project. A portion of this will be used to improve access and upgrade the playground at Bridges Hill Park. Following feedback received by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee informing the development of the Bridges Hill Park Masterplan, a number of changes were made to include Aboriginal interpretive art, an Aboriginal themed playground and yarning circle.

Another example of the value of the Protocol is Council's Hunter Valley Wine Country Strategy (Signage), adopted by Council in 2015. The Signage Strategy includes opportunity for a Welcome at Gateway Entry Points. The implementation of the Strategy and the inclusion of a Welcome at Gateway Entry Points will be a focus of the current Committee and forms an action within this Innovate RAP.

The implementation of a RAP is a key action in working towards Objective 1.1.1 of Council's 2017-21, Delivery Plan - Engage with the community in reconciliation activities. The Operational Plan for the 2017-18 year reaffirms this commitment and lists the strategy 1.1.1a Participate in NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week activities and strategy 1.1.1b Commence implementation of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

The most recently appointed Council (appointed 2016) reaffirmed its commitment to reconciliation and resolved to re-instate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee during the Council term. The initial Committee appointed in 2013, was instrumental in developing the Reflect RAP. The newly appointed Committee, associated with the current Council has again worked on developing this Innovate RAP and had its first meeting April 2017. The Committee was formed after an expression of interest process, calling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to join the committee as a community representative.

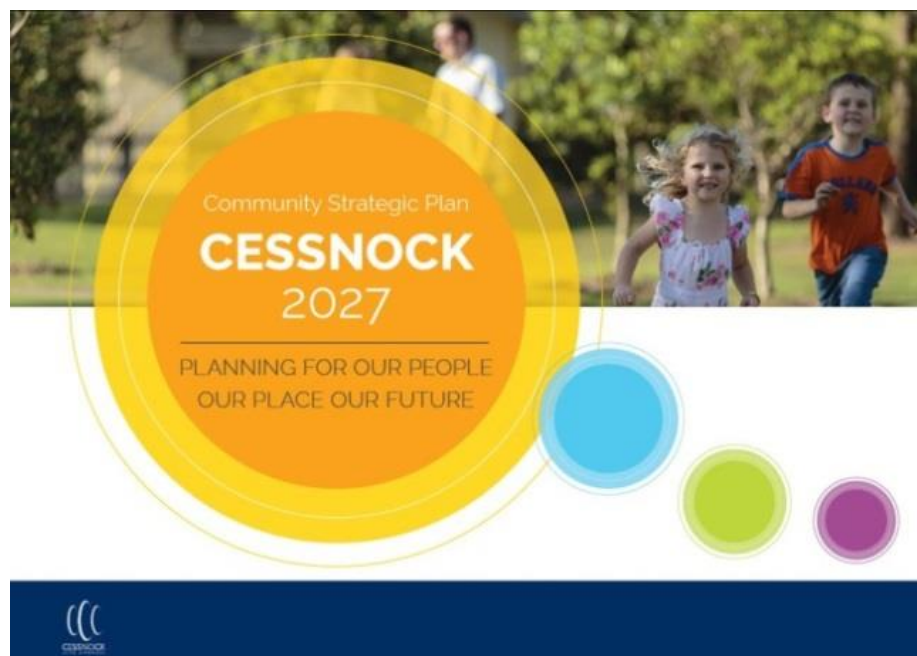
The Committee as part of its Terms of Reference meets and reports to Council on its outcomes on a regular basis. The Committee has a membership of three Councillors and up to eight representatives from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with the intention that the majority of members are from the Wonnarua nation. The community representatives are members who have nominated as individuals, not as representatives of organisations.

The objectives of the Committee, as outlined in its Terms of Reference, is:

1. To engage and consult with representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who live within the Cessnock local government area.
2. To provide a forum within the Cessnock local government area to discuss issues of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
3. To raise local awareness of issues of interest to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
4. To encourage understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, heritage and cultures.
5. To provide Council with strategic advice and guidance in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. This includes obtaining an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective on the development of plans and strategies, as appropriate.
6. To provide advice for Council events/activities associated with NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week.
7. To maintain and enhance positive working relationships between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Links to Council's Strategic Plan's

The implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan is a key action in working towards Objective 1.1.1 of Council's 2017-21, Delivery Plan - 'Engage with the community in reconciliation activities'. The Operational Plan for the 2017-18 year reaffirms this commitment and lists the strategies 1.1.1a 'Participate in NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week activities' and 1.1.1b 'Commence implementation of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan'.



Reconciliation Action Plan



*2017 NAIDOC Week, Kurri Kurri Rotary Park
Barkuma Family Fun Day Event*

Relationships



Cessnock City Council understands that strong and meaningful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is important for reconciliation.

Collaboration, consultation and liaison with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and key organisations provides guidance for Council in delivering services to the community that are inclusive and respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and issues.

Strong relationships are important to Council and assist the organisation to strengthen service delivery within the community. For example, the NAIDOC Week program has experienced considerable growth in recent years with Council having a great awareness of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, local artists and cultural performers.

Focus area:

This focus area links to the following objectives of the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027:-

- **Objective 1.1 – Promoting social connections**
- **Objective 1.2 – Strengthening community’s culture**
- **Objective 5.2 – Encouraging more community participation in decision making**

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and Maintain Relationships			
1.1) RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	• The RWG will monitor and track implementation of the Plan.	May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	• Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG. The RWG to include at least one community member from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.	May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	• Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	• RWG to meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	May 2018 October 2018 March 2019 October 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and Maintain Relationships (continued)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed RAP actions and goals into Council's strategic planning framework. 	July 2018 July 2019	Finance and Administration Manager
1.2) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee to provide guidance to the RWG and oversee RAP implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute the Terms of Reference for Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee to employees and make it available on Council's website. A representative from the RWG to attend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee meetings. An update on the RAP's implementation to be included as a regular item on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee's meeting agenda. 	May 2018 May 2018 May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
Supporting Service Development			
1.3) Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. Continue to engage and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and stakeholders. Support Council staff to use inclusive engagement practices to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community members in consultation on strategic planning initiatives. 	December 2019 December 2019 December 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Supporting Service Development (continued)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Council's community initiatives amongst local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks. These may include; Council's grant programs, funding opportunities, community and cultural events. 	February 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement engagement strategies to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. 	May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
National Reconciliation Week			
1.4) Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the wider community, and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Council will organise an event to recognise and celebrate NRW annually. 	May 2018 May 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives from the RAP Working Group will participate in at least one external NRW. 	May 2018 May 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will register its NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's website to capture support and participation. 	May 2018 May 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation/s to celebrate National Reconciliation Week, including the provision of in-kind support for external National Reconciliation Week events. 	May 2018 February 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Engagement in the Arts			
1.5) Programming at the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre (CPAC) will be inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander performances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual CPAC program will include where available performances presented by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander theatre companies and/or featuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander actors. 	January 2019 January 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
Awareness Raising			
1.6) Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a plan to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders. 	September 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders. 	February 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate quarterly updates on RAP progress to all staff including publishing the progress on the staff intranet. 	March, June, September, December 2018 & 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage neighbouring local government areas to develop a RAP. 	February 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager



*2017 NAIDOC Week event, held in the grounds of Cessnock TAFE
Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation (Black Creek in Wonnarua
language) Family Fun Day*

Respect



The local area is one of great social, cultural and spiritual importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage assists to build understanding and an appreciation of diversity within the community. Cultural awareness increases the capacity of Council to effectively engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provide opportunities for the whole community to come together. Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as custodians of the land and promoting the value of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage demonstrates respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Focus area:

This focus area links to the following objectives of the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027:-

Objective 1.1 – Promoting social connections

Objective 1.2 – Strengthening community’s culture

Objective 2.3 – Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Cultural Learning			
2.1) Engage employees in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the business case for cultural learning including continuing with the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training program for staff. 	September 2019	Human Resource Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide continued opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training. 	December 2019	RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Custodians and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training and include as part of the staff orientation package. 	September 2019	Human Resource Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Cultural Learning (continued)			
2.2) Engage Council in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural awareness training to be included in the induction program for the future, newly elected Council. 	April 2020	General Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite the present elected Council to participate in the current program of cultural awareness training. 	September 2019	General Manager
Cultural Protocols			
2.3) Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country and make available on the staff intranet. 	June 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available to staff a list of contacts for organising a Welcome to Country. 	November 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to invite Aboriginal Elders to provide a Welcome to Country at Council civic events and could include Naturalisation Ceremony's, Hall of Fame, Spring Awakening and Carols in the Park. Events to also consider the inclusion of an Aboriginal performance. 	May 2018 to April 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of Council meetings and at Council initiated events. 	May 2018 to April 2020	General Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support employees to give an Acknowledgement of Country at community events, as well as internal events. 	May 2018 to April 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Cultural Protocols (continued)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise and display an Acknowledgment of Country banner in Council's administration building and on the Council website. Provide a welcoming entry statement (signage) into the Cessnock Local Government Area acknowledging the Wonnarua People as Traditional Custodians of the local area. 	<p>September 2018</p> <p>February 2020</p>	<p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Infrastructure Manager</p>
2.4) Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review human resource policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. Investigate ways to involve Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the planning and delivery of NAIDOC Week celebrations. Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week. 	<p>May 2018</p> <p>May 2018</p> <p>July 2018 July 2019</p>	<p>Human Resource Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>General Manager</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Participation and Engagement in NAIDOC Week			
2.5) Celebrate and share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures including the hosting of an annual event as part of NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in developing the local NAIDOC Week event calendar. Continue to build relationships with external stakeholder groups to encourage engagement in Council's NAIDOC Week calendar of events, to expand the program of activities, and increase community awareness of and participation in the week. Participate or host one internal NAIDOC Week event and extend an invitation to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Promote community NAIDOC Week events in the Cessnock local government area. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, performers and organisations as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations. Cessnock City Library to develop and launch during NAIDOC Week 2018 a research guide including accompanying training for searching Aboriginal Heritage. Include information in the new resident's pack to increase awareness of local Aboriginal histories, services and encourage participation in annually hosted events such as NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week. 	May 2018 April 2019 May 2018 July 2018 July 2019 June 2018 June 2019 July 2018 July 2019 July 2018 May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Participation and Engagement in NAIDOC Week (continued)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek grant funding for the design and printing of NAIDOC Week street banners to be displayed within the Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Central Business Districts. 	December 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
Young People			
2.6) Programming at the Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) will be inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander performances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Council's youth service CYCOS has a presence at NAIDOC Week community events. 	July 2018 July 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager
Culture and Tourism			
2.7) Promote cultural learning throughout the Cessnock local government area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the feasibility of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural space and consider opportunities as a tourism experience. Encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to list their services on the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre website and in its publications. 	December 2019 December 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Economic Development Manager
2.8) Promote Aboriginal Tourism to people who live and visit the Cessnock Local Government Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate membership with the NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council (NATOC). NATOC is recognised as the peak body for Aboriginal Tourism in New South Wales. 	December 2018	Economic Development Manager

Y SHOP
gh Here

ERY
OP

**PUT YOUR HAND UP
FOR NAIDOC!**

and Torres Strait Islands Cultural Heritage Month Cessnock LGA

*Put Your Hand Up for NAIDOC Public Awareness Campaign
Cessnock Regional Art Gallery*



Opportunities



Addressing the inequities in employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples is a key opportunity for Cessnock City Council and the wider business community. This includes increasing employment opportunities at Council, procuring of goods and services that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses along with the delivery of practices that support business development. Opportunities that strengthen the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is important to the community and Council has a responsibility to demonstrate community leadership.

Focus area:

This focus area links to the following objectives of the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027:-

- **Objective 2.1 – Diversifying local business options**
- **Objective 2.2 – Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities**

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Employment			
3.1) Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collect information on our current rates of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and use to inform future employment opportunities, recruitment and retention. • Implement the Cessnock City Council Workforce Plan 2017-21 which forms part of Council's Resourcing Strategy and includes actions relating to employment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. • Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who express an interest in discussing employment and career development opportunities, including professional development. • Advertise job vacancies (including traineeships and internships) through a range of networks such as Job Services Australia, job fairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets. 	<p>May 2018 to April 2020</p> <p>February 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>June 2018</p>	<p>Human Resource Manager</p> <p>Human Resource Manager</p> <p>Human Resource Manager</p> <p>Human Resource Manager</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Employment (continued)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further investigate and increase pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples including training pathways, apprenticeships, traineeships, the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment program, graduate programs and work experience. 	December 2019	Human Resource Manager
Procurement			
3.2) Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually review and update procurement procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Review and update Council's tendering documentation to identify supplier's commitment to encouraging and increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. Investigate Supply Nation membership. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are considered first when procuring goods and services for NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week. Develop and communicate a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to staff. Develop relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business. 	<p>May 2018 to April 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>July 2018 July 2019</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>February 2020</p>	<p>Finance and Administration Manager</p> <p>Finance and Administration Manager</p> <p>Finance and Administration Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Economic Development Manager</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Business Development			
3.3) Provide business development opportunities that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote and engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by providing information for business development and expansion, awareness of grant opportunities and provision of information that supports grant applications, for example business and demographic statistics. 	November 2019	Economic Development Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses via the Cessnock City Council Economic Development electronic newsletter 'e-News Monitor and Advance Cessnock City website'. 	July 2018	Economic Development Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to host the Les Elvin Kungerra Gallery, to enable local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to exhibit their products and services, in particular artworks. 	May 2018	Economic Development Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Les Elvin Kungerra Gallery and its products to recognise local talent and drive sales. 	May 2018	Economic Development Manager
Community Facilities			
3.4) Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers are aware of community facilities, in particular those that are available which support the delivery of service, for example youth centre, community halls, performing arts centre and neighbourhood centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage the delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services across the Cessnock Local Government Area and the use of Council owned facilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs. 	December 2019	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Open Space and Community Facilities Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Community Facilities (continued)			
3.5) Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are consulted when developing Plans of Management for community facilities and parks situated on community land and have a link to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures/heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee is consulted when planning new community and/or recreation facilities as per the 2015 adopted Consultation Protocol for the Referral of Matters to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee. 	May 2018	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Open Space and Community Facilities Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for the recognition and commemoration of Aboriginal culture and heritage within community facilities, for example Aboriginal Artworks, Aboriginal Language as the facility name and plaques/signage that acknowledge Traditional Custodians. 	February 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Open Space and Community Facilities Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Bridges Hill Park Masterplan which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpretive art and yarning circle. 	February 2020	Open Space and Community Facilities Manager



***Cessnock City Council Administration Building
The inclusion of the Torres Strait Islander Flag was an outcome
of the Reflect RAP***

Governance, tracking progress and reporting



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Governance, tracking progress and reporting			
4.1) Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to collect data for the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. RAP Working Group to seek internal approval to complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. Submit the completed RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually. Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer. 	<p>July 2018 July 2019</p> <p>August 2018 August 2019</p> <p>September 2018 September 2019</p> <p>May 2018</p>	<p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p>
4.2) Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, including within Council's Annual Report. Report on the progress of the RAP to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee, noting the minutes are reported to Council and are available to the community. Report to staff the progress of the RAP via the internal Council website. 	<p>October 2018 October 2019</p> <p>December 2018 December 2019</p> <p>October 2018 October 2019</p>	<p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community and Cultural Engagement Manager</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Governance, tracking progress and reporting (continued)			
4.3) Review, refresh and update RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a Stretch RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements. • Send draft refresh RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback. • Submit draft refresh RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement. 	October 2019 January 2020 March 2020	Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager Community and Cultural Engagement Manager



Tiddalik - Wollombi Valley

Tiddalik overcome by thirst, gulped more water than was required with little regard for the need of others. Tiddalik drank so much water, drying up the streams. With no water left for the other animals, the animals decided to make Tiddalik laugh to bring the water back up. Tiddalik was punished for being greedy and was turned into stone.

Photograph taken by Sonia Sharpe

Member of the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee



62-78 Vincent Street
Cessnock, NSW
Australia



Contact:
tel: 0249934300
tel: 0249934100



Online help:
council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au
<http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au>