CONSULTATION DRAFT

Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029

City of Whittlesea

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

Contents

Message from the CEO	2
Executive summary	3
The Aboriginal Community in Whittlesea	4
The Whittlesea Reconciliation Group	5
Our reconciliation journey	6
Next steps – an Aboriginal action plan	8
Listening and learning	10
Self-determination	11
Our Aboriginal Action Plan	12
Theme 1: Culture, respect and trust	14
Theme 2: Awareness and engagement	16
Theme 3: Accountability and direction	18
Theme 4: Governance and participation	19
Theme 5: Economic participation	20
Theme 6: Health and wellbeing	22
Theme 7: Resourcing and funding	23
References	24

The artwork featured on the cover design and used throughout this document was created by Mandy Nicholson, Wurundjeri artist. It contains traditional Wurundjeri motifs and represents how we are connected to the earth, just like our fingerprints.

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I am proud to present the City of Whittlesea's *Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029*.

The *Aboriginal Action Plan* marks a new era in Council's commitment to reconciliation and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

With the second largest Aboriginal population in metropolitan Melbourne, Council understands the important role it can, and should, play in leading change across our community.

Developed in consultation with the local Aboriginal Community, including the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group, the plan will guide Council's reconciliation efforts for the next five years.

Building on the progress made through Council's first *Reconciliation Action Plan* and subsequent S*tretch Reconciliation Action Plan*, this plan contains 34 key actions.

These actions focus specifically on the needs, aspirations and priorities of the Aboriginal Community within the City of Whittlesea to improve cultural, health, education and employment outcomes.

Importantly, the *Aboriginal Action Plan* forms part of Council's *Integrated Planning Framework,* which ensures it is at the heart of decision making across the organisation.

The *Aboriginal Action Plan*, together with initiatives such as the Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Parkland, will help drive meaningful, long-lasting change.

I look forward to Council working with the Community on these important next steps in our reconciliation journey.

Craig Lloyd
Chief Executive Officer
City of Whittlesea

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029* is a key strategy in Council's *Integrated Planning Framework*.

It was developed through close collaboration with our local Aboriginal community and reflects their expert knowledge.

It aims to recognise and enable Aboriginal self-determination by:

- prioritising culture
- addressing trauma and supporting healing
- addressing racism and promoting cultural safety
- prioritising decision-making power in areas that impact their communities.

It also aims to support:

- *the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026 (VALGS 2021-2026)*
- *the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*
- the Treaty process including Yoorrook Justice Commission recommendations
- *the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023.*

To do so, it addresses seven action areas set out in the VALGS 2021-2026. These action areas align with our *Integrated Planning Framework* and accurately reflect the City's journey toward reconciliation.

The plan will be achieved in partnership with the City of Whittlesea's Aboriginal Community and Council's Reconciliation Group.

THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY IN WHITTLESEA

The City of Whittlesea is located on the Country of the Wurundjeri and Taungurung Peoples.

Approximately 20 kilometres north of Melbourne, this Country has many culturally significant sites and the Wurundjeri Willum clan and Taungurung People are the Traditional Owners of the land that now forms our Green Wedge.

This Green Wedge protects and promotes Aboriginal heritage on over 60 per cent of the City of Whittlesea's land area.

Today, more than 2,250 Aboriginal people call the City of Whittlesea home. This is more than three per cent of the City's population and means this community is the second largest Aboriginal Community in metropolitan Melbourne.[1]

The Community has grown by almost 40 per cent since 2016, especially in Doreen and Mernda where it has grown by more than 50 per cent. Many members are under 18.

The City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members are represented at Council through the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group.

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. *2021 Census*.
2021 Whittlesea, Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au).

THE WHITTLESEA RECONCILIATION GROUP

Council's formal pathway to reconciliation began in 2001 with the formation of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group.

This community-based committee is comprised of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, as well as council representatives including an Administrator and post the Council election, the City of Whittlesea mayor and a councillor.

It also has three non-voting members from Council to support its work.

The Whittlesea Reconciliation Group meets regularly to discuss issues, opportunities, policies and programs that impact on Aboriginal Peoples living in the City and is an important reference group to Council.

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Since 2001, the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group has inspired and supported Council in a range of initiatives to progress our reconciliation journey. These include the following steps:

2001

Council establishes the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group

2002

Council adopts our first Indigenous Reconciliation Policy

2005

Council holds our first Koori Christmas BBQ

2007

Council holds our first Reconciliation Dinner and National Sorry Day events

Council creates an Aboriginal Liaison Officer position

2009

Council creates a fixed term Aboriginal Project Officer position for Bubup Wilam

2010

Council creates a full-time permanent Youth Services Officer (Aboriginal portfolio) position

The first Aboriginal community-controlled organisation in Whittlesea is incorporated – Bubup Wiliam for Early Learning Centre Inc

2011

Council's Traditional Owner Acknowledgement Statement is translated into eight local languages

The Local Aboriginal Elders Social Support group is established

2012

The Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Centre is officially opened

Council adopts an Aboriginal Employment Pathways Strategy

Council adopts our first Reconciliation Action Plan

2013

Almost 150 senior Council staff attend cultural awareness training

2014

Council completes construction of a Sorry Space dedicated to the Stolen Generations

Council begins biannual meetings between the Aboriginal community and Council's CEO and Mayor

2015

Council adopts an updated Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy and an Aboriginal Inclusion Charter

Council adopts *Building Respect: Whittlesea's Anti-racism Strategy 2015 -2019*

2017

Council adopts its *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020*

2018

WRG Change the date campaign

2019

Council adopts an updated City of Whittlesea *Cultural Heritage Strategy 2019-2025*

2020

Installation of Acknowledgement of Traditional Owner plaques at the entrances to all Council's key public facilities

Council's commitment to revise its approach to January 26th, including holding a Whittlesea 'Community Awards' initiative, in lieu of holding 'Australia Day Awards'

2021

First dedicated Whittlesea Reconciliation Group stall at City of Whittlesea's Community Festival

2022

Business case approval of the Aboriginal Gathering Place

2023

Consultation and drafting of the Aboriginal Action Plan

2024

Construction commenced of the Aboriginal Gathering Place

Implementation of the Aboriginal Action Plan

NEXT STEPS – AN ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN

In October 2023, Council's Aboriginal Communities Department began consulting with local Aboriginal Communities and other local governments to work out what the next steps in our reconciliation journey should be.

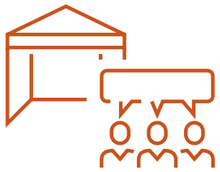
Through these consultations, it became clear that our next plan should be an Aboriginal action plan.

This plan will be a key part of the set of plans and strategies that guides Council's actions on behalf of the local community.

This set already includes the following strategies:

1. *Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033*
2. *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2024-2026*
3. *Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026*
4. *Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032*
5. *High Performing Organisation Strategy 2023-2028*
6. *Long-term Community Infrastructure Plan 2024-2033.*

Each of these plans and strategies has clear actions and outcomes to help Council achieve our vision: *Whittlesea 2040*, a place for all. All were developed in collaboration with the local community. For example:



More than 4,000 community members

made submissions or participated in workshops, forums, and online and in-person events and activities to inform our *Whittlesea 2040* vision.

1,300 people across 40 events

informed our *Community Plan* through our 'Let's talk' program.

Focus groups with community members

informed the priorities in our *Connected Community* and *Liveable Neighbourhoods* strategies and our *Community Infrastructure Plan*.

Many of the actions and outcomes in these plans support reconciliation and have a direct and measurable impact on the local Aboriginal Community.

The *Aboriginal Action Plan* details other specific actions that Council will take to advance our reconciliation journey.

Reconciliation actions in other Council plans and strategies

Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033

- Recognise and acknowledge Traditional Owners
- Undertake cultural awareness programs with our community

Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2023-2033

- Acknowledge and celebrate the Aboriginal cultural heritage of our municipality
- Protect and celebrate sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance

Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026

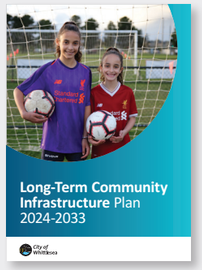
- Create effective Aboriginal employment and development pathways

Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032

- Integrate Traditional Owner custodianship into the management of Country through collaboration and partnerships
- Recognise the rights of Traditional Owners and their deep connection and knowledge of Country
- Increase awareness of traditional land custodianship and cultural practice

High Performing Organisation Strategy 2023-2028

- Collaborate and partner with Traditional Owners to inform Council decisions
- Embed reconciliation within our people and our organisational culture
- Always consider cultural heritage and raise internal awareness of traditional cultural practice



Long-term Community Infrastructure Plan 2024-2033

- Deliver an Aboriginal Gathering Place that supports self-determination, inclusion and participation
- Enhance cultural safety in built spaces for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

LISTENING AND LEARNING

To develop and implement this *Aboriginal Action Plan*, Council is listening and learning from the local Aboriginal community, our wider community and other local governments.

Consultation to date has included but is not limited to:

- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
- Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group
- Neighbouring local governments
- Aboriginal Community-controlled and private organisations
- Other Council Community/Advisory Groups.

Council commits to ongoing consultation with the local Aboriginal Community, wider community and other local governments and organisations.

By listening and learning in this way, we aim to strengthen the foundations we have in place and build other foundations to facilitate self-determination and make sure we achieve long term change.

We know that meaningful collaboration with Traditional Owners and throughout the wider community is critical to this plan's success. It is also essential for self-determination.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Council understands that reconciliation is a journey that builds and requires mutual respect, trust, and courageous conversations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

As we continue this journey, we are working to:

- deepen our understanding of our shared history
- recognise the challenges to self-determination
- take actions that facilitate self-determination
- ensure Aboriginal Community members have control over the decisions that affect their lives.

To do this, Council and our staff will do the following:

1. **We will acknowledge and respect Aboriginal rights by:**
   - acknowledging Aboriginal self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and working with the Aboriginal community and other levels of government towards a future of equality and justice
   - supporting truth-telling to ensure Council and the community we serve learn more about the history and impact of colonisation, dispossession, assimilation and oppression on Aboriginal Peoples and communities.
2. **We will listen to and support Aboriginal voices by:**
   - listening to and learning from the diverse and valuable voices of Aboriginal Peoples in our local community and more broadly – this includes Elders, community leaders, community organisations, artists and young people
   - engaging with Aboriginal Peoples and organisations in meaningful ways and involving them through consultation, collaboration, partnership and co-design
   - actively encouraging and supporting Aboriginal Peoples and local Aboriginal Communities to participate in Council decision-making processes.
3. **We will celebrate and support Aboriginal culture by:**
   - honouring the cultural heritage of Aboriginal Peoples, promoting their cultural expression and protecting their cultural integrity
   - participating and collaborating in cultural events and significant dates that are organised by or open to Aboriginal Peoples.
4. **We will empower and resource our Aboriginal Communities by:**
   - enabling Aboriginal Communities to determine their own priorities, goals and solutions
   - providing infrastructure and services as well as access to funding and grants opportunities
   - enabling all parties to be accountable for the outcomes of their actions and inform polices that affect Aboriginal Communities.
5. **We will recognise the rich history of environmental protection and custodianship of Traditional Owners by:**
   - acknowledging and respecting Traditional Owners recognition and celebration of Country
   - acknowledging the recently released Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy and the integrated approach to empower Traditional Owners to lead planning and activate cultural knowledge and practices to manage Country
   - acknowledging that supporting Traditional Owners to manage Country as a cultural landscape benefits communities and Country.

OUR ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN

This draft *Aboriginal Action plan* has been developed through engagement with the local Aboriginal Community. We will continue listening and learning to this Community as we finalise, implement, review and revise this plan.

Aim

Our Aboriginal Action Plan aims to recognise and enable Aboriginal self-determination by:

- prioritising culture
- addressing trauma and supporting healing
- addressing racism and promoting cultural safety
- prioritising decision-making power in areas that impact their communities.

It also aims to support the *Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026 (VALGS 2021-2026);* the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023;* the *Treaty process;* and the *Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023.*

VALGS 2023-2026 action areas

To do so, the plan addresses seven action areas set out in the VALGS 2021-2026. These action areas were developed by the Victorian Government in consultation with local governments and the broader Aboriginal Community. They also align with Council's *Integrated Planning Framework* and accurately reflect our journey toward reconciliation.

Culture, respect and trust

Foster trust and respect through genuine partnerships that understand, embed and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage

Awareness and engagement

Continue ongoing, meaningful dialogue to identify, create and deliver regular communication and engagement opportunities

Accountability and direction

Provide clarity, ownership and accountability to progress self-determination that recognises the critical role between Aboriginal Peoples and Council

Governance and participation

Create vibrant local communities by embedding Aboriginal cultures, voices, values, rights and perspectives along with participation in local council

Economic participation

Enable Aboriginal people to participate in the local economy through employment and business opportunities

Health and wellbeing

Preserve Aboriginal culture by supporting Aboriginal people to continue their culture through empowering proud, strong and thriving communities

Resourcing and funding

Establish effective and sustainable resourcing and funding models that support and encourage collaborating, prioritising and resource sharing between Aboriginal people and Council

VALGS 2023-2026 success stages

For each action, the plan identifies which stage Council is at on the Pathway to Stronger Partnerships set out in the *VALGS 2021-2026*. These stages are:

Stage 1: Understand

Form relationships, understand each other's aspirations and agree on ways to work together

Stage 2: Embrace

Work together to deliver priorities and mutual outcomes

Stage 3: Embed

Hold each other to account on outcomes to create a new 'business as usual' model

Council's role

For each action, the plan identifies which of the following three roles we will play as we continue our journey:

1. **Provider**: We will deliver services and implement projects and programs to promote inclusion and safety
2. **Facilitator**: We will establish partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders to create community building opportunities
3. **Advocate**: We will support investment and increased service delivery in the municipality by promoting and influencing decision making.

Making it happen

All actions in the *Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029* will be subject to Council's budgeting processes.

Council will review the plan annually by:

- taking an organisational, holistic approach to accountability and reporting
- considering changing community needs
- considering changing state and federal government policies and priorities.

ACTION PLAN

Theme 1

Culture, respect and trust

Goal: Connected community

Key direction: A social, cohesive community

Outcome: Our community understands, values and recognises Aboriginal cultures, histories, knowledge and rights

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Continue to build cultural competence across all Council stafff				
Develop and deliver an ongoing cultural learning program for all Council staff and Councillors, tailored to different roles and functions.	Embed	Facilitator	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** People & Culture **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Acknowledge and promote culturally significant dates and events				
Collaborate with stakeholders to host and promote culturally significant events such as NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week.	Embed	Facilitator	Sept 2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project/event
Remove barriers and promote staff attendance at culturally significant events.	Embed	Facilitator	Sept 2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project/event
Provide support and advice to community groups and organisations who seek to acknowledge culturally significant dates and/or host or attend events.	Embed	Facilitator	Sept 2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project/event

ACTION PLAN

Theme 1

Culture, respect and trust

Goal: Connected community

Key direction: A social, cohesive community

Outcome: Our community understands, values and recognises Aboriginal cultures, histories, knowledge and rights

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Promote and support self-determination				
Complete construction of the Aboriginal Gathering Place in Quarry Hills Parkland.	Embed	Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project/event
Continue working with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community towards the Aboriginal Gathering Place becoming incorporated and standing independently.	Understand	Advocate		**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Governance
Respond and implement actions from the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and Self-Determination Reform Framework in Council's sphere of influence.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various departments, depending on action
Embed Traditional Owner languages, culture and people in the naming of Council's places and spaces				
Review and update Council's Signage Management Plan and relevant signage in consultation with Traditional Owners.	Embrace	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing	**Lead:** Governance **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Collaborate with Traditional Owners to develop place naming protocols for Council's assets in accordance with Council's Naming Policy for Features.	Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Communications and Engagement/ Capital Delivery/ Various depts, depending on project

ACTION PLAN

Theme 2

Awareness and engagement

Goal: High performing organisation

Key direction: Driving better community outcomes

Outcome: Our community is informed and engaged about Council's services, programs and activities

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Embed strong collaborative relationships between Council and Traditional Owners				
Continue ongoing, regular engagement with the Traditional Owners (Wurundjeri/ Taungurung).	Understand/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	Sept 2025 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Communications and Engagement **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Engage with and support Traditional Owners (Wurundjeri/Taungurung) to share climate resilience and Care for Country practices, as well as provide input on the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage				
Partnering with Traditional Owners (Wurundjeri/Taungurung), to collaborate on the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental management and the sharing of Care of Country practice, in alignment with Council's Sustainable Environment Action Plan 2022-2024 relevant action items and future planning. Integrate knowledge gained from the cultural landscapes approach across Council land use policies, plans and operations, including strategic planning, statutory approvals, open space, urban design, assessments, sustainable environment, land use planning and communications.	Understand/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	31/12/2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Sustainable Environment **Support:** Aboriginal Communities

ACTION PLAN

Theme 2

Awareness and engagement

Goal: High performing organisation

Key direction: Driving better community outcomes

Outcome: Our community is informed and engaged about Council's services, programs and activities

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Enhance Council's public communication for all campaigns to reinforce ongonig commitment towards reconciliation and self-determination				
Revise Council's existing communication and engagement processes to better respond towards Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	Dec 2024 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Communications and Engagement **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Ensure Aboriginal community stakeholders are provided regular opportunities to discuss key matters of importance with Councillors and Council staff, including partnership opportunities, barriers and advocacy priorities				
Explore opportunities where Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Organisations can provide feedback to enhance service delivery and increase participation.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Office of Council & CEO
Establish regular opportunities for Aboriginal Community members, working and advisory groups to connect and meet with Council, including Council, Youth Council and Council Officers.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	June 2025 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Office of Council & CEO

ACTION PLAN

Theme 3

Accountability and direction

Goal: High performing organisation

Key direction: More informed Council decisions

Outcome: Our decisions are informed and made in the best interest of community now and for future generations

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Embed existing Victorian Aboriginal Frameworks to enhance internal policies or decision-making processes				
Explore opportunities to align self-determination enablers and principles with Council business and activities, as well as prioritising culture, empowerment, increasing opportunities and resources to the community.	Embed	Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Office of Council & CEO/ People & Culture **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Embed internal reporting mechanism to monitor, evaluate and report against deliverables outlined throughout the Aboriginal Action Plan (AAP)				
Establish an internal AAP Governance committee to monitor and evaluate implementation of the AAP.	Embed	Provider	Dec 2024 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** ePMO & Change **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Monitor and evaluate Aboriginal programs delivered through Council				
Monitor and evaluate all Aboriginal programs delivered through Council – including at the Aboriginal Gathering Place – to review improvements and ensure community needs are being addressed.	Embed	Provider	Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various departments, depending on project

ACTION PLAN

Theme 4

Governance and participation

Goal: Connected community

Key direction: A participating community

Outcome: Our community is empowered and enabled to participate in decision-making

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Involve Aboriginal community in decisions that affect them				
Continue collaborating and seeking formal advice on decisions affecting Aboriginal community members from the local community through dedicated advisory groups.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Office of Council & CEO
Identify opportunities to embed Aboriginal voices in Council's advisory groups and committees.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Office of Council & CEO
Sponsor support and promote leadership opportunities within the community, such as participation in Council's Community Leadership Program.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Office of Council & CEO

ACTION PLAN

Theme 5

Economic participation

Goal: Strong local economy

Key direction: Increased local employment

Outcome: Our economy is inclusive and accessible for all

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Strengthen support networks for growth and success in education and employment				
Work in partnership with Aboriginal employment providers to identify and to create training and upskilling opportunities to support Aboriginal people to enter or re-enter the workforce in alignment with Council's Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022 – 2026.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	Sept 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Economic Development
Work in partnership with local providers to increase opportunities and confidence in job seeking.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	Sept 2025 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Economic Development
Actively engage and support Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations, businesses and individuals to increase economic opportunities				
Develop and participate in Aboriginal business events and conferences to strengthen commercial relationships with Aboriginal businesses.	Understand/ Embrace	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Economic Development
Create and publish a database of local Aboriginal enterprises.	Understand/ Embed	Provider	Sept 2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Economic Development
Promote tendering opportunities to local Aboriginal businesses.	Understand	Understand	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Economic Development
Support community groups and organisations to upskill in grant writing and navigating funding pathway.	Understand/ Embrace	Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** ePMO & Change

ACTION PLAN

Theme 5

Economic participation

Goal: Strong local economy

Key direction: Increased local employment

Outcome: Our economy is inclusive and accessible for all

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Make City of Whittlesea an employer of choice for Aboriginal Peoples				
Create an inclusive and supportive work environment by community engagement, diversity and inclusion policies, work life balance and recognition and rewards.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** People & Culture
Identify more pathways for Aboriginal Peoples to work at Council, including work experience, mentoring and traineeships.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	June 2025 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** People & Culture **Support:** Aboriginal Communities
Provide assistance, training opportunities and individual support to increase career development opportunities to expand their Council career progression.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** People & Culture
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal Peoples and stakeholders.	Embed	Advocate	Ongoing annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** People & Culture

ACTION PLAN

Theme 6

Health and wellbeing

Goal: Connected community

Key direction: A healthy and safe community

Outcome: Our community is healthy, well and physically active

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Establish the Aboriginal Gathering Place as a central hub for community, connection and culture				
Work with the local Aboriginal community to co-design programs and activities for the Aboriginal Gathering Place that address social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs.	Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Capital Delivery/ Various depts, depending on project
Develop, partner and promote community activities that create positive health and wellbeing, throughout the Council.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project
Establish a network of Council Aboriginal resource hubs				
Utilising community hubs and online resources – including the Aboriginal Gathering Place – to promote and boost Aboriginal businesses, programs, events, activities, grants and other funding opportunities.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Communication & Engagement/ Various depts, depending on project
Foster partnerships with industry professionals				
Create and develop strong relationships with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that deliver and promote healthy social and emotional wellbeing programs.	Understand/ Embrace	Facilitator/ Advocate	Dec 2024 Ongoing calendar annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Various depts, depending on project

ACTION PLAN

Theme 7

Resourcing and funding

Goal: High performing organisation

Key direction: More cost-effective investment and an engaged workforce

Outcome: Our community is confident that City of Whittlesea can fund community needs into the future

Deliverable/Actions	Stage of success	Council's role	Timeline	Responsibility in Council
Honour, respect and value Aboriginal Peoples' experience, expertise and knowledge by supporting First Nations resourcing and opportunities				
Support sustainable and effective grant and funding models to assist on-going Traditional Owners', Aboriginal Organisations' and Peoples' engagement, activities and initiatives.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** Financial Development and Accountability/ ePMO & Change
Engage with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Organisations to establish future program and grant funding guidelines				
Facilitate workshops that support Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Organisations in program delivery and guidelines.	Understand/ Embrace/ Embed	Facilitator/ Provider/ Advocate	June 2025 Ongoing financial annual review	**Lead:** Aboriginal Communities **Support:** ePMO & Change

REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. *2021 Census*.
Available at 2021 Whittlesea, Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au).

City of Whittlesea. 2023. *Economic Participation Plan 2023-2026.*
Available at economic-participation-plan.pdf (whittlesea.vic.gov.au).

Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. 2021.
Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026.
Available at Victorian-Aboriginal-and-Local-Government-Strategy.pdf (localgovernment.vic.gov.au).

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023
Available at https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/victorian-aboriginal-affairs-framework

Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023
Available at https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/victorian-closing-gap-implementation-plan

Treaty for Victoria
Available at https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/treaty and https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/

Yoorrook Justice Commission
Available at https://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au/

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination
Available at https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit/aboriginal-self-determination/
https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/self-determination-and-indigenous
https://deadlystory.com/page/culture/articles/self-determination-and-treaty

City of Whittlesea Council Plans and Strategies:

Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033
Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2023-2033
Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026
Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032
High Performing Organisation Strategy 2023-2028
Long-term Community Infrastructure Plan 2024-2033

Council Offices
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Email: info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
Website whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Postal address
City of Whittlesea Locked Bag
Bundoora MDC VIC 3083

Phone: 9217 2170
National Relay Service: 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Connect with us in your
preferred language:

Free telephone interpreter service
131 450

City of Whittlesea