

COUNCIL REPORT

1st Ordinary Council Meeting

Agenda Item:	13.2.4
Report Title:	Reconciliation Action Plan Update
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 21 January 2025
Author:	Acting Executive Manager People and Customer, Becky Saywell
Approver:	Acting General Manager People and Place, Emma Blight

Community plan

Cultural Diversity: In Palmerston we celebrate our cultures in a way that values our diversity.

Purpose

This Report provides Council with an update on the progress of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Key messages

- In September 2023 City of Palmerston registered to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan with Reconciliation Australia, the peak body for reconciliation in Australia.
- The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group last met on 16 December 2024.
- A draft Reconciliation Action Plan was sent to Reconciliation Australia on 24 December 2024 (submission due date was 31 December 2024).
- Feedback from Reconciliation Australia is expected to be received by the end of January 2025.
- Amendments to the draft Reconciliation Action Plan based on this feedback will be actioned, and a new draft will be formulated and ready for Council endorsement for community engagement by March 2025.
- Following extensive community engagement, the final Reconciliation Action Plan will be presented to Council for approval for implementation by 30 June 2025.

Recommendation

THAT Report entitled Reconciliation Action Plan Update be received and noted.

Background

As a community with strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will support City of Palmerston to sustainably and strategically take meaningful action to advance reconciliation in the Palmerston community.

To date, City of Palmerston has successfully completed the following actions towards progressing the development of a RAP:

- Registered with Reconciliation Australia (RA) to develop a RAP (September 2023);
- Published internal and external expressions of interest to join City of Palmerston's first Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG);
- Developed a Terms of Reference (ToR) **Attachment 13.2.4.1**;
- Established the RWG including internal and external community members;
- Conducted two working group meetings; and
- Completed the first draft RAP and submitted for feedback prior to deadline of 31 December 2024 as required by Reconciliation Australia.

Discussion

There have been two RWG meetings held to further advance the draft RAP for City of Palmerston since its establishment, with the most recent of these being held on 16 December 2024.

At the meeting, the RWG discussed the mandatory sections of the draft RAP template supplied by RA and identified a number of possible actions and deadlines to be achieved.

The first draft of City of Palmerston's Reconciliation Action Plan has been supplied to RA (**Attachment 13.2.4.2**) and the next meeting will be held after the initial round of feedback has been received from RA. The RWG will then use the advice from RA to refine the draft RAP in preparation for endorsement by Council for the purpose of commencing Community Engagement.

It should be noted that the Draft RAP shows the RWG being formed, the Terms of reference being approved and the appointment of a RAP Champion as occurring in October 2024. These actions were completed in June 2024, and the Draft RAP will be updated to reflect this in the next iteration.

Following extensive community engagement, it is anticipated the final 'Reflect' RAP will be ready for implementation for City of Palmerston by 30 June 2025.

At this point, two of the external RWG positions are yet to be filled. The Terms of Reference will be updated to enable a broader section of the Palmerston community to apply for these positions moving forward.

Consultation and marketing

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this Report:

- Executive Assistant to General Manager People and Place
- General Manager Community (RWG Chair)

Policy implications

There are no policy implications for this Report.

Budget and resource implications

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this Report.

Risk, legal and legislative implications

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

4. **Inclusion, Diversity and Access**
Failure to balance meeting needs of Palmerston's cultural mosaic.
6. **Governance**
Failure to effectively govern.

Strategies, framework and plans implications

This Report relates to the following City of Palmerston Strategies, Framework and Plans:

Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Policy Framework

Council officer conflict of interest declaration

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

Attachments

1. Reconciliation Action Plan Terms of Reference [13.2.4.1 - 4 pages]
2. City of Palmerston RAP draft 1 [13.2.4.2 - 14 pages]



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Committee Name:	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group		
Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager People & Customer		
Owner:	General Manager People and Place		
Approval Date:	18/06/2024	Next Review Date:	18/02/2026

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Palmerston Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG) is to develop, implement and report on the City of Palmerston Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in consultation with Reconciliation Australia.

2 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Develop a RAP within the context of City of Palmerston's core business and in-line with:
 - The City of Palmerston Community and Municipal Plans; and
 - The City of Palmerston Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Strategy.
- 2.2 Establish a collaborative and consultative process for engaging staff across the organisation so that they can provide:
 - Ideas for the RAP; and
 - Feedback on draft versions.
- 2.3 Develop a project plan and timeline to develop, launch and begin implementing the RAP, including consultation with Reconciliation Australia at regular intervals.
- 2.4 Regularly liaise with relevant internal and external stakeholders to review progress of the RAP actions including:
 - Reporting RAP progress to Council as RAP Sponsor quarterly or more frequently as required;
 - Reporting RAP progress to Reconciliation Australia annually;
 - Reporting RAP progress internally;
 - Reporting RAP progress to relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders; and
 - Reflecting on key learnings in the development of a new RAP.
- 2.5 Consider RAP implementation issues and consult with relevant staff to find solutions.
- 2.6 Seek approval from Council for final version of Reconciliation Action Plan.
- 2.7 Liaise with internal or external designers inform the design of the RAP document.
- 2.8 Develop a new RAP when the current plan expires.

3 AUTHORITY/DELEGATION

- 3.1 The RWG will have no delegation and progress of the RAP development and implementation will be reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.2 City of Palmerston staff on the RWG are responsible for liaising with all relevant business units to assist in completion and submission of the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.
- 3.3 Once approved by Council the final document will be signed off by the RAP Champion and Chief Executive Officer.

4 MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Membership of the RWG will be limited to ten (10) people.
- 4.2 Nominations will be open to City of Palmerston staff members, Palmerston residents and Palmerston based organisations who are interested in reconciliation and how it can be a positive force for changing the culture, work practices and core business of City of Palmerston.
- 4.3 The RWG will comprise a maximum of six (6) staff members who have been nominated for the group. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members will be strongly encouraged to nominate.
- 4.4 The RWG will comprise two (2) Palmerston Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander community members and one (1) Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Palmerston organisation representative. These external vacancies will be advertised on the City of Palmerston website and any other media decided by the organisation.
- 4.5 Nominations will be submitted via email to a designated City of Palmerston email address.
- 4.6 Final selection will be made by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.7 The RWG will also include a RAP Champion from the Executive Leadership Team.
- 4.8 The roles of RWG membership and other decision makers internal and external to the RWG are defined as follows:

Member/Decision Maker	Reason for Membership and Role
RWG Members	
Staff that represent a wide range of departments, locations and levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a whole-of-organisation approach to the RAP. To ensure the RAP does not sit with a single team. To ensure the responsibility for implementing the RAP does not fall to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff or departments as reconciliation is everyone's responsibility.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the RAP is guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives.



A Place for People

TERMS OF REFERENCE

representatives (staff or external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in decision-making. To build a culturally appropriate approach to RAP development, implementation and reporting. To assist the RWG and organisation work through areas that can be complex or sensitive. It should be noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and RWG members should not be expected to drive the RAP, but rather guide it.
RAP Chair/Co-chairs (may be RAP Champion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To coordinate RWG meetings (or their delegate) and take responsibility for holding other members of the group accountable and on track. To provide a primary contact for other staff, community members, organisations and Reconciliation Australia when they have enquiries about the RAP.
RAP Champion/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Executive Leadership Team member to raise the profile of reconciliation as an organisational priority internally and externally. To lead by example by actioning the commitments in the RAP.
External to RWG	
Council/RAP Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the leadership, guidance and resources to ensure that City of Palmerston's commitment to reconciliation is realised. Approve RWG Terms of Reference Approve final version of the Reconciliation Action Plan
CEO/Key decision makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the RWG can resolve roadblocks to RAP implementation.

5 TERMS, VACANCIES AND FEES

- 5.1 The membership term of the RWG will be until implementation of the current iteration of the RAP. New members will be invited to join as vacancies arise to ensure the group generates new ideas as well as continuity.
- 5.2 To ensure participation and recognition of contribution, the community members on the RWG will be compensated for their attendance at meetings at the rates identified in the 'Extra Meeting/Activity Allowance' for Elected Members per Determination No. 1 of 2023 as a (noting that these are not Elected Members and meetings will likely be conducted outside normal business hours).



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 5.3 When meetings are held out of business hours, City of Palmerston staff attendance will be considered as working additional hours and compensated accordingly per the relevant City of Palmerston Enterprise Agreement or Employment Contract.
- 5.4 A member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without providing an apology is considered to have resigned from their membership.
- 5.5 The Terms of Reference and membership profile will be reviewed by the RWG every two years from commencement, or as required.

6 MEETINGS

- 6.1 The Reconciliation Action Plan Champion (or their delegate) will convene meetings and will distribute business papers no later than three business days prior to a meeting.
- 6.2 Meetings will be held monthly while the RAP is being developed, and every two months after launch to monitor progress.
- 6.3 Meetings will require a quorum of half plus one.
- 6.4 In the event that the group is unable to come to a cohesive understanding on any matter or discussion item, a vote will be taken and will be noted in the minutes.
- 6.5 Meeting minutes will be distributed to members within five working days after a meeting.

7 CONDUCT

- 7.1. RWG members must declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest when joining the group and at the start of each meeting before discussion of the relevant agenda items.
- 7.2. Committee members must not speak on behalf of the RWG without the approval of the Chief Executive Officer.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 'REFLECT'

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

City of Palmerston acknowledges the Larrakia people as the Traditional Custodians of the Palmerston region. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future leaders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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OUR BUSINESS

City of Palmerston provides essential services to the residents of Palmerston including, but not limited to;

- waste management
- animal management
- library services
- community facilities
- community events
- community initiatives and
- community programs

As part of a culturally diverse and growing municipality of 40,000 + population, consideration is taken towards the events, programs and services that we deliver to ensure we are reaching and positively impacting everyone in Palmerston. This also includes the way in which we communicate, welcome and deliver our services.

Civic Plaza, centrally located in Palmerston's CBD is the main office where staff are located, as well as where Council Chambers is. Other working locations include the Palmerston Recreation Centre, City of Palmerston Library and the Operations Centre. We also have a number of community parks and facilities that we look after and provide access to the community, including Gray Community Hall, Durack Community Arts Centre and Driver Community Centre. Palmerston also boasts three dog parks, over 100 open space areas (Playgrounds and parks), Gulwa Community Recording Studio, as well as SWELL, which is Palmerston's Swimming, Wellness, Events, Leisure and Lifestyle facility. Use of all parks and SWELL is free to the community and hire of council facilities for community purposes is at a heavily discounted rate or free.

As of December 2024, City of Palmerston has 97 staff, 38% male and 62% female, with 24% of staff born outside of Australia. There is currently 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members working at City of Palmerston.

OUR RAP

City of Palmerston currently has an Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible (IDA) Policy Framework which commits to creating a “community where all members enjoy equal access within the public domains, services and programs as outlined in the Community Plan. While inclusion, diversity and accessibility are often referred to in the context of people with lived experience of disability, these principles apply to many different groups within society, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds including newly arrived refugees and migrants; people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+); older people, children and young people; people with a disability; people experiencing homelessness; people experiencing mental illness; people who are socio-economically disadvantaged and people experiencing gender inequality.” (City of Palmerston, IDA Policy Framework, 2021)

Currently, Council incorporates the following inclusive practices throughout the organisation;

- Incorporating inclusive practices in corporate processes such as recruitment, procurement and communication (within legislative guidelines).
- Promotion and celebration of diversity and consideration of inclusion and accessibility for events and programs. Examples include Drag Queen and Bilingual Story Times, Harmony Day, NAIDOC and Pride events.
- Collaboration with and support for several active community networks and organisations including Seniors, Youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Disability Organisations.

Our RAP journey to date;

9 July - RAP committee member (internal and external) expressions of interest open for a 5 week period

September – RAP committee members confirmed internal and external

15 October – RAP Working group update Council report

26 November - First RAP meeting – minutes attached - approved

16 December - Second RAP meeting – minutes attached – draft only

24 December – Initial draft of City of Palmerston ‘Reflect’ RAP sent to Reconciliation Australia

The RAP is a deliverable identified in the IDA policy framework, 2021. The RAP is an important first step to ensure reconciliation within council, towards leading future reconciliation within the community.

It is evident from the first meeting that City of Palmerston’s ‘Reflect’ RAP will be authentic and an important piece towards meaningful reconciliation within the community. 11% of Palmerston’s population is made up of ATSI residents, a significant representation worthy of appropriate and respectful recognition and reconciliation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

City of Palmerston has approximately 20 - 30 established networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and organisations. This includes Larrakia Nation, Northern Land Council, Children's Ground plus entertainers, artists, musicians and more. We utilise these networks within the services we deliver at the library, programs we deliver through our community development space, and events that we offer to the community.

City of Palmerston delivers a variety of acknowledgment, activities and or events specific to the ATSI community including (but not limited to);

- Reconciliation week
- Library programming - storytime
- NAIDOC week
- Incorporating an indigenous activity or element to all events where possible (storytelling, painting, weaving etc)
- Welcome to Country and/or Ceremony at all events or official openings
- Smoking Ceremony at every first Council meeting of the year
- Acknowledgement of Country at every Council meeting and all public speeches
- Acknowledgement of Country on our website
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags at the front of the Council buildings
- All staff undertake Cross-cultural course

RELATIONSHIPS			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Jan, 2025 (onwards)	Community Dev City Activation Governance RWG
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Jan, 2025 (onwards)	RWG Community Dev
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	2024 - ongoing	RWG and ELT
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	2025 - reconciliation week/NAIDOC week	RWG and ELT
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2025	RWG and ELT
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May, 2025	RWG, ELT and Council
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	May, 2025	Community Dev City Activation Procurement RWG
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	May, 2025	Community Dev City Activation Procurement RWG

RELATIONSHIPS			
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	June, 2025 onwards	Governance
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	June, 2025 onwards	HR

RESPECT			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June, 2025 onwards	RWG Community Dev
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June, 2025	HR
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	June, 2025	RWG
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Jan, 2025	RWG, ELT
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Jan, 2025	HR, ELT
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	Jan, 2025	HR, ELT
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	2025 – reconciliation week/NAIDOC week	RWG, ELT

OPPORTUNITIES			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June, 2025	HR
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June, 2025	HR
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June, 2025	Governance/Procurement
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May, 2025	Governance/Procurement

GOVERNANCE			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Oct, 2024	ELT/HR
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Oct, 2024	Council
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Jan, 2025, ongoing	HR
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jan, 2025, Ongoing	RWG
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Nov, 2024	RWG, ELT
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Oct 2024	ELT
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Jan, 2025	RWG
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	HR
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	HR
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	HR

GOVERNANCE			
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April, 2026	HR

*Deliverables in green have been completed

NEXT STEPS

As part of genuine commitment to achieve a 'Reflect' RAP that aligns with City of Palmerston values and Customer Service Charter, the working group will be refining the draft RAP further in January 2025. This will entail developing an internal communications plan, specific organisational actions and a detailed action list relevant to Palmerston and the organisation (see minutes of meeting Dec 2024). This draft document will be presented to the Executive Team, and then to Council for endorsement for community engagement.

City of Palmerston will engage with relevant stakeholders and the community, on the draft RAP for a 28-day period.

Final endorsement of the RAP is proposed to go before Council by June 2025.

CONTACT

CONTACT NAME	POSITION	DETAILS	EMAIL	PHONE
Becky Saywell	Acting Executive Manager People and Customer	Contact in relation to RAP contents, administration, registration, website content, Council reporting	Becky.saywell@palmerston.nt.gov.au	0427 548 014
Innocent Ndhlovu	People and Customer Manager	Contact in relation to the RWG members and meetings	Innocent.ndhlovu@palmerston.nt.gov.au	0460 306 880
Konrad Seidl	General Manager Community	Contact in relation to Reconciliation Action Plan Champion	Konrad.seidl@palmerston.nt.gov.au	0488 287 953