



City of
KINGSTON

Reconciliation Strategy

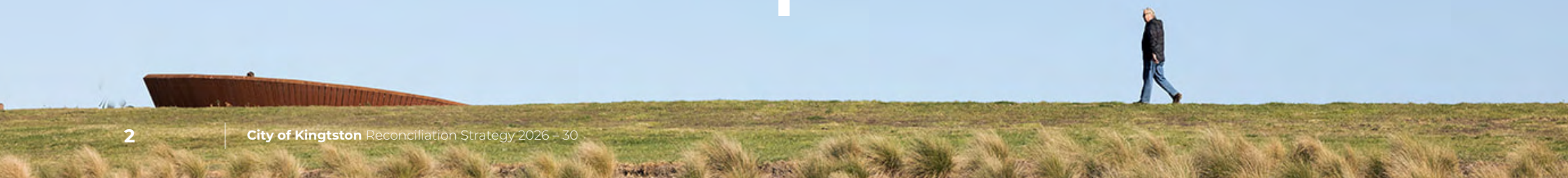
2026 – 2030



Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Kingston proudly acknowledges the Bunurong Boon wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land.

We pay our deep respects to their Elders, past and present, and honour their unbroken connections to this Country.





About the Artwork

Bunjil Continues to Guide Us 2025

Digital artwork by Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Bunitj, Boon Wurrung artist, Nakia Cadd.

“The creation story of Port Phillip Bay is essential to the landscape's historical narrative.

The map of Country, as seen today, showcases how the flood impacted the lands of the Boon wurrung/Bunurong. Whilst the water takes up ample space within the artwork, various shades of blue are used to accentuate its vital role as a life source for the Boon wurrung peoples.

Mordialloc Creek is highlighted to depict the substantial cultural importance it plays for the Boon wurrung, as it has historically provided vital necessities like materials, food, plants, and animals; enabling sustainable living for many years.

The creator spirit(s), Bunjil and Waa roam the skies, embodying protection on the sacred lands. The many gathering circles throughout Country serve as a symbol of community, coming together and culturally safe spaces. The gum leaves in the background are a symbol of healing and cleansing.

This artwork serves as a reflection of the cultural significance of Boon wurrung/Bunurong Country and the City of Kingston's commitment to truth telling and fostering a culturally safe community.”

Other Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the following groups for their contribution to the development of this Strategy.

- Biik Bundjil
- Boon wurrung Land and Sea Council
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- City of Kingston First Nations Staff
- City of Kingston Reconciliation Strategy Reference Group
- City of Kingston Reconciliation Strategy Working Group
- Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place
- Little Rocket
- Local First Nations Community
- Mirriyu Cultural Consulting
- Think In Colour

A Note on Language

The City of Kingston recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have their own unique languages, beliefs, cultural practices, and traditions that vary between groups. This Reconciliation Strategy uses the terms First Nations people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interchangeably, to reference and reflect the unique identity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The City of Kingston prioritises the use of "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" when referring to Australia's First Peoples. The terms "First Nations" or "First Peoples" are also considered appropriate. The term "Indigenous" is less preferred, as it has historically been used to generalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples alongside plants and animals, and does not reflect the distinct identities, cultures, and histories of these communities.

It is important to always capitalise these terms as proper nouns such as **F**irst **P**eoples, **A**boriginal, **T**orres **S**trait **I**slander, **I**ndigenous, in the same manner that would be used to refer to **A**ustralia, or **A**ustralians.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document includes references to culture. Every effort has been made to ensure that respectful and appropriate terminology/ language is used throughout.

Contents

About the Artwork	3
Other Acknowledgements	4
A message from the Mayor	6
A message from our CEO	7
Glossary	8

Section 1	10
Our Vision for Reconciliation	11
Reconciliation at Kingston	12
Strategic Context	14
Organisational Context	16
Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place	19
How was the Strategy developed?	20
What We Heard	22
Youth and Elders Infographics	24
Section 2	26
Priority 1: Relationships and Partnerships	27
Priority 2: Cultural Inclusion and Belonging	30
Priority 3: Empowering Community and Protecting Country	34
Priority 4: Employment and Economic Participation	40
Priority 5: Governance and Accountability	44
Governance	47
Implementation and Reporting	48

A message from the Mayor



It is my great pleasure to present the City of Kingston's Reconciliation Strategy 2026–2030.

At Kingston, our community is at the heart of everything we do. This Reconciliation Strategy reflects our shared commitment to building a more inclusive, respectful and connected community.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to its development. Through conversations with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, community members and local organisations, we have listened carefully to what matters most.

You told us the importance of meaningful recognition, and creating genuine opportunities for connection, learning and respect.

We've listened, and this plan reflects those priorities.

As a Council, we recognise that we have an important role to play in leading reconciliation at a local level.

That means embedding respect for First Nations cultures and histories across our work, strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and using our voice to advocate for equity and inclusion.

This Strategy sets out an ongoing commitment that must be reflected in how we work, how we lead, and how we come together as a community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georgina L. Oxley".

Cr Georgina Oxley
Mayor, City of Kingston

A message from our CEO



The City of Kingston has an important role to play in advancing reconciliation – not just as an organisation, but as a leader within our community.

Reconciliation means recognising the truth of our shared history, valuing the oldest continuing culture on earth, and committing to a future built on respect, equity and genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Reconciliation Strategy 2026-2030 sets out clear, measurable actions for the next four years. It has been shaped through listening, learning, and working alongside Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations and community members.

This process has further strengthened our resolve to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard in our decision-making, plans and policies.

We are committed to providing an inclusive and respectful workplace that offers equal opportunities and celebrates cultural knowledge and leadership. We will continue to create opportunities for learning across our organisation and the wider community, promoting awareness of Aboriginal heritage, culture and achievements.

True reconciliation is not a single event or week in the calendar – it is an ongoing commitment. It calls on all of us to have honest conversations, take real action, and walk together towards a shared future.

We are proud to walk alongside our First Nations community in this journey. Together, we are stronger – and together, we will build a Kingston that honours the past and empowers the next generation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Bean'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Peter Bean
Chief Executive Officer

Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Aboriginal refers to the first peoples or original inhabitants of a land. This Reconciliation Strategy specifically refers to Aboriginal people of Australia. However, Aboriginal can be used to reference any First Peoples around the world.

Australian Aboriginal people have maintained unbroken cultural and ancestral connections to Country for over 65,000 years, making them the world's oldest continuous living culture. Aboriginal people are not a single group but are diverse peoples with over 250 individual nations across Australia today practicing their own distinct cultures, languages and lore.

Torres Strait Islanders are the first peoples and original inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands; a group of over 270 islands located between northern Australia and Papua New Guinea.

There are five main island regions of the Torres Strait, categorised into Northern Islands (Main Island: Boigu Island), Western Islands (Main Island: Badu Island), Central Islands (Main Island: Yam Island aka. Iama), Eastern Islands (Main Island: Murray Island aka. Mer) and Southern Islands (Main Island: Thursday Island aka. Waiben). Each region has its own distinct language, cultural practices and lore.

Collectively, both terms are used, i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, to refer to all of Australia's First Peoples from the mainland and islands.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered by anyone, whether First Nations or non-First Nations, and typically occurs at the beginning of a formal meeting or event. Its purpose is to pause and recognise that the land on which people are gathered is the sacred homeland of an Aboriginal mob, clan, or group. It is a moment to give thanks to the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders who have cared for the land for thousands of years and remain deeply connected to it.

Country

For First Nations people, Country does not refer to Australia as a whole. Instead, it refers to the hundreds of distinct geographical areas that are home to over 250 individual Aboriginal language groups. For example: "I am on Bunurong Boon wurrung Country today", or "my home Country is Tebrakunna Country, in lutruwita (Tasmania)".

Readers are encouraged to learn about the Country on which they live and work and to use these traditional placenames in everyday language as a sign of respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Elders

Elders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are recognised within their communities as custodians of traditional knowledge, lore and beliefs. They are senior leaders who play a vital role in preserving and passing on knowledge to younger generations.

An Elder is defined not by age or gender, but by their contribution and connection to Culture, Community and Country. Elders are often respectfully referred to as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' and may prefer these titles to be used by non-First Nations people as well. If unsure how to address a community member, it is always best to ask their preference, as not everyone follows the same conventions.

First Nations/ First Peoples

Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal Australians are the two groups recognised as the First Peoples of Australia. The terms 'First Nations' or 'First Peoples' are used throughout this Reconciliation Strategy to collectively refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Indigenous

Indigenous is a blanket term that has traditionally referred to all people, plants, and animals that are native to a geographic location. Historically, it was used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before their recognition as distinct peoples.

Mob

A collective and informal term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to refer to one another. Mob can also describe a family group, clan or community.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a coming together of two parties after conflict. It is about building stronger relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations people. It involves recognising the impacts of colonisation and acknowledging that the voices and experiences of First Nations people have often been excluded from Australia's history.

Self determination

The right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to freely make decisions about their own political, economic, social and cultural development (UNDRIP).

Traditional Owner/Custodian

Traditional Owners are the original inhabitants and custodians belonging to one or more of the 250+ distinct Aboriginal nations, each occupying different territories across the land. The term 'Traditional Owner' and 'Traditional Custodian' are often used interchangeably: 'Traditional Owner' emphasises direct connection to the land through ancestry and ownership, while 'Traditional Custodian' highlights responsibility to care for and protect the land and its resources.

Welcome to Country

Welcome to Country is an ancient ceremony, delivered by Traditional Owners, or by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been given permission by Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their Country. It is a generous invitation from the Traditional Owner, extended on their home Country, for all visitors to come with purpose, travel safely across the land, and respect Country by doing no harm.

A Welcome to Country typically occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, and/or a speech. When participating, please be respectful and mindful, offering the same respect as you would to the singing of the National Anthem.

Section 1

Section 1 of the Reconciliation Strategy provides the foundation for our work.

It sets out Council's vision and commitment to reconciliation, outlines the legislative and organisational context, and explains how the Strategy was developed through consultation with First Nations community members, reconciliation advocates, partner organisations, and the broader community.

Together, these elements articulate the values, principles, and context that guide Kingston's reconciliation journey.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

We envision a thriving and empowered First Nations community where cultural safety, equity and self-determination are central to community life, supported by strong, respectful relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations people.

Our Commitment

The City of Kingston respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Boon Wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land. Recognition is given to the rich diversity of First Nations cultures within the community and the enduring impacts of colonisation.

Kingston remains committed to addressing harm, dismantling barriers and enabling the community to engage with and benefit from a deeper understanding of Australia's cultural heritage, history, and identity.

The City of Kingston is committed to advancing reconciliation through five key priority areas, developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and staff across the municipality:

1. Relationships + Partnerships
2. Cultural Inclusion + Belonging
3. Empowering Community + Protecting Country
4. Employment + Economic Participation
5. Governance + Accountability

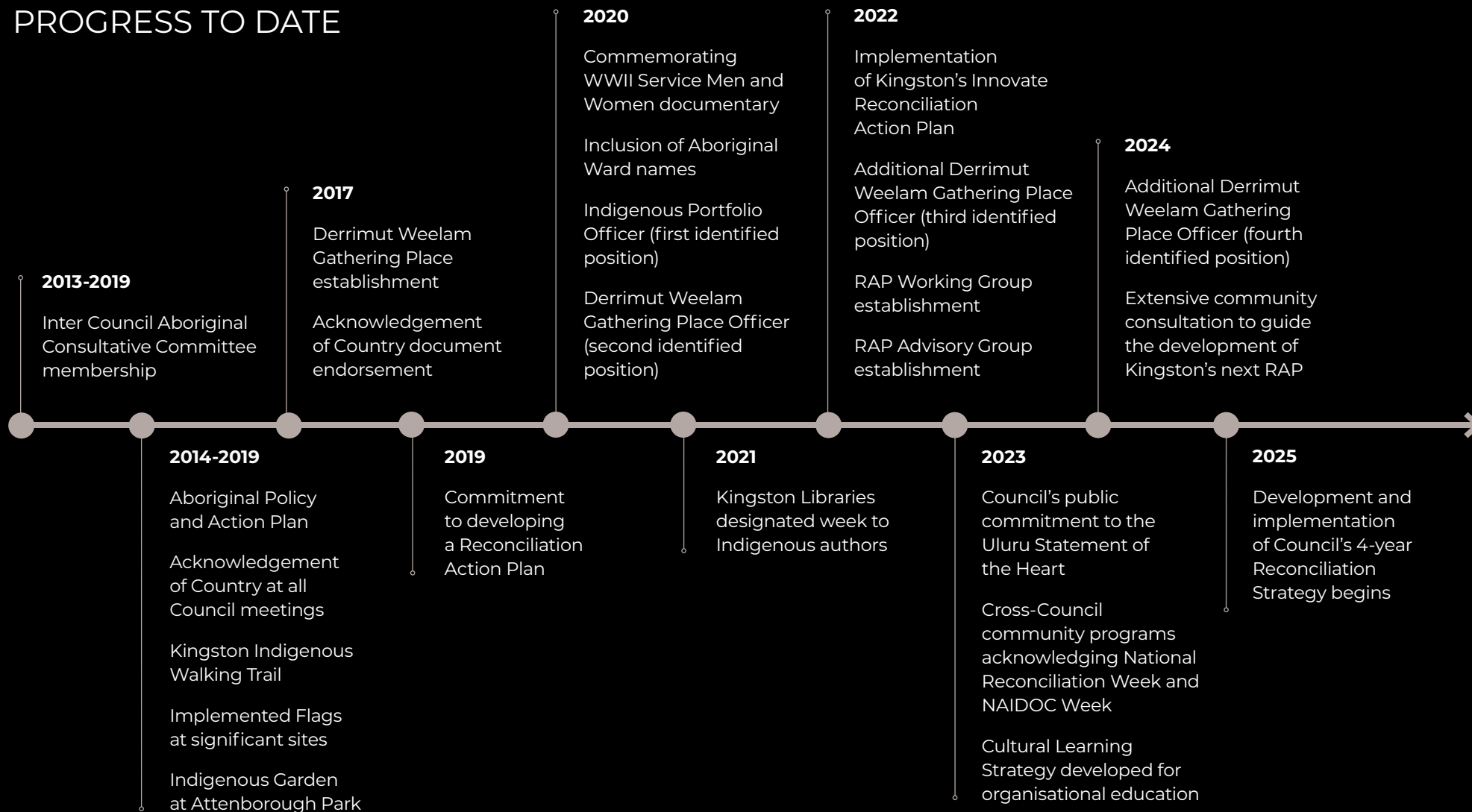
Self Determination

Reconciliation cannot be achieved without committing to the principle of self-determination. Recognised as a human right in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, self-determination refers to the right of First Nations peoples to have control over decisions that affect their lives, communities, and Country. It underpins freedom, autonomy, and equality, empowering those who have historically been denied these rights.

By embedding self-determination into policies and practices, Kingston can foster an environment where First Nations peoples lead the development and delivery of initiatives that reflect their priorities, values, and aspirations.

Reconciliation at Kingston

PROGRESS TO DATE





Strategic Context

The Reconciliation Strategy is guided by key Victorian legislation and strategic frameworks, including:

- [Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006](#)
- [Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018](#)
- [Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)
- [Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027](#)
- [Local Government Act 2020](#)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Local Government Strategy 2021](#)
- [Statewide Treaty Act 2025](#)
- [The Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2026](#)

Treaty in Victoria

Victoria is leading the nation as the first jurisdiction to negotiate a formal Treaty between the State of Victoria and Victorian First Nations peoples, represented by the First Peoples' Assembly Victoria.

The formal Treaty process began in 2016 with the establishment of the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group, which later evolved into the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission. The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act came into effect in 2018, followed by the Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022.

Statewide Treaty in Victoria, known as the Statewide Treaty Act 2025, was signed into law on 13 November 2025. Local treaties with Traditional Owner groups will follow.

Other Guiding Documents:

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

[The National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), established in 2020, is a formal partnership between Australian governments, and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. It sets out a shared commitment to achieving equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by addressing deep-rooted inequalities across key areas such as health, education, employment, justice, and housing.

Central to the Agreement are four Priority Reforms focused on strengthening partnerships with First Nations communities, building the community-controlled sector, transforming government institutions, and improving data and transparency. The Agreement shifts the focus from government-led targets to community-led solutions, placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre of decision-making to drive real, lasting change.

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)

The City of Kingston affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples as outlined in [UNDRIP](#), and commits to being guided by the First Nations communities that it serves.

Uluru Statement from the Heart

In 2023, Council publicly declared support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including its three key elements: Voice, Treaty, and Truth — with Treaty and Truth collectively referred to as Makarrata. Progress is underway in Victoria toward establishing the state's first Treaty and a permanent Truth-telling body. At a local level, Council remains committed to ensuring First Nations voices are heard and continue to seek guidance from First Nations communities on matters that affect them.

Alignment to the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS)

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy serves as a practical guide for councils across Victoria and helps to embed the voices and priorities of Aboriginal communities at a local government level.

It is centred on seven strategic pillars:

1.	Culture, respect and trust
2.	Awareness and engagement
3.	Accountability and direction
4.	Governance and participation
5.	Economic participation
6.	Health and wellbeing
7.	Resourcing and funding

The Strategy recommends actions for Local Governments, the Victorian Government and Aboriginal communities that progress Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation.

Organisational Context

The City of Kingston's Reconciliation Strategy is aligned with the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029, providing a cohesive and coordinated approach to strengthening community resilience and building social capital across the municipality.

The Reconciliation Strategy also supports and works collaboratively with Council's:

- [All Abilities Action Plan 2024-2028](#)
- [Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Climate and Ecological Emergency Response Plan 2021-2030](#)
- Creative and Learning Strategy 2026 - 2030 (in development)
- [Economic Development Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (in redevelopment)
- [Integrated Water Strategy 2021-2030](#)
- [Library Strategy 2019-2030](#)
- [Open Space Strategy 2023-2033](#)
- [Urban Forest Strategy 2023-2030](#)
- [Wayfinding Strategy 2023](#)



Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029



All Abilities Action Plan
2024-2028



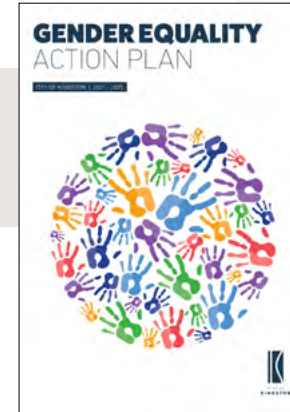
Biodiversity Strategy
2024-2029



Climate and Ecological
Emergency Response Plan
2021-2030



Economic Development
Strategy 2024-2029



Gender Equality Action Plan
2021-2025



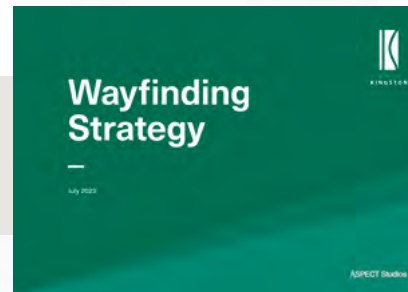
Integrated Water Strategy
2021-2030



Open Space Strategy
2023-2033



Urban Forest Strategy
2023-2030



Wayfinding Strategy 2023

Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place

The City of Kingston is proud to support Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place (DWGP). Governed by a Steering Committee and supported by a dedicated team, DWGP coordinates and delivers programs that strengthen cultural connection, wellbeing, and self-determination for the local First Nations community.



DWGP provides a welcoming space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to connect, learn from Elders and Traditional Owners, share cultural heritage and engage with local cultural history. It also fosters dialogue and education around health and wellbeing, supporting efforts to close the gaps in health, education, and economic outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Since opening in 2017, DWGP has expanded from hosting occasional events to delivering 13 annual events, including NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week Flag Raising Ceremonies, and five ongoing programs such as a monthly community gathering, Elders, Men's and Women's Groups, and school holiday workshops





How was the Strategy developed?

CONSULTATION

The Reconciliation Strategy was developed through a three-stage consultation process to reflect the aspirations of First Nations peoples and capture a diverse range of perspectives while remaining grounded in genuine community input.

This process highlighted the importance of shared responsibility and collaboration in progressing reconciliation at the local level.

STAGE 1 – First Nations Consultation

In September 2024, Mirriyu Cultural Consulting facilitated workshops with:

- First Nations Youth (secondary school students)
- Elders
- Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place community members
- Broader First Nations community living or working in Kingston

The consultation methodology was designed to be inclusive, engaging, and adaptable, ensuring meaningful participation from all attendees. By using a range of interactive tools and methods, such as discussion questions, drawing, and conversation cards for brainstorming, participants were able to articulate their thoughts clearly and visually. 100 community members contributed to this stage.

STAGE 2 – Kingston Staff Consultation

Over 60 staff were engaged through in-person workshops, including First Nations staff, the Reconciliation Working Group, the Executive Leadership Team, and the wider workforce. Feedback demonstrated strong alignment with community aspirations.

STAGE 3 – Public Consultation

In November 2025, the wider Kingston community provided feedback on the draft Strategy through online submissions, community pop-ups, and direct engagement with local organisations.

This input provided valuable insights into community priorities, highlighted opportunities to strengthen partnerships, and ensured the Strategy reflected the aspirations of both First Nations peoples and the wider Kingston community.





What we heard

The feedback gathered through consultation directly informed the development of five key priority areas. These priorities reflect the aspirations and needs of the community and demonstrate Council's commitment to driving positive change.

PRIORITY 1: **Relationships and Partnerships**

Across all workshops, strong emphasis was placed on the value of meaningful relationships with Council and the wider Kingston community.

Young people highlighted the importance of being listened to and supported through visible displays of Aboriginal identity, such as flags and events. Elders and the broader community recognised Council's efforts to host inclusive celebrations like NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week and valued the support for the Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place.

Participants across sessions advocated for increased partnerships with Traditional Owner Corporations and Aboriginal businesses, particularly in tourism, food, and the arts. The First Nations staff group also recommended establishing internal networks and stronger cross-sector collaboration to ensure Reconciliation Strategy actions are strategic and community-driven.

PRIORITY 2: Cultural Inclusion and Belonging

There was a consistent message from participants that cultural pride, connection to community, and recognition of identity are central to wellbeing. Young people expressed the importance of role models, cultural events, and learning opportunities to maintain strong cultural ties. Activities like underground cooking, traditional craft, language, and dance were named as priorities.

The broader community and Elders spoke positively about increased visibility of culture in Kingston through flags, signage, and events, and encouraged further cultural inclusion through initiatives like language signage, cultural playgrounds, and all-year cultural activations such as Blak Markets.

PRIORITY 3: Empowering Community and Protecting Country

Young people spoke about their aspirations for careers and meaningful connection to Country. They expressed a desire to contribute to their Traditional Owner organisations and take on roles that support both land management and community care. The suggestion of cultural camps and inter-Gathering Place events reflects a wish to stay connected to culture and broader Aboriginal networks.

Participants across all sessions expressed support for a purpose-built First Nations hub to house services, cultural programs, arts spaces, and early learning (e.g. Koorie Kinder). This would create a space for connection and empowerment, while also supporting intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

PRIORITY 4: Employment and Economic Participation

Economic development was seen as a key driver of community wellbeing and opportunity. Staff and community members called for support for Aboriginal-owned businesses through procurement, enterprise development, and tourism initiatives. Participants also recommended increased opportunities for local artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs, alongside mentorship and skill-building.

Young people expressed interest in work experience and long-term career goals in law, aviation, sports, and land management. Calls were made for Council to support employment pathways through school engagement, workplace learning, and partnerships with Traditional Owner organisations.

PRIORITY 5: Governance and Accountability

First Nations staff suggested strengthening internal governance mechanisms such as staff networks and cross-team accountability for Reconciliation Strategy actions. This would allow First Nations staff to provide strategic input and ensure that implementation is community informed.

The Elders and broader community emphasised the importance of Council continuing to consult and include Aboriginal voices in planning and evaluation. A shared appreciation for being heard during these sessions reflects a broader expectation that future planning continues to be co-designed and grounded in lived experience.

FIRST NATIONS YOUTH



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



WHAT SUPPORTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



THE GAPS ARE REAL

ANYONE COULD BE MOB
DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

YOU DON'T LOOK ABORIGINAL

EXPERIENCING RACISM

NO MATTER HOW MUCH COLOUR YOU HAVE, ABORIGINAL IS STILL A BORIGINAL

LAND BACK

TREATY

NATIVE TITLE

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE



TO BE A DOCTOR

WORK IN REAL ESTATE

TRAVEL THE WORLD

PRIDE

BELONGING

CONNECTION

WHAT BEING FIRST NATIONS MEANS



FIRST NATIONS ELDERS



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

 I WANT TO LEARN MY LANGUAGE

 LEARN ABOUT LOCAL HISTORY

 A PLACE FOR CULTURAL LEARNING

 TRADITIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS

DREAMS FOR OUR LATER YEARS

 GO HOME TO COUNTRY

 TO SEE MY GRANDSON FINISH HIGH SCHOOL

 SOCIAL CONNECTION

 TO WRITE A BOOK, TO TELL MY STORY

WHAT SUPPORTS WORKED IN THE PAST?

 HEALTH SERVICES
ALLIED HEALTH AND INTEGRATED TEAM CARE PROGRAM

 MOB-RUN HOSTELS
FOR MOB WHO ARE SLEEPING ROUGH OR WITHOUT A PLACE TO BE

WHAT'S NEEDED NOW?

I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT MY FAMILY HISTORY

I WANT HELP WITH CENTRELINK and the ACCESSCARE AGE CARE PACKAGE

I WANT TO LEARN HOW TO USE A MOBILE PHONE / COMPUTER

 CULTURAL SUPPORT

 COMMUNITY SERVICES

 TECHNOLOGY LITERACY

BRING BACK MOB RUN HOSTELS

MORE SERVICES TO HELP WITH HOUSE MAINTENANCE

KEEP ME IN THE LOOP

 HOUSING SERVICES

 COMMUNITY INFORMATION

I WANT THEM TO HAVE AN EASIER TIME THAN WE HAD

HOPES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

HELP AND ACCESS TO HOME LOANS


MORE PUBLIC HOUSING


SUPPORT OUR GRANDKIDS TO BE STRONG IN CULTURE

A PERMANENT SPACE FOR ALL THE YOUNG ONES AND ELDERS AND FAMILIES (ALL MOB) TO SHARE CULTURE

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

 HOUSING SUPPORTS

 INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

 A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE GATHERING PLACE

 HEALTH & WELLBEING

SUPPORTIVE

WELCOMING

I ♥ DERRIMUT WEELAM GATHERING PLACE

WE LOVE SEEING OUR FLAG ON DISPLAY, AND ALL THE NAIDOC EVENTS

LOVELY ATMOSPHERE

OUR EXPERIENCE OF KINGSTON

Section 2

Section 2 sets out the priorities that will guide Council's work over the life of the Strategy.

These priorities were shaped by First Nations community members, reconciliation advocates, partner organisations, and the wider Kingston community.

They reflect both local aspirations and national commitments, providing a clear framework to turn our vision into practical actions that build stronger relationships, respect, and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Kingston.

PRIORITY 1: Relationships and Partnerships

“Kingston is welcoming for us, and we love to see our flags on display around the area.”

Recognising Council’s responsibility to engage meaningfully with Traditional Owners and First Nations communities ensures their voices are heard and reflected in the decisions that shape the municipality. Through genuine partnerships, Council can build trust, support self-determination, and embed cultural understanding into service planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Outcome

Traditional Owners and First Nations communities are meaningfully engaged in decision-making, resulting in trusted partnerships, strengthened self-determination, and culturally informed planning, service delivery, and evaluation across the municipality.

Impact

Community feedback on attending a cultural awareness workshop by Jillian West at Cheltenham Library, August 2025.

“The wisdom and kindness that emanated from Jillian was beautiful - it really affected me and urged me to learn more.”

“So so so informative and filled with truth, knowledge and wisdom. Addresses a long standing need to be heard, told and shared. Thank you!”

“I learned so much. So grateful and humbling, and I hope we all continue with truth telling so we all live in harmony with equal rights. Thank you, Kingston Libraries!”



Community members,
Derrimut Weelam
Gathering Place
Annual NAIDOC Dinner 2025

Objective 1

Foster strong, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, stakeholders, and organisations to support collaboration and shared outcomes.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Continue to engage with neighbouring Councils and other organisations with Reconciliation plans to collaborate and share resources and expertise.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to support Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place by providing and maintaining facilities, allocating dedicated staff, offering strategic guidance, facilitating access to funding and resources, and promoting the Gathering Place to strengthen its role in community.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing

Objective 2

Enhance community participation and engagement in the planning, design, and delivery of services to ensure they reflect diverse needs and voices.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Maintain and build on established connections with Kingston's First Nations community, regularly obtain feedback to ensure the Reconciliation Strategy is effective throughout its implementation.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to engage Traditional Owners on Council policies, plans and strategies that require cultural input.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing

PRIORITY 2: Cultural Inclusion and Belonging

“Imagine what it would be like if we told people from the start that everyone was equal.”

Cultural inclusion and belonging are central to reconciliation and to creating communities where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel respected, valued, and safe.

Through education, cultural learning, and inclusive practices, we strengthen community cohesion and build environments where everyone feels a genuine sense of connection, recognition, and belonging.

Outcome

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel respected, valued, and safe, with strengthened community cohesion achieved through cultural inclusion, education, and inclusive practices that foster connection and belonging for all.

Impact

Embedding Culture in Early Learning

Rajith, an educator from an early learning centre in Kingston, attended a Yarning Circle held at Parkdale Family & Children’s Centre, to meet with other educators and learn about First Nations Cultures.

“I learn so much when hearing from Aboriginal community members and leaders. It’s so important that we have these times to connect, as we all have the same goal of creating a safe environment for all cultures, for staff and children.”

Lucy, the parent of a child who attends Parkdale Family & Children’s Centre, recently attended a Welcome and Smoking ceremony at the centre in recognition of NAIDOC Week.

“The centre does so well to include many opportunities for our children to learn Aboriginal culture, I only wish this could’ve been implemented years ago. My kids all know what a Welcome is, what to do at a smoking ceremony, and have that inherent respect for the first culture of Australia.”



Left: Ceremonial dance performed by Cassie Fisher Patterson and young community member, Kingston Arts Center 2025.
Right: Young Djirri Djirri dancer, Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place Annual NAIDOC Dinner 2025.



Objective 3

**Respect and uphold
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander cultural protocols by
recognising significant dates,
sites, and traditions across
Council activities and events.**

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Continue to recognise significant dates including NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week with community events.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to host an internal workshop or event for staff in recognition of National Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC week.	People and Culture	Every July
Continue to use Council communication channels and key civic events, including Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities such as flag-raising ceremonies, to consistently reinforce inclusive messaging that affirms all community members are welcome, encourages broad participation, celebrates shared histories, and recognises the contributions of First Nations people.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Develop a Cultural Protocol Guide to provide guidance on the use of Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, and other cultural protocols.	Inclusive Communities	Yr 1+2
Continue to invite local Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural activity at significant events throughout the year, including citizenship ceremonies.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to provide an Acknowledgement of Country at significant council events and meetings.	All	Ongoing
Implement the Naming of Places Policy .	Governance, Risk and Integrity	Ongoing
Promote a calendar of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates on Council's website.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Install Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks, Acknowledgement of Country displays, flags and/or maps of Aboriginal Australia across Council buildings and community spaces.	Inclusive Communities	Yr 1+2

Objective 4

Promote truth-telling by increasing awareness, respect, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge systems, and rights through cultural learning and engagement initiatives.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Review and update Council’s webpages on Aboriginal heritage and cultures.	Inclusive Communities	Yr 2+3
Support Early Learning Centers to implement Reconciliation Action Plans through the Narragunnawali platform and promote cultural educational resources to early years educators across Family & Children’s Services.	Family Youth and Children’s Services	Ongoing
Continue to provide regular cultural training and education opportunities for all employees, informed by the cultural learning strategy	People and Culture	Ongoing
Include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and experiences in Arts, Events, and Libraries programming, to support truth-telling and cultural understanding.	Arts, Events and Libraries	Ongoing
Provide cultural awareness training to Councillors throughout their term on Council.	Inclusive Communities; Governance, Risk and Integrity	Ongoing

PRIORITY 3: Empowering Community and Protecting Country

“I hope to see our grandkids growing up strong in Culture.”

The health of Community and Country are interwoven. Providing social, health, and wellbeing support through Council services supports First Nations self-determination. Incorporating Traditional Owner knowledge into land care, revegetation, and conservation delivers shared benefits for both Country and Council’s Open Space management.

Outcome

Stronger self-determination and wellbeing for First Nations peoples is supported through culturally appropriate social, health, and wellbeing services, while land management practices that incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge enhance the health of both Country and community.

Impact

DWGP Annual Arts Exhibition

Each year, Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place hosts an arts exhibition and competition showcasing the talents of young community members. This year, Temeka received the special Mayor’s Award for her hand-carved and decorated emu egg. She reflected on the honour by saying:

“Aunty Kalie, do you know how special this is? Winning the Mayor’s Award feels even more special than winning first place.”

Nathan was awarded second prize for his hand-carved bundi – a traditional wooden tool used by men for hunting. The raw materials were sourced through a collaboration between Kingston’s Open Space rangers and DWGP, who work together to harvest natural materials for community use. Nathan shaped and finished the bundi in Men’s Group before proudly entering it in the exhibition.







Objective 5

Support the health, wellbeing, and social connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the City of Kingston through culturally appropriate programs and initiatives.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Work with Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place and First Nations young people to strengthen cultural programs in schools and support youth connection to culture.	Inclusive Communities; Family, Youth and Children's Services	Ongoing
Source and distribute a localised directory of First Nations health and wellbeing services, ensuring services are LGBTQIA+ inclusive and accessible.	Inclusive Communities; AccessCare; Family, Youth and Children's Services; Compliance and Amenity	Yr 1+2
Ensure Aboriginal residents engaging with AccessCare receive culturally safe and appropriate support by strengthening staff cultural competency through training and practice.	AccessCare	Ongoing
Strengthen referral pathways for First Nations people experiencing homelessness, with connections to Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place where appropriate.	Inclusive Communities; AccessCare; Compliance and Amenity	Ongoing
Work in partnership with DWGP to provide access to (Council-owned) natural environments and resources for mob to practice Culture on Country.	Inclusive Communities; Open Space	Ongoing
Continue to assess opportunities for a suitable, fit-for-purpose venue to support Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place.	Inclusive Communities	Yr 2+3

Objective 6

Promote the care, protection, and sustainability of Country by embedding First Nations and Traditional Owner knowledge and perspectives into environmental and land management practices.



Kingston Open Space Rangers and Bunurong Land Council Cultural Heritage Rangers, Shoreham 2025.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Continue to collaborate with Traditional Owners on land management and cultural heritage and provide regular Caring for Country education for staff. With permission, incorporate traditional skills and techniques into the care of Kingston's foreshores, bushlands and open spaces.	Open Space	Ongoing
Continue to work collaboratively with Traditional Owners to develop a management plan to naturalise sections of Mordialloc Creek.	City Strategy; Open Space	Ongoing
Work with Traditional Owners to influence waterway management across the catchment to ensure traditional knowledge and practices are used to improve waterway health.	Open Space	Ongoing
Ensure areas of high cultural significance or sensitivity are identified early by working with a Cultural Heritage Advisor, to develop and implement a CHMP decision-making tool and system (aligned with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Regulations 2018) to guide staff on when a CHMP is required.	Inclusive Communities	Yr 1+2
Improve access to CHMP information by embedding existing plans into Council's spatial data system or providing access to ACHRIS and explore the development and maintenance of a central CHMP database.	Inclusive Communities; PMO; Information & Digital Technology	Yr 3+4
Strengthen cultural heritage expertise by engaging a qualified Cultural Heritage Advisor for guidance and delivery of staff training on CHMP processes, tools, and systems.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing



PRIORITY 4: Employment and Economic Participation

“My hope for the future is to see a level playing field for generational wealth, for our kids and their kids, and their kids. Support blak businesses, provide our young ones with employment opportunities, and give them role models to look up to.”

By creating inclusive recruitment practices, supporting career development, and fostering partnerships with Aboriginal-owned businesses, we can contribute to economic empowerment and long-term wellbeing. Valuing cultural knowledge, skills, and enterprise is essential to building a stronger, more equitable community.

Outcome

Economic empowerment and long-term wellbeing are supported through inclusive recruitment, career development, and strong partnerships with Aboriginal-owned businesses, recognising and valuing cultural knowledge, skills, and enterprise as vital to a stronger, more equitable community.

Impact

Art as Storytelling

Baanj Dayang (Rakali) Wilam (pictured right) by Aunty Kim Wandin and Chris Joy was officially opened in late 2024 at Mentone Lifesaving Club. At the launch event, Aunty Kim shared the creation story of the platypus, the offspring of the water rat (rakali), and the duck.

A community member in attendance shared their thoughts on attending the event:

“As a non-Indigenous person I was honoured to hear Aunty Kim’s creation story of the platypus! And the significance of the rakali to the area, has certainly made me look at the creatures a little differently! I’m really glad I came down this morning and got to hear about it from the artist. Thank you!”



Artwork: 'Baanj Dayang (Rakali) Wilam' 2024
by Aunty Kim Wandin and Chris Joy



Objective 7

Enhance employment outcomes by strengthening the recruitment, retention, and professional development of First Nations people at the City of Kingston.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Establish an internal First Nations Network to provide opportunities for mob working at Kingston to connect. Support First Nations staff to attend professional and cultural development workshops and further education opportunities.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Engage with First Nations staff to consult on recruitment, retention and professional development processes.	People and Culture	Yr 3+4
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders.	People and Culture	Ongoing

Objective 8

Support economic empowerment by increasing the diversity of First Nations suppliers engaged through Council procurement and partnerships.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by sharing Kingston's social procurement information and celebrating Indigenous Business Month each October.	City Economy and Innovation; Procurement and Contracts	Ongoing
Provide staff with guidance on engaging First Nations businesses by updating purchasing training and promoting Council's membership with First Nations Business Chambers	Procurement and Contracts	Yr 1+2
Develop quarterly reports to track Council's spend with First Nations businesses and increase investment annually to meet industry standards.	Procurement and Contracts	Yr 2+3+4

Objective 9

Promote cultural expression and economic participation by increasing opportunities for First Nations artists, creatives, and arts businesses across Kingston.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Continue to ensure First Nations arts and artists are featured across yearly programming	Arts, Events and Libraries	Ongoing
Commission and install public artworks by First Nations artists that reflect local culture, stories, and connection to Country, in collaboration with Traditional Owners and community members.	Arts, Events and Libraries	Ongoing



Artwork by Maree Clarke and family, featured in 'Generations: connections to Country' 2025 at Kingston Arts Centre.

PRIORITY 5: Governance and Accountability

"Nothing about us, without us."

Strong governance and genuine accountability are essential to meaningful reconciliation. Council will ensure First Nations voices are included in decision-making processes that impact First Nations communities.

Outcome

First Nations voices influence decision-making processes, ensuring strong governance and accountability in advancing reconciliation.

Impact

Whole of Council Action

"From my perspective on the Reconciliation Working Group, it's been inspiring to see how engagement across Council has grown.

More staff are actively learning about First Nations culture and contributing to our Reconciliation Strategy. I have an understanding of what sharing the load and being a part of reconciliation looks like."



Objective 10

Maintain strong governance structures by supporting effective Working and Reference Groups, with appropriate First Nations representation, to guide the implementation of the Reconciliation Strategy.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
<p>Continue to ensure strong First Nations representation on the Reconciliation Strategy Working Group (RSWG). RSWG to meet 4 times per year to monitor and report on implementation of the strategy.</p>	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
<p>Continue to ensure a majority of First Nations representation on the Reconciliation Strategy Reference Group (RSRG). RSRG to meet 4 times per year to provide guidance to Council on the implementation of the strategy.</p>	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing



Objective 11

Promote transparency and accountability through regular reporting on achievements, challenges, and key learnings to both internal and external stakeholders.

ACTION	LEAD DEPARTMENT	TIMELINE
Report annually on Reconciliation Strategy progress to the Reconciliation Strategy Reference Group and to staff via the Reconciliation Strategy Working Group.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Report annually to Council and the community on Reconciliation Strategy achievements, challenges, and key learnings.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Provide updates to Council and the community on the implementation of the Statewide Treaty Act, with separate reports to Council if a decision is required.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to celebrate, communicate and share progress as the Reconciliation Strategy is implemented, recognising achievements, positive outcomes and contributions along the way.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Develop and publish a clear, plain-English explanation of Council's role, responsibilities and governance arrangements in relation to reconciliation, and make this information publicly available on Council's website.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Continue to ensure reconciliation-related expenditure is considered and approved through Council's annual budget process.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Advocate to the State and Federal Governments, including through the Municipal Association of Victoria, for clear financial accountability and role clarity in relation to Reconciliation and Treaty-related responsibilities, with a clear position opposing cost shifting to local government.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing
Where new State or Federal Government mandates exceed current local government obligations or responsibilities in relation to Reconciliation and Treaty, officers will present a report to Council for consideration prior to any implementation.	Inclusive Communities	Ongoing

Governance

Reconciliation Strategy Working Group

The Reconciliation Strategy Working Group drives the implementation and monitoring of Kingston's Reconciliation Strategy. It includes senior staff responsible for making sure key actions are delivered, with guidance from the Executive Leadership Team.

Reconciliation Strategy Reference Group

The Reconciliation Strategy Reference Group brings together local First Nations community members, reconciliation advocates, and organisations with shared reconciliation goals.

The group's role is to guide the delivery of Council's Reconciliation Strategy and provide advice to the Reconciliation Strategy Working Group throughout the life of the Strategy.

Council is committed to ensuring the group maintains a majority of First Nations members.



Implementation and Reporting

This is a whole-of-Council strategy that will be progressively implemented over 4 years.

Delivery will involve strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new collaborations to support the achievement of planned outcomes. Responsibility for each action has been assigned to a relevant Council department, with progress reported annually to Council.

The broader community will be informed of key milestones and project updates through Council's official communication channels, including Council Annual Reports, digital platforms and social media.

Most actions will be delivered within Council's existing budget, while others will be considered through the annual budget process or supported by external funding opportunities.









City of
KINGSTON

 1230 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham VIC 3192

 PO Box 1000, Mentone 3194

 1300 653 356

TIS 131 450

 info@kingston.vic.gov.au

 kingston.vic.gov.au