

# LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

## LODDON ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2019-2022



LODDON  
SHIRE

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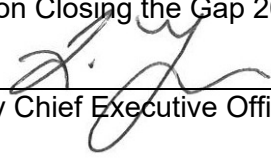
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Council Plan 2017-21  
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Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25  
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 - 1 January 2008  
Equal Opportunity Act 2010  
Local Government Act 2020  
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006  
Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010  
Recognition and Settlement Agreement between Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the State of Victoria (Schedule 6: Local Government Engagement Strategy)  
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**This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

**Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.**



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## 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for Council to advance reconciliation activities across three themes: Opportunities, Relationships and Respect. It will provide opportunities to:

- raise awareness of reconciliation
- develop knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Loddon municipality.

It aims to be achievable and to provide a platform for ongoing reconciliation efforts.

## 2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

To support delivery of this initial Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan a budget provision of \$7,500 is required over two years.

## 3 RISK ANALYSIS

In acknowledging the sensitivity and complexities surrounding reconciliation and the historical treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by government agencies, Council will commit to reconciliation through implementation of the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan.

Should Council not fulfil the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan, the following risks are present:

- breach of Schedule 6 of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the Dja Dja Wurrung, of which Council is a party to
- the local and wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community may lose confidence in Council's commitment towards reconciliation
- compromise existing and future relationships with the traditional owners and our stakeholders
- reluctance by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to support Council in service delivery, local initiatives and future strategies
- community perception – questioning Council's commitment to reconciliation.

## 4 RECONCILIATION CONTEXT

### 4.1 What is reconciliation?

Reconciliation aims for all Australians to work together to address the underlying causes of division and inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-indigenous people. Reconciliation takes a holistic approach that encompasses rights, as well as so-called symbolic and practical actions. Through actions, it seeks to drive beneficial outcomes for everyone through a focus on the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-indigenous Australia. Reconciliation aims to reduce prejudice, discrimination and racism. In this context, it also seeks to recognise the rich history, cultures and rights of Aboriginal people in Australia.

### 4.2 Context of reconciliation and the Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan

Council has demonstrated its commitment to reconciliation in its Council Plan 2017-2021 with its intention "to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan at the Reflect level". While it is still Council's

intention to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, after consultation with the Aboriginal community it was agreed that Council should develop a Community Partnership Plan, to focus on a plan that is achievable within the limited resources available.

In November 2017, Council adopted a “Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Policy”. The purpose of this was to set out the guiding principles in observing appropriate protocols when acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land at Council civic functions and business activities, and in Council publications.

Further to this, Council has been working to achieve beneficial outcomes for our local Aboriginal community, through the following:

- promotion of indigenous eco tours in Boort
- commitment to and undertaking Cultural Heritage Management Plans
- working with Dja Dja Wurrung to develop the canoe trail and promotional materials on the Loddon River and Serpentine Creek
- work on the Boort scar tree project as part of the Lake Boort Management Plan in conjunction with Parks Victoria
- flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag during NAIDOC and reconciliation weeks
- accessing Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises, trading as Djandak.

Council acknowledges it cannot achieve many reconciliation actions on its own, and accordingly has worked with the community and community service organisations to identify mutual joint projects.

#### **4.3 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Loddon Shire**

The traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans are the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people.

Dja Dja Wurrung territory traverses Central Victoria. Within Loddon Shire it extends from Boort in the north of the Shire, through to the east beyond Dingee, in the south at Bridgewater, Newbridge and Tarnagulla, and to the west of Wedderburn.

Barapa Barapa people have resided over extensive country, particularly in the southern parts of New South Wales and northern Victoria. Within Loddon Shire, the Barapa Barapa area includes part of the Boort area and all of Pyramid Hill in the north east of the Shire.

The 2016 Census data indicates that the Loddon Shire is home to 118 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is an increase of 14 people from the 2011 census. This equates to 1.6% of our overall population, which is double the Victorian average of 0.8%.

The medium age of Aboriginal people in Loddon Shire at the 2016 Census was 30 years as opposed to medium age of non-aboriginal people of 51 years<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Department of Premier and Cabinet the Loddon municipality “has 1067 registered cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal cultural place, Aboriginal historical places, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, rock art, scarred tree, a shell midden and stone features.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA23940](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA23940)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.maggolee.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LGA-Profile-Final-Loddon.pdf>

#### **4.4 Council's position**

As a local government authority, Council is ideally placed to provide leadership on reconciliation as it builds relationships and delivers services at a local community level. Council's role and responsibility is across two implementation approaches, firstly by a whole Council approach and secondly as a whole community approach.

A whole community approach is needed to work together in partnership with traditional custodians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, non-indigenous residents of the shire and community partner organisations.

The Loddon Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan demonstrates Council's support for activities that will assist in bringing about positive change in the lives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

### **5 METHODOLOGY**

This plan was developed after a thorough community engagement process, consultation with traditional owners of Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, community members, community services organisations and Loddon Shire Councillors and staff.

The process included:

- meetings with Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa
- surveying the community
- hosting of three community workshops
- roundtable discussion with Loddon community service providers
- forum with Loddon Shire Councillors
- workshop with Loddon Shire staff
- informal meetings with community members and organisations.

The plan was subsequently drafted and provided to the traditional custodians Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Clans, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders residents, interested non-Aboriginal residents, community service organisations and Council for comment and feedback.

### **6 LODDON ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

Loddon Shire Council is committed to promoting reconciliation through respect, relationship building and promotion of opportunities with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encouraging our partners and the community to do the same.

This plan includes three themes:

- Respect
- Relationships
- Opportunities

The following tables detail activities over the two years of the action plan.

#### **6.1 Respect**

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their culture, history, and experience, is fundamental to gaining a deeper cross-cultural understanding and developing equal and healthy relationships.



Action		Responsible Council Officer	Partners
1	Council to develop and adopt a statement of commitment with our partner organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Shire	Director Community Wellbeing	Northern District Community Health (NDCH)  Inglewood and Districts Health Service (IDHS)  Boort District Health (BDH)
2	Conduct an audit on Aboriginal cultural inclusive practices	Director Community Wellbeing	Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC)
3	That the Aboriginal flag be flown at the Wedderburn and Serpentine Offices for the duration of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	Manager Information and Business Transformation	Customer Service Team
4	Seek funding to undertake a project with traditional custodians and people with indigenous history to document local histories and the importance of country to Aboriginal people	Director Community Wellbeing	Marketing and Tourism Officer  Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation  Barapa Barapa  Local people with knowledge of indigenous history
5	Develop guidelines and understanding of Aboriginal protocols to share with the community	Policy and Strategy Officer	Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa
6	Allocate \$1000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups or event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage a Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events	Manager Community Support	
7	In line with the Naming Rules for Place Names in Victoria consider traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names for new local roads, bridges and public spaces in relevant council areas in consultation with the Corporation	Director Operations	Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa
8	Include the traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names of towns and places with non-Aboriginal names, or Aboriginal meaning of place names with Aboriginal names on new township	Director Operations	Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa

Action		Responsible Council Officer	Partners
	entry signage when renewed from time to time (subject to approval by VicRoads)		
9	A review of the current Welcome to and Acknowledgment of Country Policy to be undertaken to include reference to the traditional custodians by name	Director Community Wellbeing	Dja Dja Wurrung Barapa Barapa

## 6.2 Relationships

Meaningful relationship enable the Shire and its community to understand the experience, interests and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and work together for the wellbeing of our community.

Action		Responsible Council Officer	Partners
10	Facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island residents, groups and organisations for Council and the community	Council's executive and leadership team	BDAC NDCH IDHS BDH
11	Assist community to establish a community reconciliation action group led by residents	Director Community Wellbeing	Interested community members
12	Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	Director Community Wellbeing	
13	Raise awareness of this Loddon Aboriginal Partnership Plan within and externally to Council	Director Community Wellbeing	Council's Communications Officer
14	Training for Council staff (and offered to Councillors) in order to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Director Corporate Services	Manager of Organisational Development
15	Seek funding to offer cultural awareness training sessions to local community leaders to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Director Community Wellbeing	Interested community leaders

### 6.3 Opportunities

Providing opportunities that foster wellbeing through social inclusion, employment, civic participation, and cultural expression.

Action		Responsible Council Officer	Partners
16	Develop a joint procurement strategy with other councils to engage Aboriginal companies for contracts	Director Corporate Services	Manager Financial Services  City of Greater Bendigo  Mt Alexander Shire Council
17	Work closely with and engage Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises) to provide services to Council in line with Councils Procurement practices and strategies and where possible partner organisations	Director Operations	
18	Through the Loddon Youth Council implement a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Islander youth leadership and to routinely discuss and advocate for promotion of reconciliation	Manager Community Support	
19	Council staff to work with local kindergartens to include the integration of programs and activities for children that promote reconciliation into the offered curriculum.	Manager Community Wellbeing	Children and Youth Coordinator Loddon Shire cluster kindergartens

### 6.4 Progress tracking and reporting

Council will continually evaluate progress and record initiatives of this partnership plan.

Activity		Responsible Council Officer	Partners
20	Monitor the partnership plan annually	Director Community Wellbeing	Council staff
21	Engage the Community Reconciliation Action Group through discussions to ensure actions and activities are recorded and have achieved intended outcomes	Director Community Wellbeing	Community Reconciliation Action Group
22	Review the partnership plan following the initial two year implementation. Based on this review, update and proceed to next plan	Director Community Wellbeing	All community partners including Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Interested community members Councillors and Council staff

## 7 COSTING AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS

Where an action has not been identified below, it is considered that it can be completed within existing Council resources.

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
Conduct an audit on Aboriginal cultural inclusive practices	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	Council	June 2020
That the Aboriginal flag be flown at the Wedderburn and Serpentine Offices for the duration of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	Council	December 2019
Work with traditional custodians and people with indigenous history to document local histories and the importance of country to Aboriginal people	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	External	December 2020
Allocate \$1,000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups and event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage an Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000 (annually)	Council	March 2020 (annually)
Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	National Reconciliation Funding	May 2020 and July 2020 (annually)
Staff training program	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500	Council	June 2020

# ACTION PLAN 2022

## PURPOSE

This Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan 2019-2021 has now reached the end of its term. Due to a number of factors, including disruptions and service redirections resulting from lockdowns, Council has decided to extend this Plan to the end of 2022.

Annual Action Plans have been developed to guide Council staff on what needs to be done to achieve each strategy of the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan and ensure it is implemented efficiently and effectively. Progress against previous years' Action Plans were assessed and feasibility for delivery in 2022 determined in consultation with staff at departmental level. This Action Plan includes priority actions from the previous Action Plans that have not yet been completed. There are 12 items outlined within this Action Plan which Council will endeavour to deliver in 2022. There are also two progress and tracking items to ensure continual evaluation and monitoring of this Plan.

This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan 2019-2021.

## ACTION PLAN

### Priority area: Respect

Outcome	Action	Responsible	Partners
Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their culture, history, and experience, is fundamental to gaining a deeper cross-cultural understanding and	Investigate available, relevant guidelines and other resources in understanding Aboriginal protocols, to share with the community.	Director Community Wellbeing	Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities
	Allocate \$1000 through Council's Event Sponsorship program for community groups or event organisers to apply for up to \$500 to engage a Dja Dja Wurrung or Barapa Barapa representative to perform a Welcome to Country at public events. Promote opportunity via social media.	Manager Community Support	Media Officer

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Partners</b>
developing equal and healthy relationships.	Implement the new Welcome to and Acknowledgment of Country Policy, to include reference to Traditional Owners by name.	Director Community Wellbeing	Loddon Leaders
	In line with the Naming Rules for Place Names in Victoria consider traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names for new local roads, bridges and public spaces in relevant council areas in consultation with the Corporation.	Director Operations	Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities
	Include the traditional Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa names of towns and places with non-Aboriginal names, or Aboriginal meaning of place names with Aboriginal names on new township entry signage when renewed from time to time (subject to approval by VicRoads).	Director Operations	Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities

### Priority area: Relationships

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Meaningful relationships enable the Shire and its community to understand the experience, interests and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and work together for the wellbeing of our community.	Facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, groups and organisations for Council and the community.	Council's Executive and Leadership team	Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities  BDAC  NDCH IDHS BDHS
	Investigate current community reconciliation groups led by residents within the region and/or state, with a view to assess feasibility of establishing a group specific to the Loddon Shire.	Director Community Wellbeing	

Outcome	Action	Responsible	Partners
	Participate in and celebrate both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.	Director Community Wellbeing	Manager Organisation Development
	Raise awareness of this Loddon Aboriginal Partnership Plan within and externally to Council.	Director Community Wellbeing	Loddon Leaders  Media Officer
	Continue to provide training for Council staff, in order to raise awareness and understanding for reconciliation and education of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Director Corporate Services	Manager Organisation Development

### Priority area: Opportunities

Outcome	Action	Responsible	Partners
Providing opportunities that foster wellbeing through social inclusion, employment, civic participation, and cultural expression.	Work with consultant and other partner councils to meet objectives of the Aboriginal Business Capability Building Initiative, to increase the level of procurement of goods, services and works from Aboriginal businesses.	Director Corporate Services	Manager Financial Services  Aboriginal Business Capability Building Initiative partner councils
	Implement the new Child Safe Standards 2022, standard number 1: <i>Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.</i>	Manager Community Wellbeing  Manager Organisation Development	Child and Youth Coordinator  Loddon Shire cluster kindergartens  Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities

## Progress tracking and reporting

Outcome	Action	Responsible	Partners
Council will continually evaluate progress and record initiatives of this partnership plan.	Continue to monitor the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan in preparation for the development of the new Plan.	Director Community Wellbeing	All responsible Council staff
	<p>Engage a consultant to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, Council staff and key stakeholders to begin the development the new Plan.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Aboriginal Community Partnership Plan forms part of the Access, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy – due for development in 2022/23.</p>	Director Community Wellbeing	<p>Relevant Council staff</p> <p>Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa communities</p> <p>BDAC</p> <p>NDCH</p> <p>IDHS</p> <p>BDHS</p>