

# **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2016**



Queanbeyan City Council  
257 Crawford St Queanbeyan  
PO Box 90 NSW 2620  
**Phone:** 6285 6000  
**Email:** [council@qcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@qcc.nsw.gov.au)  
**Web:** [www.qcc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.qcc.nsw.gov.au)

## Acknowledgment:

Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) wishes to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people whose land our city is on. QCC acknowledges, recognises and respects the cultural heritage, beliefs and connection the traditional owners have to the land and water.

QCC also acknowledges and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations living within the Local Government Area and looks forward to working with these groups to advance reconciliation.



*Mayor Tim Overall, Daniel Williams, Uncle Jimmy Williams, Scott Russell.  
Absent: Cheryl Rule*

## Artwork Acknowledgement:

### Cover Image: Letchworth Indigenous Mural

The artwork on the cover of this document was created by a group of community members under the guidance of Uncle Jimmy Williams. The artists were Uncle Jimmy, Daniel Williams, Scott Russell and Cheryl Rule.

The mural represents all members of the community coming from diverse backgrounds to one meeting place. It highlights local flora and fauna of the Queanbeyan Region.

The artwork was created as a community art project funded under the Indigenous Culture Support program funded by the Commonwealth Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

The mural is on permanent display for the community at Letchworth Neighbourhood Centre.

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## Message from the Mayor

I am proud to present the inaugural *Queanbeyan City Council Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-2016*, which has been developed by Council in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This Plan is about working together, promoting respect and building on existing strengths.

The Reconciliation Action Plan program, launched by Reconciliation Australia in July 2006, provides a framework for organisations to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop actions and outcomes that will contribute to 'closing the gap' through the key areas of 'relationships, respect and opportunity'.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is a significant and practical step that builds on a number of successful initiatives implemented by Council over recent years. These include a Memorandum of Understanding with the local Aboriginal Community, the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, formalised cultural protocols and cultural awareness training for Councillors and employees

Our Reconciliation Action Plan strengthens our commitment to respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities; to collaboration and partnership building; and to improving opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our sphere of influence.

Council is committed to delivering the *Queanbeyan City Council Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-2016* and working with the community and other stakeholders towards reconciliation.

I look forward to supporting the implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan and working to ensure that our Aboriginal community feels valued, respected and included.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Overall', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Tim Overall**  
**Mayor, Queanbeyan City Council**  
**April 2014**

## **OUR GOAL:**

Queanbeyan City Council's goal is to have a Reconciliation Action Plan that will strengthen existing partnerships and deliver better outcomes for the people of Queanbeyan.

Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) is a multicultural and diverse organisation and is committed to reconciliation. Council seeks advice on Aboriginal issues through the Queanbeyan City Council Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues, its strong working relationships with local Aboriginal organisations, and key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups.

We work together with our community to continually enhance our well governed, safe and healthy city by caring for its assets, fostering a strong sense of civic pride, and delivering quality services in a financially, socially and environmentally responsible manner to ensure a sustainable future.

## **OUR BUSINESS:**

Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) is the local government authority responsible for the Queanbeyan Local Government Area. It operates under and is bound by the NSW Local Government ACT 1993.

QCC plays a critical role in the social, economic and environmental success of the local community.

Queanbeyan City Council covers an area of 172 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 40,209. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 3% of the overall population, which is higher than the NSW state average of 2.5%.

In March 2014 Council had 321 employees, of which 2.8% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in QCC's workforce is above the NSW Public Sector target of 2.6% by 2015 (NSW Government, *EEO Benchmarks and Targets*, 2012).

## **OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN:**

Queanbeyan City Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2014 – 2016 has been developed in consultation with the Queanbeyan City Council Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues and the RAP Working Party.

The RAP will provide Council with a framework for future actions and priorities to advance reconciliation, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander equality and promote closer working relationships between the Council and the Aboriginal community. It will recognise the positive contribution that both Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to Queanbeyan. Establishing this RAP consolidates QCC long standing commitment to reconciliation.

This RAP has been developed through a lengthy process that included:

- Research and consultation;
- Input from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff of Queanbeyan City Council, the QCC Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues, and the RAP Working Party.
- Input from Reconciliation Australia;
- Consultation with local traditional owners, the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people as well as members of the broader local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

QCC is committed to working towards a positive partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through reconciliation. Council recognises that reconciliation will not be fully achieved while there are huge gaps in health, education and employment opportunities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. Council also recognises that cultural awareness, respect, and employment are key issues that can be acted on to reduce these gaps.



## HOW THIS PLAN WORKS:

Reconciliation Australia has developed a framework for the development of Reconciliation Action Plans. This framework identifies four different levels of RAP.

1. **Reflect RAP** – The Reflect RAP is designed for those organisations taking their first steps towards a formal reconciliation plan. It is designed to provide direction in the establishment of relationships and raising awareness of reconciliation within the organisation.
2. **Innovate RAP** – An Innovate RAP is designed to develop specific programs and initiatives that promote reconciliation. This can include tools such as formal cultural protocols, memorandum of understanding, employment strategies and procurement plans.
3. **Stretch RAP** – A stretch RAP is designed to build on the success of an Innovate RAP or for organisations that have a strong success rate in existing initiatives that promote reconciliation. It focuses on setting measurable targets for initiatives, such as employment and procurement. It is about expanding or refining existing initiatives that have proven successful in improving relationships, respect or awareness of reconciliation.
4. **Elevate RAP** – This type of RAP is designed for organisations that have a successful Stretch RAP and are seeking to extend their activities in the area of reconciliation. These organisations are leaders and champions in the reconciliation area.

QCC and the RAP working group have identified that an Innovate RAP is most suitable to this organisation. This acknowledges the work already undertaken by QCC to promote reconciliation, such as the MOU with the local Aboriginal community, the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, formalised cultural protocols and successful cultural awareness training conducted across the organisation.

This Innovate RAP is made up a series of actions and initiative in four key areas: Relationships; Respect; Opportunities and Tracking and Reporting. Some are new initiatives, some are already standard practice within the organisation.

It should be noted that this Plan is for two years and it will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported on to Reconciliation Australia and to the Council via the Queanbeyan City Council Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues.



## RELATIONSHIPS

Acknowledging and respecting the cultural practices of the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is a significant part of the relationship building process. QCC is committed to forming partnerships and maintaining relationships to achieve our vision of reconciliation.

*Focus Area: Expanding networks, cultural protocols, community engagement, encouraging initiatives to support relationship building.*

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>MEASURABLE TARGET</b>
Establish a RAP working party comprising of members of the QCC Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal staff, and non-Aboriginal staff.	Manager Family Services and Community Development  Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	May 2012	Working Group Established
QCC staff participate in Council's major events including the Reconciliation Walk, NAIDOC, Harmony Day.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Managers / Staff	Annually - Ongoing	Staff attendance at events.
QCC maintains and facilitates the Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development	Ongoing	Meeting held Bimonthly
Maintain strong relationships with key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	Ongoing	Representation of local organisations and community representatives on the QCC Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues.

## RESPECT

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important to QCC. Recognising the cultural diversity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people builds respect and positive relationships. Council values the contribution of the diverse histories and culture each community brings to Queanbeyan and supports an inclusive environment based on respect for all cultures.

*Focus Area: Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land, Cultural Awareness training and participation in significant public celebrations.*

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>MEASURABLE TARGET</b>
QCC will work with local elders, the Ngambri Local Aboriginal Land Council, key Aboriginal organisations and the QCC Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues to review existing Cultural Protocols.  Develop a protocol for Council which acknowledges the traditional owners at Council meetings.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development	May 2015	Protocols are completed and adopted by Council.
Investigate providing Cultural Awareness training to all staff every 2 years.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager People and Organisational Efficiency	December 2014	Cultural Awareness Training Plan developed in consultation with Training and Development Officer.
Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on prominent Council buildings daily and at significant cultural events.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	Ongoing	Flags flown daily on Council buildings and at significant events.
The Mayor and Councillors are invited to attend events that are significant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, such as NAIDOC Week, Harmony Day and Sorry Day.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	Ongoing	Mayor and Councillors are given proper notice and invited to attend by event organisers.
Local Elders and key Aboriginal community members are invited to attend significant Council functions and events, such as civic receptions.	Personal Assistant to the General Manager  Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	Ongoing	Invitations sent to identified members of the community for significant Council functions and events.
Investigate the installation of a permanent plaque or monument in a prominent position to commemorate the original Aboriginal people of the land.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	December 2014	Installation complete.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community is important to QCC. Council will endeavour to contribute to closing the gap in education and employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal members of the community, and identify areas to support greater self determination and contribute to an inclusive community.

*Focus Area: Supporting Aboriginal employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within Queanbeyan City Council. Supporting community groups. Increase indigenous visibility in the city.*

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>MEASURABLE TARGET</b>
Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at Queanbeyan City Council through the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.	Manager People and Organisational Efficiency  Manager Family Services and Community Development  Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	December 2014	Updated Aboriginal Employment Strategy endorsed by Council and implemented.
Investigate the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program.	Manager People and Organisational Efficiency  Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	June 2014	Report on suitability of program prepared and presented.
Investigate the establishment of a ‘Sister City’ with a rural or remote Aboriginal Council/Community.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects	May 2015	Sister City opportunities investigated and reported back to Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues.
Establish an annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Award for outstanding community work to be presented at the Reconciliation Walk.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development	May 2015	Award in place.  First award presented and 2015 Reconciliation Walk.
Investigate dual naming of geographical areas with consultation from Ngambri Local Aboriginal Land Council and traditional owners	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development  Manager Parks and Recreation	October 2014	Discussion paper tabled.

*Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-2016*

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<p>Consult with Ngambri Local Aboriginal Land Council, key Aboriginal organisations and traditional owners on major open space projects when development planned to ensure the protection of Aboriginal heritage, culture and significant sites.</p>	<p>Strategic Development  Manager Development Control</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Consultation conducted on key developments as they arise.</p>
<p>Investigate establishing an after school homework centre at the Library and encourage Aboriginal students to attend</p>	<p>Library Manager  Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects</p>		
<p>Identify sources of funding to support the activities and objectives of the RAP and assist the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to apply for relevant funding opportunities.</p>	<p>Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Community notified of funding opportunities.  Number of applications submitted for funding.</p>

## TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the action outlined in this RAP provides valuable information to QCC about the success of the RAP, what worked well, what didn't and what is needed in the next iteration of the RAP. Reporting on the successful actions in this RAP also provides valuable insights for other organisations undertaking the reconciliation process and adds to the body of evidence Reconciliation Australia can draw upon to support them through the process.

*Focus Area: Measuring success, celebrating progress, reflecting on challenges and opportunities for the future.*

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
Develop RAP.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development	July 2014	RAP finalised and adopted by Council  RAP submitted to RA and uploaded on both websites
Implement RAP.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development  Other relevant staff.	Ongoing	Number of actions implemented..
Annual RAP report developed and delivered to Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues and Reconciliation Australia.	Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Projects  Manager Family Services and Community Development	July 2015 July 2016	Annual report submitted to Reconciliation Australia.

## RESOURCES

*Reconciliation Action Plan Toolkit – Reconciliation Australia*

*Queanbeyan City Council Community Profile*

*Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census QuickStats*

*NSW Government (2012) EEO Benchmarks and Targets*

*City of Melbourne Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-14*

*Blacktown City Reconciliation Action Plan 2010*

*Bankstown City Council Reconciliation Action Plan 2012-2015*

*Lismore City Council - Reconciliation Action Plan 2013/2014*

*The City of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2014*

Queanbeyan City Council would like to acknowledge the contribution made to this RAP by:

- ❖ The RAP Working Party - Tamsin Porter, Antoinette House, Hayden Page and Malcolm Towney;
- ❖ Members of the Queanbeyan City Council Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Issues; and
- ❖ Reconciliation Australia.