


Southern Grampians Shire Council

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Reflect

October 2024 - October 2025





**Southern Grampians Shire Council
acknowledges that our Shire is on the
Traditional Lands of the Gunditjmara, Tjap
Wurrung, Jardwadjali and Buandig people.**

**We recognise the important ongoing role
that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
people have in our community and pay our
respects to their Elders, past, present and
emerging.**

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Our Artwork and Artist Story

“ In the heart of the Southern Grampians is where the boundaries of Gunditjmara, Buandig and Jardwadjarli people lived for many thousands of years. This country cared for our people, as did our people care for country, it is our obligation. This country is sacred and connects our mob. This country is where Bunjil soars above overlooking, ensuring we care for our country. This country is where the earth meets the sky harmoniously, where ancient mountains, waterways, and trees dance.

This artwork represents the country and its people who have lived and cared for country for many thousands of years. It is our obligation to care for the country and listen to the people (Gunditjmara, Buandig, Jardwadjarli people).

Together, as we embark on a journey of healing, crafting a Reconciliation Action Plan that honors the past while paving the way for a brighter future. Let us reach out to the community, extending a hand of friendship and cooperation, eager to learn from knowledge and forge a bond that surpasses centuries of division. ”

“Mirring” by Jason Walker - Gunditjmara | Yorta Yorta

Southern Grampians Shire Council would like to acknowledge proud Gunditjmara and Yorta Yorta man Jason Walker, whose artwork appears on the cover and throughout this document.

We thank Jason for his ongoing support of Council's Reconciliation journey.

This artwork hangs proudly throughout our Council Offices.



Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Southern Grampians Shire Council to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Southern Grampians Shire Council joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

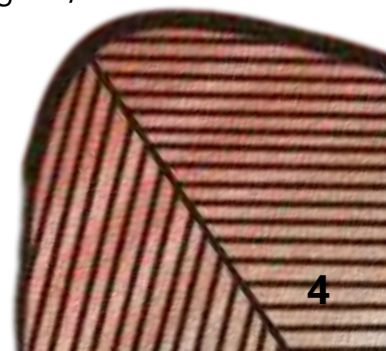
These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Southern Grampians Shire Council to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Southern Grampians Shire Council, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Message from Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

As the Mayor and CEO of Southern Grampians Shire we are proud to present this Reconciliation Action Plan, a first for our shire and a significant step in our reconciliation journey.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Jardwajali and Buandig people. We pay respect to their Elders, celebrate their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memory of their ancestors. We also acknowledge that Peoples of the First Nations occupied this land for many thousands of years prior to white settlement and that this settlement caused disruption and dislodgement to many communities without any agreement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

These lands are the place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live, develop their cultures, preserve the land and waterways, and pass on their knowledge from generation to generation. Unfortunately, these lands are also the place where significant death, cruelty, segregation, inequity, and hardships were endured through colonisation and in the decades and centuries that have followed.

It is our hope that by acknowledging uncomfortable truths, Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan will then be a basis for the continuing acknowledgement and celebration of the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures in Southern Grampians Shire. Though this Plan is an internal Council Plan, it should be regarded by the entire community as Council endeavouring to create a foundation from which we can move toward reconciliation.

The Plan builds on work already undertaken by providing a platform to strategically target opportunities, educate, strengthen relationships and demonstrate respect. It is anticipated the achievement of the actions in this Plan will strengthen Council as an organisation and contribute to a stronger community.

This Plan is the next step in Council's journey; providing a meaningful contribution to reconciliation and an opportunity for Council to lead by example.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Robertson'.

Mayor Councillor David Robertson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Doyle'.

Chief Executive Officer Tony Doyle

Our Business

Southern Grampians Shire Council was formed in September 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Shires of Dundas, Mt Rouse, Wannon, and the City of Hamilton.

With a landscape dominated by the spectacular Grampians mountain range, ancient volcanoes, tranquil rivers, and waterfalls, and undulating pastoral land dotted with majestic red gums, the Southern Grampians spans the heart of the Western District of Victoria. The Shire is located 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south-east of Adelaide. With a population of approximately 16,500, Southern Grampians covers an area of 6,652 square kilometres.

Hamilton is the main retail and service centre supported by the nine surrounding townships of Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Peshurst, and Tarrington.

Agriculture, with its associated industries, is the largest employment sector with this intensive agriculture production contributing significantly to the Victorian and Australian economies. Processing, manufacturing, research and development, engineering, retail, tourism, aged and health care services, and education are also important employment sectors across the Shire.

The Southern Grampians Shire has a keen sense of community with people working together to achieve common goals and outcomes. This sense of community benefits the entire municipality and Southern Grampians Shire Council will continue to encourage and acknowledge the community interests in the development of the Shire.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is responsible for delivering more than 70 services to the Southern Grampians community.

This includes everything from family and children's services, arts and culture services, community engagement programs and services, youth programs, health and safety services, parks and recreation management, community facilities, waste management, roads management and community buildings; to business development, planning for appropriate asset management, major infrastructure projects and ensuring accountability for Council's budget.

As well as implementing various Commonwealth and State Government programs, Council also provides a range of discretionary services in response to community needs. This broad range of community services and infrastructure for residents, supports the wellbeing and prosperity of our community.

Currently, Southern Grampians Shire Council employs over 200 full-time and part-time staff members with the number increasing to approximately 300 employees when including casual staff members. Presently, Southern Grampians Shire Council recognises having two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff onboard. Council is hopeful that in the future there will be more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people employed.



Photo: Council officers and Uncle Bungaditj Mara at the Hamilton Sundial

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Southern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges that having a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan that is endorsed by Traditional Owners of Gunditjmara, Jardwadjali and Tjap Wurrung Nations is vital, as it furthers our understanding on the requirements for the development on Country. It is essential that Southern Grampians Shire Council has continuous and strong communications with local Registered Aboriginal Parties; Gunditj Mirring, Eastern Maar, & Barengi Gadjin, as well as other First Nations stakeholders to ensure that the organisation's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is endorsed and implemented to establish a culturally safe and inclusive community and workplace. Developing a Reconciliation Action Plan provides practical actions and a written strategic document that is established to drive Southern Grampians Shire Council's contribution to the reconciliation process whilst developing an understanding about the local First Nations communities that the Council operates in.

The development and implementation of Southern Grampians Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan is led by the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, providing consultations between Council, our Registered Aboriginal Parties, and local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members. Currently, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group consists of Southern Grampian Shire Council's Mayor, Deputy Mayor, CEO, Communications & Engagement Manager, Community Development Coordinator, First Nations Community Engagement Officer, a Gunditjmara Elder and the CEO of Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation.

Southern Grampians Shire Council has appointed a First Nations Community Engagement Officer to facilitate and guide the development and implementation of the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan alongside the Reconciliation Action Plan Champion Tony Doyle, Southern Grampians Shire Council's CEO. This position enables Council to effectively consult and liaise with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, in turn establishing and securing our commitment to embedding the Reconciliation Action Plan within the organisation and local communities.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to reconciliation and has chosen to develop a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan as part of its initial steps along the reconciliation journey. In the development of a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, the organisation commits to identifying practical actions that will contribute to reconciliation and improve relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Southern Grampians Shire Council commits to completing the documented actions and objectives over the following 12 months to ensure that the organisation is fulfilling its commitment to reconciliation and contributing to a positive, diverse, and inclusive change within the community as well as the workforce.



Photo: Scarred tree

Our Partnerships & Current Activities

Southern Grampians Shire Council collaborates and consults with Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, for guidance and advice on First Nations cultural matters. Council also supports and collaborates with Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation on community-based activities and events. Council is working on strengthening partnerships with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Barengi Gadjin Land Council to strive for better reconciliation outcomes and engagement to improve the organisations and community understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, practises, experiences, and histories.

Southern Grampians Shire Council has implemented training, events, and information sessions across the organisation to develop employee's understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander practices and protocols. For instance, Council held a Cultural Capability session which provided insight into the various aspects of Aboriginal cultures. This was comprised of cultural protocols and sensitivities for engaging with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities respectfully, importance of diversity and representation across all industries, and historical information to support the conversation on respect and acknowledgement.

Southern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the necessity to increase the current community engagement and interaction with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to strengthen the participation and involvement with developing partnerships with communities while providing recognition and understanding of the importance of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures.



Photo: Uncle Bungaditj Mara, Jasmin Wright, Aunty Tina Wright, Jason Walker, Cr Bruach Colliton, and Aunty Annabelle Atkinson



Photo: Troy Lovett performing a smoking ceremony

Relationships



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</p>	<p>Continue to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Maintain and strengthen Council's ongoing relationships with the Traditional Owner groups across the region: including Barengi Gadjin, Eastern Maar, and Gunditj Mirring</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>First Nations Officer & CEO</p>
	<p>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
<p>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	<p>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<p>Communications Coordinator</p>
	<p>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</p>	<p>27 May - 3 June 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator & First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</p>	<p>27 May - 3 June 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
<p>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</p>	<p>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<p>CEO & Community Development Coordinator</p>

Relationships



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly	May 2025	Communications Coordinator & CEO
	Continue to identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	August 2025	CEO & First Nations Officer
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	September 2025	Community Development Coordinator
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	September 2025	Community Development Coordinator



Photo: Wannon Falls, Hamilton

Respect



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<p>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.</p>	<p>October 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer & Community Development Coordinator</p>
	<p>Investigate cultural learning opportunities for staff.</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</p>	<p>August 2025</p>	<p>People and Culture Coordinator & First Nations Officer</p>
<p>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>	<p>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>CEO</p>
	<p>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Encourage and support staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.</p>	<p>January 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>

Respect



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	<p>Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</p>	<p>July 2025</p>	<p>RAP working Group Chair</p>



Photo: Staycee Charles speaking during Reconciliation week



Opportunities

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.</p>	<p>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</p>	<p>January 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
	<p>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Learning and Development Officer & First Nations Officer</p>
<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<p>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</p>	<p>October 2025</p>	<p>Procurement Coordinator</p>
	<p>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</p>	<p>July 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer & Procurement Officer</p>



Photo: View of Tapoc (Mount Napier)



Photo: Uncle Bungaditj Mara at Wannan Falls, Hamilton

Governance



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</p>	<p>Continue to maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation</p>	<p>February 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Review and Update Terms of Reference for the RWG.</p>	<p>February 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator & First Nations Officer</p>
<p>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</p>	<p>Define resource needs for RAP implementation</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator & First Nations Officer</p>
	<p>Appoint and maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
	<p>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Governance Coordinator</p>

Governance



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.</p>	<p>Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss important RAP correspondence.</p>	<p>July 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
	<p>Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.</p>	<p>1 August 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
	<p>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.</p>	<p>30 September 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>
<p>Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</p>	<p>Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Community Development Coordinator</p>

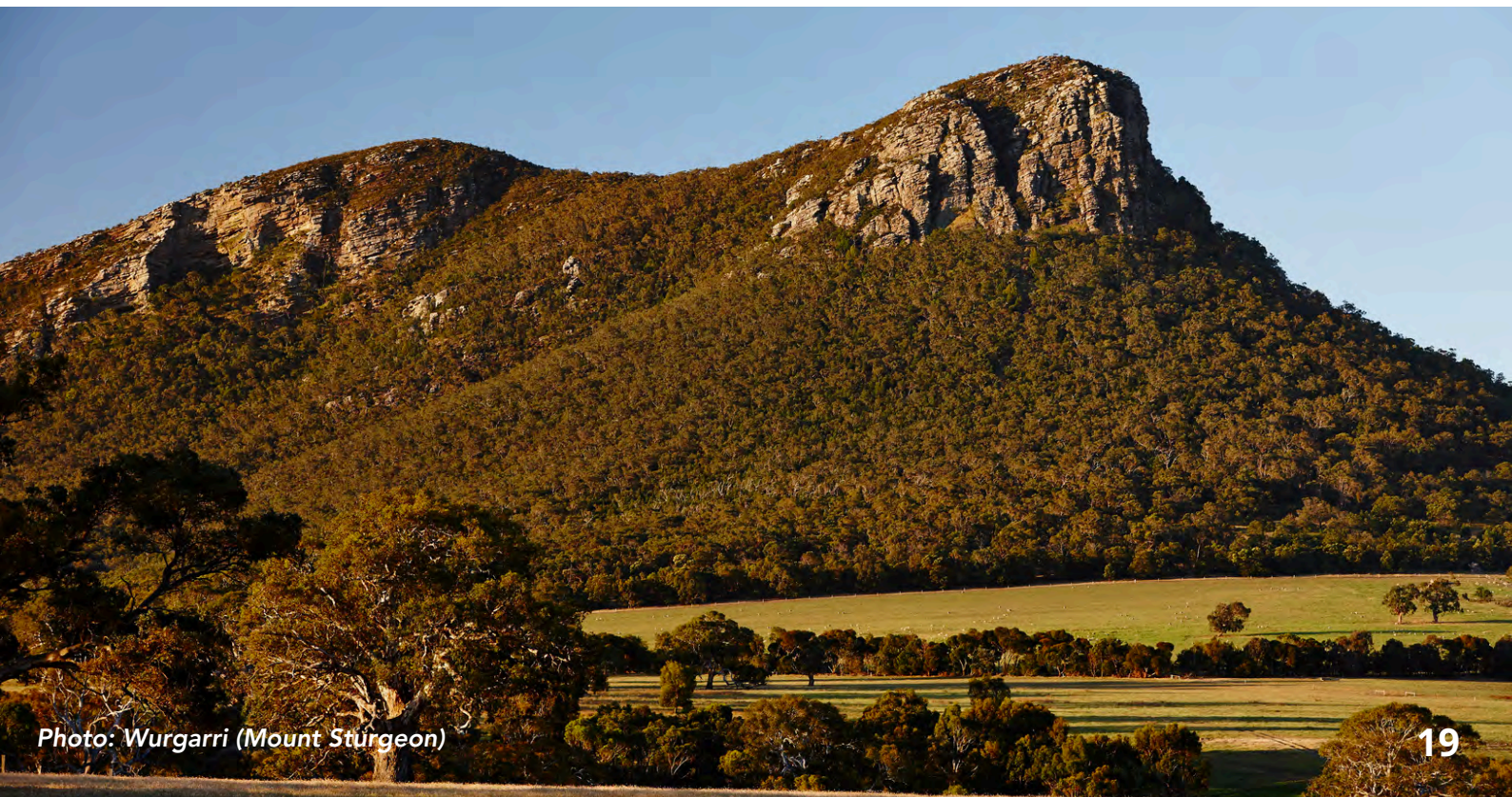


Photo: Wurgarri (Mount Sturgeon)



For more information, please contact:

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