

Tablelands Regional Council
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
May 2018 - May 2019





Acknowledgement of Country

Tablelands Regional Council would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Tablelands region and recognise their continuing connection to country. We pay respects to Elders past, present and future.



Message from the Mayor

I am proud to be a part of Council's important journey towards reconciliation and to present the inaugural Tablelands Regional Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). As the Local Government Authority for our region, it is critical for Council to formalise its commitment to reconciliation.

The diversity of First Peoples of the Tablelands Regional lands provides a home rich in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture. It is important we continue to grow our understanding and celebrate the uniqueness of our communities, whilst understanding the historical and ongoing impacts of our colonial past.

The Reflect RAP will guide us in our understanding of where we need to grow and develop in our reconciliation journey; what we are doing well to build on as foundations; and continue to develop relationships and seek guidance from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This plan is our commitment to the reconciliation process, supporting our workforce and community to build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, create positive lasting relationships and generate opportunity.

I sincerely thank the members of the RAP Working Group for their invaluable insights and contribution to the development of our Reflect RAP. Tablelands Regional Council is looking forward to continued work with our community partners to develop our path to reconciliation to bring meaningful outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations.



Cr Joe Paronella
Mayor of Tablelands Regional Council



Message from the Chair, RAP Working Group

It is my honour to Chair the Tablelands Regional Council RAP Working Group. The Group is made up of voluntary representatives from our indoor and outdoor workforce including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, non-Indigenous staff and Elder representatives from community. It is inspiring to be a part of the discussions; to hear the member's aspirations and hopes for reconciliation in the Tablelands Region. The Reflect RAP 2018-2019 which we present to Council and the community has been formed through respectful insights, guidance and wisdom.

This Reflect RAP lays the foundations and prepares our Council for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives. It is our starting point to learn and understand how we as an organisation can engage in reconciliation and contribute to reconciliation in our region. The RAP Working Group has been guided by the Reconciliation Australia framework of relationships, respect and opportunities for implementing reconciliation action. These core pillars are guiding Tablelands Regional Council to turn our good intentions into actions.

The RAP Working Group has identified key actions, timelines and targets committing to strong relationships built on trust and respect. The Reflect RAP demonstrates our desire to grow respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and experiences, to celebrate and be proud of our First Peoples culture and heritage, whilst fostering a shared regional identity. It aims to imbed cultural competence into Tablelands Regional Council's business to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face less barriers in accessing our services, participating in civic celebrations and working as part of our team.

I acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and communities through our histories and celebrate the continued significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions in shaping a shared sense of unity and identity in our region.

I am proud to present this Reflect RAP as Council's first formal commitment to advancing reconciliation.



Katrina Spies

Cr Katrina Spies
Deputy Mayor of Tablelands Regional Council



Our Community

The Tablelands Regional Council local government area population is 24,827 (2016 Census), with 1,823 (7.3%) of the population identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The Tablelands Region in Far North Queensland is located about 1,800 kilometres north of the Brisbane CBD and 100 kilometres west of the Cairns CBD. The considerable range in elevation, rainfall and soil types produce an incredibly diverse and beautiful region encompassing World Heritage rainforests, crater lakes, dry savannah, wetlands, tropical waterfalls and unique birdlife and wildlife. Rural land is used mainly for agriculture, with some timber production and nature-based tourism.

We have a range of services and community development initiatives to help reinforce the many positive aspects of life in our region including events, libraries, facilities such as swimming pools, aged housing, sporting fields and aerodromes, disaster preparedness and support for heritage, arts and culture. There are many opportunities to join locally based groups or participate in an assortment of health, sporting and recreational activities.

The region has a rich heritage and stories of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the early pioneers, miners, farmers, and a once thriving Chinese community are told in some of the local museums and heritage displays.

Our business

'The Tablelands is a region where we prosper and enjoy an enviable lifestyle within a pristine environment, realising our full potential in smart, connected rural communities'

TRC Corporate Plan 2017-2021 Vision

Tablelands Regional Council is the local government authority for our diverse and beautiful region. The Council encompasses a total land area of about 11,000 square kilometres. Notable regional centres are Atherton, Malanda and Ravenshoe with villages at Mt Garnet, Millaa Millaa, Herberton, Kairi, Walkamin, Tinaroo, Tolga and Yungaburra.

As at 30 April 2018, Tablelands Regional Council had 340 employees (279 full time equivalent) with 14 employees (4.1%) identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Tablelands Regional Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2021 has four key priorities with aligned strategic goals:

- 1. Strong Economies;** drive local economic development, incentivise investment and diversification, develop entrepreneurs and innovation, leverage emerging opportunities in domestic/international markets, showcase our region.
- 2. Vibrant Communities;** support inclusive resilient communities, build community capacity, develop catalytic infrastructure and services that nurture connectivity and opportunity, cultivate integrated health and wellbeing, grow a diverse population, preserve a healthy natural environment with sustainable biodiversity management of resources and growth.
- 3. Smart Centres;** embrace innovative practices and technologies, develop digital connectivity and engagement, overcome the digital divide, mitigate the impact of natural disasters.
- 4. Towards Council 2050;** create an enterprising innovative Council, model good governance and leadership, initiate smart and sustainable infrastructure and service delivery, adopt and implement smart participatory civic engagement, support public-private partnerships.



Our RAP

As the Local Government Authority for the Tablelands Region we have a critical role to play, in partnership with our community, to set out a clear roadmap toward a reconciled, just and equitable region. We strive to be a community that values diversity and celebrates culture. The Reflect RAP is guiding Council to look within our organisation to understand how we can nurture and lead reconciliation in our region. As we work together, building relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, we will continue to grow as a vibrant and inclusive community.

In December 2016, Council resolved to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan with identified actions, timelines and targets for relationships, respect and opportunities. Council approved a framework to develop the plan including the establishment of a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group with Cr Katrina Spies as Chairperson.

All staff were invited to nominate their interest to be involved in the RAP Working Group. The process included a concerted effort to attract Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff. The RAP Working Group comprises of representatives from Council's indoor and outdoor workforce including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and non-Indigenous staff. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders from community are represented.

The first RAP Working Group meeting was held on 25 August 2017, with meetings held quarterly to develop and monitor RAP progress.

The Manager Community and Customer Services is the Tablelands Regional Council RAP Champion.

Our Partnerships

Tablelands Regional Council has established relationships with a range of community and government agencies servicing the Tablelands Region. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations such as Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre, Atherton Midin Clinic, Mamu Health Service, Ngoonbi Community Services, Southern Tablelands Traditional Owners Alliance and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Council is committed to developing these relationships and to identifying the opportunity to work with additional partners to drive our reconciliation agenda.

Tablelands Regional Council has native title determinations within its authority. Where established, Native title recognises the traditional rights and interests to land and waters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Council works with the Traditional Owners through the Prescribed Body Corporate groups to facilitate the exercise of native title rights, including notification of activities affecting those rights.

Council recognises the need for the protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Cultural heritage includes physical objects, cultural practices and areas of significance to Aboriginal people. This recognition is based on respect for Aboriginal knowledge, culture and traditional practices. Council further acknowledges that:

- Aboriginal people should be recognised as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- It is important to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of Aboriginal communities and to promote understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Activities involved in recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage are important because they allow Aboriginal people to reaffirm their obligations to 'law and country'.
- There is a need to establish timely and efficient processes for the management of activities that may harm Aboriginal cultural heritage.¹

1. *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld) s. 5 (Austl.)*



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1 Support and maintain a RAP Working Group to develop and monitor progress and reporting of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Working Group meets at least quarterly • Membership is maintained according to the Terms of Reference • RAP Working Group oversees the development, endorsement, launch and reporting of the RAP 	April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic & Leadership Team (SALT) • Manager Community & Customer Services • RAP Working Group
1.2 Identify a network of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, Elders and organisations to develop and enhance working relationships and community connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop contact list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our Local Government area that we can connect with on our reconciliation journey • Build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to progress the reconciliation agenda within our Local Government area • Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and organisations are invited to participate in key community networks and forums 	May 2018 March 2019 December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager Community & Customer Services • Coordinator Legal & Governance
1.3 Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Councillors and staff to attend a NRW event or other reconciliation events • Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff • Encourage RAP Working Group to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW 	27 May – 3 June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors • SALT • Manager Community & Customer Services • RAP Working Group
1.4 Raise awareness of Reflect RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect RAP information on Council's intranet and website • Provide council and Senior Leadership groups with a specific annual report on the RAP progress • Develop and implement a communication plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about RAP commitments • RAP included in new staff inductions • RAP Working Group members to be ambassadors for the RAP within Council 	May 2018 March 2019 July 2018 July 2018 April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager Community & Customer Services • Communications Advisor • SALT • Manager People Capability & Culture • RAP Working Group



Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture data and measure staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements 	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager People Capability & Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver one-day cultural awareness training to the top three tiers of TRC staff including Senior Leadership team (CEO, General Managers and Chief Operating Officer), Managers, Advisors and Coordinators 	Dec 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how to address cultural heritage with Council, considering the needs and priorities of different work groups 	Dec 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator Legal & Governance
2.2 Celebrate and participate in NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities 	June/July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Community & Customer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver annual NAIDOC Week flag raising celebration in partnership with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders 	July 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote all NAIDOC community events in our Local Government area 	June/July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Councillors, staff and RAP Working Group to participate in local NAIDOC Week events 	June/July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors SALT RAP Working Group
2.3 Raise understanding within Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country TRC policy to ensure it contains clear direction for staff on protocols in public forums, in significant documents (such as the Annual Report) and meetings 	Sept 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Community & Customer Services Coordinator Legal & Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Acknowledgement of Country prior to each Council meeting 	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor & Councillors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement to Country in all community events organised by Council 	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an Acknowledgement of Country on Council's electronic signature block 	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review TRC Anti-discrimination policy and training for staff to ensure comprehensive coverage of inappropriate language and actions in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture 	Dec 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager People Capability & Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how other organisations manage cultural conflict of interest to ensure there is a supportive process in place for staff 	March 2019	
2.4 Demonstrate support and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fly the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag, alongside the existing Australian flag at the Atherton Customer Service Centre building 	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Community & Customer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display a copy of Acknowledgement to Country and the government apology on TRC website; consider appropriate public areas such as Customer Service Centres, Visitor Information Centres and Libraries 	Sept 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate a consultant to develop a Tourism Signage Strategy which includes Welcome to Country signage throughout the region 	March 2019	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the opportunity for Visitor Information Centres to work in partnership with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to produce a map identifying country and traditional owners, including local cultural interpretive information 	Dec 2018	



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and volunteering	• Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities	May 2018	• Manager People Capability & Culture
	• Develop a buddy system for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander new starters	Oct 2018	
	• Job advertisements to include 'We encourage applicants from all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from different cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities'	May 2018	
	• Identify pathways from volunteering, traineeships and apprenticeships into permanent employment	March 2019	• SALT
	• Strive to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the workforce with an aim to increase existing figures	March 2019	• Manager People Capability & Culture
	• Search for funding opportunities for identified positions to employ greater numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices and trainees	March 2019	
3.2 Demonstrate commitment to the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through TRC's Cultural Plan 2018-2021	• Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural representatives are included in decision making processes and relationships brokered with local communities and regional arts and cultural organisations	July 2018	• Manager Community & Customer Services
	• Monitor the implementation of the TRC Cultural Plan 2018-2021 to understand the impact and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Dec 2018	
	• RAP Working Group to collaborate with the Indigenous Cultural Working Group (ICWG), to be established as part of the Cultural Plan 2018-2021	Sept 2018	• RAP Working Group
3.3 Actively seek grants to increase opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	• Apply for grants for concepts identified in the RAP with the aim of enhancing opportunities in our community and showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture	Dec 2018	• SALT
	• Work in partnership with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to identify grant opportunities to strengthen community	Dec 2018	• Manager Community & Customer Services
3.4 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	• Investigate the opportunity to develop a database of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers within the Local Government area	Sept 2018	• SALT
	• Encourage and support participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to tender to Register of Pre-Qualified Service Providers: Trades and Technical Services Register	Jan 2019	• Manager Finance



Governance and Tracking Progress

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1 Build support for the RAP	• Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation	April 2018	• SALT
	• Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	May 2018	• Manager Community & Customer Services
	• Complete annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia	March 2019	
	• RAP Working Group members to be ambassadors for the RAP within Council	April 2019	• RAP Working Group
4.2 Review and refresh Tablelands Regional Council RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements • Submit draft RAP to Council and Reconciliation Australia for review and endorsement 	May 2019	• RAP Working Group



Contact us

For further information relating to Tablelands Regional Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan contact:

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