



Ordinary Meeting of Council Attachments

Monday 15 June 2026

Council Chamber

ATTACHMENTS

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COUNCILLOR BRIEFING – PUBLIC RECORD

Briefing Details:

Date: Monday 18 May 2026 Time: 6:00pm Location: Meeting Rooms 1 & 2, Realm

All items discussed at a Councillor Briefing are considered confidential in nature.

Attendees:

Councillors		
Cr Linda Hancock (Mayor)	Cr Catherine Gordon	Cr Kylie Spears (virtual)
Cr Paul Macdonald (Deputy Mayor)	Cr Claire Rex	Cr Rob Steane OAM
Cr Chris Jones	Cr Nathaniel Henderson	
Council Officers:		
Steve Kozlowski	Chief Executive Officer	
Tony Rocca	Director Corporate	
Adam Todorov	Director Assets & Leisure	
Marianne Di Giallonardo	Director Community	
Andrew Fuaux	Director City Growth & Precincts	
Joanne Ellis	Governance Officer	
		Item
Steve McIntosh	Manager Projects & Asset Management	2
John Richardson	Coordinator Assets Projects & Facilities	2
Nathan Bachmann	Coordinator Assets Strategic Projects	2
Danielle Butcher	Manager Communications & Citizen Experience	2

Apologies:

Councillors:	Cr Daniella Heatherich
Council Officers:	Nil

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Nil

Items Discussed:

1	Council Meeting Agenda
2	Major Council Projects Update
3	MAV Motions - State Council Business Paper - 29 May 2026
4	Items of a General Nature Raised by Councillors

Record completed by:

Council Officer	Joanne Ellis
Title	Governance Officer



COUNCILLOR BRIEFING – PUBLIC RECORD

Briefing Details:

Date: Monday 1 June 2026 Time: 6:00pm Location: Meeting Rooms 1 & 2, Realm

All items discussed at a Councillor Briefing are considered confidential in nature.

Attendees:

Councillors		
Cr Linda Hancock (Mayor)	Cr Catherine Gordon	Cr Kylie Spears
Cr Paul Macdonald (Deputy Mayor)	Cr Claire Rex	Cr Rob Steane OAM
Cr Chris Jones	Cr Daniella Heatherich	Cr Nathaniel Henderson
Council Officers:		Item
Steve Kozlowski	Chief Executive Officer	
Tony Rocca	Director Corporate	
Adam Todorov	Director Assets & Leisure	
Marianne Di Giallonardo	Director Community	
Andrew Fuaux	Director City Growth & Precincts	
Joanne Ellis	Governance Officer	
Joshua Burt	Coordinator Sport, Recreation, Open Space & Events	1
Tara Choudari	Leisure and Aquatics Facilities Manager	2
Jeremy Cutajar	Manager Maroondah Golf Courses & Sportsfields	3
Grant Meyer	Manager City Futures	4 & 6
Jim Herron	Manager Cyber and Technology	5
Joanna Wood	Community Development Officer	6
Chris Zidak	Manager Business and Precincts	7
Elissa Bates	Creative Places Manager	7
Danielle Butcher	Manager Communications & Citizen Experience	8

Apologies:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Nil

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Councillors:	Cr Catherine Gordon: Item 1 - Capital Funding for Community Organisations Program 26/27 <i>Reason: Grant recipient is a staff member of Volleyball Victoria of which Cr Gordon is a board member.</i>
	Cr Catherine Gordon: Item 6 - Maroondah Community Grants Program 26/27 <i>Reason: Delivers the program the grant is for and family</i>

Council Officers:

<i>member on board of Association</i>
Cr Catherine Gordon: Item 9 - Community Assistance Fund - Approved Table for Individual / Organisations <i>Reason: Mentors an applicant</i>
Cr Kylie Spears: Item 2 - Aquanation Renewal Works Update <i>Reason: Operator of local swim school</i>
Nil

Items Discussed:

1	Capital Funding for Community Organisations Program 2026/27
2	Aquanation Renewal works update
3	Sportsfield Update
4	Draft Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030
5	Desktop as a Service (DaaS) Renewal Procurement Update
6	Maroondah Community Grants Program 2026-27
7	Maroondah Arts and Cultural Grants Program 2026-2027
8	Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct - Naming Update
9	Community Assistance Fund - Approval Table for Individual/Organisation - June 2026
10	Councillor Delegates' Meeting Report
11	Items of a General Nature as Raised by Councillors

Record completed by:

Council Officer	Joanne Ellis
Title	Governance Officer



Maroondah Disability Advisory Committee – Minutes

These minutes are yet to be confirmed. They will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting to be held on the 2 June 2026.

Meeting Details:

Date: Tuesday 21 April 2026 Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm Location: Maroondah Federation Estate

Attendees:

Councillors Cr Catherine Gordon (Chair) Cr Linda Hancock (Deputy Chair and Mayor) Cr Nathaniel Henderson	
Council Officers: Chris Riseley, Team Leader Community Development Grant Meyer, Manager City Futures Marianne Di Giallonardo, Director Community Joanne Ellis, Governance Officer (Minute Taker) Kirstin Jenkins, Manager Community Safety Item 4.2 Rachel Devlin, Strategic Environment Planner Item 4.3 Rachelle Jones, Community Resilience Officer Item 4.4	
Agency Representative: Bruce Watson (NEAMI) Michaela Alcorn (Interchange Outer East) Laura Helps (EACH)	
Community Representative: Amelia Dell Greg Collins Paul Gallagher Judith Lenthall Gemma Lewer Lana Wheatfill	

Apologies:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Jack Mulholland, Community Access and Inclusion Facilitator
Agency Representatives:	Sarah Morgan (Vision Australia)
Community Representatives:	Matt Haanappel

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers	Nil
Agency Representatives:	Nil
Community Representatives:	Nil

Items Discussed

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Cr Gordon provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

2. WELCOME

Cr Gordon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

ITEM 3

Cr Gordon informed the Committee the notes from the previous meeting did not require confirmation as a quorum was not achieved.

Cr Hancock discussed the importance of reaching a quorum. If the quorum is not met, the business of the Committee is not included in Council meeting minutes.

4. ITEMS

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

ITEM 4.1

The Committee discussed the changes to the Terms of Reference, with a change being requested to the "Role of Committee" section.

The Committee requested dot point 3 be updated to say:

- To provide advice to Council on policy, plans, programs, service development and planning issues in relation to people with disabilities., their families and carers **and associated agencies** at both strategic and operational levels.

The 2026 MDAC Terms of Reference were moved by consensus upon the inclusion of the above wording.

STREET ACTIVITIES POLICY

ITEM 4.2

Kirsten Jenkins, Manager Community Safety, discussed the Street Activities Policy which is currently up for review. The previous Policy was approved in 2018 and is due to be updated. The new policy is planned for implementation in late 2026.

Kirsten noted the Policy covers items such as A-Frame signs, outdoor dining, goods display, shade shelters / umbrellas, freestanding barrier screens, busking and fundraising but does not cover community events, festivals etc.

Kirsten advised that Council is seeking to develop a policy that balances public safety and accessibility as well as vibrancy and local appeal and that Maroondah is currently benchmarking against other Councils.

The Committee was divided into small groups to discuss the principles of the Policy including:

- Public safety;
- Accessibility for all;
- Vibrant street life;
- Prosperous economy;
- Attractive streetscape; and
- Leisure opportunities.

The Committee was asked to choose one of the current principles and advise the following:

- Why do you think this principle is important / not important?
- What do you think are the challenges in relation to this principle?
- What could be included that is currently missing?

Feedback from the Committee included:

- Looking at trading areas in their entirety - if a café has a serving window, people will tend to congregate there which blocks off footpath access, especially if tables and chairs are also in place.
- Areas feel safer when there are more people around.
- Chairs and tables are often in the flat section of the footpath which leaves sloped areas for pedestrian access - this creates challenges for wheelchairs etc.
- Need to consider height of plants, hedges and barriers - lower profile wheelchairs are often below this height creating visibility and safety issues.
- Lighting considerations especially in the winter months.
- Lack of available space for service dogs.
- Encouraging Traders Associations to work with new businesses to ensure they are disability-friendly.

Kirsten thanked the Committee and noted the feedback would be used to help inform the approach to the community and businesses when public consultation commences.

Chris advised he will advise the Committee when the consultation starts.

ACTION: Chris Riseley to communicate with the Committee when the public consultation of the Street Activities Policy commences.

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE EVENTS

ITEM 4.3

Rachel Devlin, Strategic Environment Planner, introduced the Committee to the City Nature Challenge 2026 which is a worldwide event being held from 24-27 April. The event is being coordinated by iNaturalist, an online social network focussing on biodiversity, with 3 events being hosted in Maroondah.

Rachel shared the event advertising postcard and advised that the event has also been advertised through a variety of platforms.

Rachel asked the Committee for feedback on how events such as these could be more attractive and accessible for people with a disability.

Feedback from the Committee included:

- Improved communications regarding accessible paths, parking and toilets.
- Include accessibility symbols in advertising material.
- Offering an afternoon session as mornings can be challenging.
- Consider language other than “walk”.
- List the session number limits - knowing group size can help reduce anxiety and encourage people who prefer uncrowded events.
- The word “challenge” may deter some people from engaging.

General feedback included:

- Encouraging Scouts groups to get involved.
- Avoiding Sunday mornings as this is when some faith-based activities take place.
- Aligning activities with school holidays.
- Inviting “Friends of” groups to encourage new members.
- Encouraging school groups, kindergartens and childcare centres to use iNaturalist during their activities throughout the year.

Rachel thanked the Committee for their valuable input that will assist with future event planning.

**READY MAROONDAH AND PERSON-CENTRED EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS**

ITEM 4.4

Rachelle Jones, Community Resilience Project Officer, introduced the Ready Maroondah community resilience project.

Rachelle noted there are 3 phases to the project:

Phase 1 - Community Engagement is almost complete. This included feedback from emergency services, emergency relief organisations, cultural groups, community service providers, faith based groups, sporting clubs, scouts and schools.

Phase 2 - Workshops and Forum is about to commence. This involves workshops with groups and organisations and the team want the disabled community to be adequately represented.

Phase 3 - Implementation - planned for July 2026 - March 2028.

Rachelle noted that emergencies and disruptions do not impact people equally and that disabled and CALD communities can be more heavily impacted.

Rachelle informed the Committee that a Community Resilience Forum is being held on 19 May 2026 at Karralyka with the main topics of:

1. Networking.
2. Looking at the Social Network Analysis map.
3. Emergency scenarios.
4. Next steps in building community resilience.

Rachelle noted Committee members are welcome at the session.

Rachelle asked the Committee what things would make them feel more secure when faced with challenges or disruptions. The main Committee feedback was:

- Importance of communication from a reliable source.
- Information from a local perspective - ie local Police Sergeant or the Mayor.
- An awareness of what is required for evacuation.
- Where to go in an emergency? Will it be accessible? What facilities will be provided - e.g. can't sleep on a portable bed.
- Safety is a higher priority than resilience.
- Who to call in different situations, what are the priority actions - need tangible advice rather than messaging to "stay calm".
- Provision of one-page fact sheets of concrete, actionable steps to follow in different situations.
- Advice about what to have on hand at home prior to an emergency.

MEETING CLOSE

ITEM 4.5

Cr Gordon thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on 2 June 2026.

The Meeting concluded at: 12:00pm.



Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee – Minutes

Meeting Details:

Date: Tuesday 12 May 2026 Time: 6:45pm - 8:30pm Location: Meeting Rooms 1 & 2, Realm

Attendees:

Councillors	
Cr Chris Jones (Chair)	
Cr Claire Rex	
Council Officers:	
Anita Ransom, Coordinator Strategic Planning and Sustainability	
Rachel Robertson, Sustainability Planner	Item 4.2
Rachel Devlin, Strategic Environment Planner	Item 4.3
Joanne Ellis, Governance Office (Minute Taker)	
Community Representatives:	
Dennis Zhang (left the meeting at 8:13pm)	
Jessica Odlum	
John Cull	
Keith Loveridge	
Kirsty Bishop-Fox	
Lucy Harberts (joined the meeting at 6:53pm)	
Lyndon Walker	
Paul Thompson	
Shea Vaughan	
Vinotha Bheem	

Apologies:

Councillors:	Cr Paul Macdonald (Deputy Mayor)
Council Officers:	Grant Meyer, Manager City Futures
Community Representatives:	Nil

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Nil
Community Representatives:	Nil

Items Discussed

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Cr Jones opened the meeting and provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

2. WELCOME

Cr Jones welcomed all to the meeting. Cr Jones noted the Committee had received a resignation from Elspeth De Fanti who is no longer able to remain on the Committee due to conflicting responsibilities.

Cr Jones discussed the need to change the meeting start time to 6:00pm in order to be consistent with the Realm closing time. Committee members supported the change that will take effect from the July meeting.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2026

ITEM 3

The minutes of the 24 February 2026 meeting were moved by consensus.

4. ITEMS

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ITEM 4.1

Each member of the Committee provided a brief introduction to themselves and their reasons for joining the Committee.

MAROONDAH CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN - COMMUNITY EDUCATION
PROGRAM CONSULTATION

ITEM 4.2

Rachel Robertson provided a presentation on the Maroondah Climate Adaptation Plan which was adopted by Council on 27 April 2026.

Rachel noted the focus for this discussion was item 3.4 of the Plan:

3.4 Provide support and education resources to Maroondah residents and businesses to encourage emissions reduction and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

- *Provide community education for climate change adaptation and mitigation via workshops, webinars or online educational videos and resources.*
- *Investigate opportunities to work with or promote sustainability or climate action focused community groups to deliver community education workshops or knowledge sharing.*

Rachel sought feedback from the Committee on what Council can do to support the community with:

- Reducing energy bills.
- Gardening and growing food.

Noting that low cost / no cost options are a priority.

The Committee broke into 2 groups to provide suggestions. The main feedback included:

- Focus on Council taking a key educational role including drawing attention to what is already available.
- Focus on things people can do that is meaningful and achievable.
- Ways to improve soil health.
- Water management.
- Opportunities to swap produce and speak to other growers.
- Community gardens and planting in vertical spaces.
- Rebrand as “saving money” to encourage more uptake.

THE FUTURE OF CITIZEN SCIENCE CONSULTATION

ITEM 4.3

Rachel Devlin provided a presentation on citizen science activities in Maroondah with a view to increasing participation at future events.

- Rachel noted that citizen science involves everyday people contributing to scientific knowledge, monitoring and data collection and includes:
 - Friends Group participation.
 - iNaturalist observations, contributing to projects and events.
 - Use of apps such as FrogID, FungID and BirdCount (BirdLife).
 - Partaking in events such as Australian Pollinator Count (November), National Tree Day (July) and Aussie Bird Count (October).
 - Planting indigenous and native plants in your backyard.

Rachel discussed attendance at the recent iNaturalist City Nature Challenge which is a global event and how these contribute to a greater understanding of local environments and human interactions with nature.

Rachel sought feedback on three topics with responses from Committee members including:

1. What barriers might prevent residents from participating, and how can we reduce them?
 - Awareness of event.
 - Promotion in other languages.
 - Promote the wellbeing benefits from participating in activities and make them more prominent.
 - Access to technology and using it.
2. How can we design citizen science programs that attract diverse participation, not just already engaged groups?
 - Scouts and scavenger hunts.
 - Child-focussed sessions - appeal for animals and appeal for science.
 - Links to social groups eg sports clubs hosting pre-training nature discovery sessions.
 - Dusk and twilight experiences.
 - Links with waterways.
 - Basic science experiments for teens.
 - Creek cleanups with Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMD) Database / app tracking.

3. How do we sustain long-term engagement rather than short-term participation?
- More events on more days.
 - Non-specific events (eg not specific to birds etc)
 - Scout groups - gamifying.
 - Encourage other councils to participate and councils working together as one team.
 - Newsletters.
 - Get school kids involved - Junior iNaturalist.
 - CRM - send updates on the area of interest.
 - Offer a reward - eg most pictures per year by a new member / old member.

FOR INFORMATION REPORT

ITEM 4.4

Cr Jones noted the For Information Report and advised that if anyone would like to contribute or suggest ideas for the meeting to contact the Councillors or Anita.

Paul Thompson asked whether the pavers being removed as part of the Croydon Main Street renewal program were going to be reused. Paul also asked whether the quality of the soil for the street / landscaping trees was lacking as the existing trees, whilst a very hardy species, have failed to thrive. Paul is concerned that replacement of the existing trees will be unsuccessful if soil quality is lacking.

Cr Jones advised that Council looks to reuse materials and minimise waste where possible and would take this matter on notice. He advised that the Street Tree team has been closely involved in the Croydon Main Street renewal project.

Keith Loveridge requested future Committee consideration regarding the introduction of "idle-free zones" in Maroondah. Keith advised he had worked with Maribyrnong Council on their plan and would be happy to share learnings on any similar plan for Maroondah.

MEETING CLOSE - NEXT MEETING: 28 JULY 2026

ITEM 4.5

Cr Jones closed the meeting advising that the next meeting will be held on 28 July 2026 commencing at 6:00pm.

The Meeting concluded at: 8:30pm

***S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Planning and Environment Act 1987)***



**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
*(Planning and Environment Act 1987)***

Council Officer Name

Service Area



**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Planning and Environment Act 1987)**

In this instrument "officer" means -

Council Officer Name

By this Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation, Maroondah City Council -

- 1. under s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - authorises the officer to carry out the duties or functions and to exercise the powers of an authorised officer under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and
- 2. under s 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officer either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

- comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of **Maroondah City Council** on 15 June 2026.

THE COMMON SEAL of MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL was affixed hereto on 15 June 2026, in accordance with the resolution of Council made on 15 June 2026, in the presence of:)
)
)
)
)
)

..... Councillor

..... Chief Executive Officer

***S11B Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Environment Protection Act 2017)***



**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
*(Environment Protection Act 2017)***

Officer Name

Service Area



**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Environment Protection Act 2017)**

In this instrument "officer" means -

Officer Name

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation, Maroondah City Council -

under s 242(2) of the *Environment Protection Act 2017* ('Act') and the Instrument of Delegation of the Environment Protection Authority under the Act dated 4 June 2021 - appoints the officer to be an authorised officer for the purposes of exercising the powers and functions set out in the Instrument of Direction of the Environment Protection Authority under the Act dated 4 June 2021.

It is declared that this instrument -

- comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of **Maroondah City Council** on 15 June 2026.

**THE COMMON SEAL of MAROONDAH CITY)
COUNCIL** was affixed hereto on 15 June 2026 in)
accordance with resolution of Council made on 15)
June 2026, in the presence of)

..... Councillor

..... Chief Executive Officer

Capital Funding for Community Groups 2026/2027 - Project Proposal Summary

Organisation Name	Contact	Position	Address	Suburb	PC	Email	Location	Project Description	Total Cost (Excl. GST)	Council Contribution	Organisation Contribution	Deferred Contribution	External Funding	Comment - Department
Projects under \$7,000														
1	North Ringwood Community House	Helen Ferguson	CEO	Tortice Drive	Ringwood North	3134	helen@nrwh.org.au	Ringwood North	Installation of a garden gate	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
2	Knath Road Childcare Centre	Belinda Beacom	Assistant Director	Knath Road	Ringwood East	3135	office@krcc.com.au	Ringwood East	Replacement of front wooden fence	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
3	Glen Park Community Centre	Heidi Butler-Moore	CEO	Glen Park Road	Baywater North	3135	heidbutler@beparkcc.com.au	Baywater North	Upgrade to ventilation in shed	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
4	Kurboroo Kindergarten	Penny Palmer	Business Optr Manager	Bemboka Road	Warranwood	3134	kurboroo.kindergarten@gmail.com	Warranwood	Installation of outdoor fans	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
5	East Ringwood Tennis Club	Jake Mutton	President	Mt Dandenong Road	East Ringwood	3135	president.erc3135@gmail.com	East Ringwood	Installation of handrail at court 4	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets as this is a safety component in the bigger project of works at the tennis Club
6	Heathmont Cricket Club	Matt Carr	President	Heathmont Road	Heathmont	3135	president@heathmontcc.org.au	Ringwood	Synthetic cricket pitch replacement	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Sportsfield Team as the current synthetic is un-safe due to significant wear and holes in the surface.
7	St Andrews Cricket Club	Rohan Smith	President	Selkirk Avenue	Wantina	3152	janor.president@st-andrews-cricknet.club	Wantina	Synthetic cricket pitch replacement	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Sportsfield Team as the current synthetic is un-safe due to significant wear and holes in the surface.
8	Croydon Ranges Football Club	Tony Ryan	Vice President Vets	William Road	Croydon	3136	crf4972@gmail.com	Croydon	Storage area for Soccer Goals	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Sportsfield Team. Currently when the goals are in storage they create an issue for the Parks Team. A dedicated space for them will alleviate the problem.
9	North Ringwood Community Children's Centre	Meryl Potter	Co-ordinator	Warrandyte Road	Ringwood North	3134	nccc@netopare.net.au	Ringwood North	Bin enclosure	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	NIL		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
Projects over \$7,000														
10	Ringwood Cricket Club	Ron Fotta	Secretary	Greenwood Ave	Ringwood	3134	secretary@ringwoodcricketclub.com.au	Ringwood	Upgrade of safety netting in practice cricket facility	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval and managed by Councils Sportsfield team. The installation of fly netting over the cricket practice facility will address the immediate risk.
11	USA Parkwood Hub	Alex Robertson	Treasurer	Tortice Drive	Ringwood North	3134	treasurer@usaringwood.org.au	Ringwood North	Installation of solar system on Parkwood Hub	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets. The installation of solar will service all user groups in the Parkwood Hub.
12	Heathmont Cricket Club	Matt Carr	President	Heathmont Road	Heathmont	3135	president@heathmontcc.org.au	Heathmont	Synthetic cricket pitch replacement incl run-ups	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 8,750.00	\$ 8,750.00	Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval and managed by Councils Sportsfield team.
13	East Ringwood Cricket Club	Adam Hinds	Council Liaison	Mt Dandenong Road	Ringwood East	3135	adamhinds13@outlook.com	Ringwood East	Centre Wicket Upgrade	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$12,000 (IACF Grant not yet approved)	Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval and managed by Councils Sportsfield team.
14	Lipcombe Park Kindergarten	Clare Douglas	Grants Officer	Birbrook Drive	Croydon	3136	grantsofficer@lipcombparkkindergarten.org.au	Croydon	Installation of stage 2 playground area	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 42,500.00		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
15	Ringwood Bowls Club	Simon Mitchell	Grants Coordinator	Loughnan Road	Ringwood	3134	decisionschoices@hotmail.com	Ringwood	Installation of a verandah over alfresco area	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets through a previous "request for works" process.
16	Ringwood Central Tennis Club	Paul Higgins	Committee	Gardini Ave	Ringwood	3134	paulhiggins@gmail.com	Ringwood	Renovation of 2/4 courts	\$ 116,000.00	\$ 58,000.00	\$ 58,000.00		Yes - Recommended for funding Recommended for approval by Assets for synthetic conversion of two lower courts. Project scope has been reduced from four courts to two courts. Concerns with the Clubs financial capacity to repay costs for four courts.
Projects Not Recommended for Funding														
1	Ringwood Central Tennis Club	Paul Higgins	Committee	Gardini Ave	Ringwood	3134	paulhiggins@gmail.com	Ringwood	Installation of a drink fountain	\$ 4,700.00	\$ 4,700.00			Not recommended for funding Project supported in principle, however insufficient budget. Currently there are adequate drinking receptacles at the Tennis Club.

Project Totals	Amounts Incl. GST
Council Allocation	\$ 200,000
Grants Requests	\$ 290,000
Other Recommendations	\$ 230,000
Corporate Deficit	-30,000

Overspend amount to be funded from 26/27 Community Facilities Improvement Program



Maroondah Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy 2026

Date adopted: << insert Day Month Year >>
Responsible Service Area: City Futures

Purpose

This Policy guides how Council will seek to prevent and minimise the social, health and economic harms caused by gambling through robust, evidence-based, transparent and consistent decision-making.

The Policy informs the gambling industry, the community, peak bodies, statutory authorities, Victorian local governments and other relevant stakeholders of Council’s policy position, priorities and strategic objectives in relation to preventing and minimising gambling harm.

Background / Context

Australia has the highest gambling losses per capita of any country in the world. In the 2024-2025, the City of Maroondah had a higher density of Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) and greater average player loss per 1000 people than the average for metropolitan councils in Victoria. Loss to EGMs in the municipality in the 2024-25 Financial Year was \$64.2 million.

Most people gamble in venues such as hotels, clubs and casinos, and the resulting harm disproportionately affects males, young people, First Peoples, culturally diverse communities, people with low educational attainment, high socioeconomic disadvantage, and people participating in a greater number of gambling activities.

More information can be found in the *Maroondah Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy 2026 Background Report*.

Scope

This Policy covers all forms of gambling with the potential to cause harm to the community and applies to:

- Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs).
- Online gambling.
- Sports betting.
- Keno.
- Commercial bingo.

Policy Title: Maroondah Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy 2026		Policy type: << Insert text >>
Current version approved: << Insert text >>		Current version number: << Insert text >>
Parent policy: << Insert text >>		Policy review date: << Insert text >>
Child policy/policies: << Insert text >>	Policy responsibility: << Insert text >>	

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- Casino games; and
- Horse/dog race wagering.

The policy is particularly relevant to EGMs as this is the form of gambling over which Council has direct influence through its statutory role in planning and decision-making processes.

This Policy supports but does not replace specific roles and responsibilities defined by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*.

Objectives

This Policy seeks to achieve the following objectives which are developed in the context of, and aligned with, relevant adopted Maroondah City Council strategies, plans and research.

Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to:

- Advocate for the adoption of measures to minimise the harmful impacts of gambling.
- Support services that assist those directly and indirectly affected by gambling harm.
- Enhance the community's access to social, recreational and cultural activities as alternatives to gambling.

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Policy Principles

Addressing gambling harm is the collective responsibility of a wide range of stakeholders. For its part Council will demonstrate leadership in preventing and minimising gambling harm by applying the following principles:

Public health approach

Council acknowledges that gambling harm is a public health issue.

The public health approach to preventing and minimising gambling harm takes a broad view of the determinants and impacts of gambling harm. It is based on the following:

- Gambling harm occurs across a continuum of risk.
- There are multiple social, environmental, economic and technological determinants of gambling harm.
- Interventions are applied across the population rather than focusing on the individuals experiencing harm.

Harm minimisation

The two pillars of a harm minimisation approach to addressing gambling harm are:

- managing the supply of and demand for gambling in the community, and
- reducing the adverse health, social and economic harms for individuals, their families and the wider community.

Evidence based

Decision-making processes are informed by a robust evidence base.

Intersectionality

The intersectionality of a person's low socio-economic and poor health status disproportionately increases the risk of gambling harm among vulnerable groups.

Governance

Transparent and accountable governance enables Council to demonstrate leadership in its commitment to preventing and minimising the social, health and economic harms caused by gambling.

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Alignment with Council's mission and values

The prevention and minimisation of gambling harm supports the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision that "Maroondah is a safe, inclusive and vibrant community...". This outcome also reflects the "safe and liveable" outcome area in the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision.

The strategic objectives in the Policy Position support the following community priorities detailed in the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision:

- Support for the community, particularly residents experiencing vulnerability, marginalisation and disadvantage, families, seniors, and young people.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing of the community.
- Transparent and accountable governance.
- Consultation and engagement with the community on matters that impact them.
- Collaboration and partnering with the local community, organisations and businesses.

The strategic objectives in the Policy Position align with Council's five roles that form the framework of the Council Plan 2025-2029 which are plan, deliver, facilitate, partner and advocate.

This Policy also supports the priority in the Maroondah Liveability Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031 (Update 2025) which is to "Work in partnership to prevent and minimise gambling related harm in the community through collective advocacy, health promotion and raising awareness around the impacts of harmful gambling behaviours."

Policy position

While gambling is legal in Victoria, gambling harm is recognised as a significant global public health concern¹ associated with a range of health, social and economic harms to people who gamble, their family and the wider community.

Council is concerned about the significant cost burden caused by gambling harm to the community, service providers and all tiers of government.

1. Strategic planning and regulation

Council will undertake its strategic planning and regulatory roles to protect those most at risk of gambling harm by:

- Embedding gambling harm minimisation as a priority area in Council's strategic documents, including future Council and Health and Wellbeing Plans.
- Managing the location and operation of EGMs through the planning process.
- Assessing the social and economic impacts of applications considered under the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* and *Maroondah Planning Scheme*.
- Enforcing planning permit conditions.

2. Capacity building

Council will build the community's capacity to enhance health and wellbeing by:

- Raising awareness of the causes of and risks associated with gambling.
- Raising awareness of support services available to people directly and indirectly affected by gambling harm.
- Supporting efforts by community organisations to reduce their reliance on gambling revenue.

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3. Advocacy

Council will address the community's concerns about the harmful impacts of gambling by:

- Advocating for reforms to the regulatory framework that improve the design and operation of gaming venues and EGMs and reduce exposure to gambling through advertising.
- Representing the community in response to applications considered under the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
- Making submissions to state and federal government proposals in relation to gambling matters.
- Maintaining strong partnerships with peak bodies such as the Alliance for Gambling Reform and other local governments to enhance advocacy impacts.

4. Collaboration

Council will collaborate with our stakeholders to prevent and minimise gambling harm by:

- Strengthening collaborative partnerships with agencies responsible for delivering services to people affected by gambling harm.
- Collectively enhancing access to and use of activities and facilities that provide social, leisure, entertainment, cultural and recreational alternatives to gambling.
- Collaborating with adjoining local authorities when responding to applications considered under the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

5. Leadership

Council will demonstrate leadership through managing its facilities and programs to prevent and minimise harm from gambling by:

- Prohibiting exposure to gambling on Council-owned or managed land.
- Not providing community grants, financial assistance, or in-kind support to organisations or businesses that operate EGMs.
- Not funding nor promoting any programs, events or activities held in facilities that operate EGMs.
- Maintaining independence from the gambling industry by not accepting direct financial contributions nor participating in the distribution of financial contributions from the gambling industry
- Not holding any activity, event, function or program at venues that operate EGMs.
- Endeavouring to filter and block gambling related internet sites for devices connected to the Council's core ICT Network.

Policy implementation

The Policy will be implemented through Council's planning, policy, programs and decision-making processes.

This will involve the following:

- Integrating the Policy principles into all Council strategic and decision-making processes.
- Continuing to monitor trends in gambling behaviour, and the determinants and impacts of gambling harm on community health and wellbeing.
- Collaborating with stakeholders to identify opportunities to collectively address gambling harm such as through Gambling Harm Awareness week.

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- Raising awareness of the Policy within the community, the gambling industry, peak bodies, local government and service providers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Relevant departments across Council will be responsible for implementing the Policy.

Related legislation

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Local Government Act 2020

Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Gambling Regulation Act 2003

Interactive Gambling Act 2001

Gender Equality Act 2020

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Related policies, strategies, procedures and guidelines

Maroondah 2050, Our Future Together

Council Plan 2025-2029

Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031 (Maroondah’s Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)

Maroondah Planning Scheme

Definitions

Advocacy	Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.
Community	<p>People who have a stake and interest in the City of Maroondah, including those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who live, work, study, conduct business or provide services in the municipality, • involved in local community groups or organisations, • who visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within the municipality, • who share an interest, a sense of identity or a shared common goal, and • providing gambling activities.
Electronic gaming machine	<p>A computerised gambling device with a video screen displaying symbols on simulated reels. Cash is inserted into the machine and buttons are used to place bets. The machine randomly determines the position of symbols on the screen. Wins are returned as credits back into the machine.</p> <p>Also referred to as EGMs, pokies, pokie machines or poker machines.</p>
Gambling	The placement of a wager or bet on the outcome of a future uncertain event. Gambling includes gaming and wagering activities. ²

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Gambling-related harm	<p>Any initial or exacerbated adverse consequence due to an engagement with gambling that leads to a decrement to the health or wellbeing of an individual, family unit, community or population.³</p> <p>These harms include relationship breakdown, compromised mental and physical health and wellbeing, financial losses, demand for services, lost work productivity and crime.</p> <p>Gambling-related harm can be divided into seven key areas: Financial harm, relationship disruption, emotional or psychological distress, decrements to health, cultural harm, reduced work or study performance and criminal activity. These harms can further be considered as general harms (which occur at any time), crisis harms, which are acute and occur in specific situations and may be associated with attempts to seek help, and legacy harms which occur long after gambling has ceased.⁴</p>
Gaming	All legal forms of gambling other than wagering, such as lotteries, EGMs, casino, interactive gaming and minor gaming. ⁵
Gaming venue	<p>A gaming venue is classified as a 'gaming premise' under the Maroondah Planning Scheme. The definition of a 'gaming premise' is 'land used for gambling by gaming, and where there is the ability to receive a monetary reward'.</p> <p><i>The Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> permits the use of EGMs in venues with a pub licence (hotel operating under a General Liquor Licence), club licence (operating under a Full Club Liquor Licence) and racing club licence (operating under a Full Club Liquor Licence).</p> <p><i>The Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> defines a club as a 'club, society or other association of persons by whatever name called and whether incorporated or unincorporated'.</p> <p>There is no definition of a hotel or racing club under the <i>Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i>.</p> <p>Some clubs operating EGMs in Victoria provide sporting activities such as golf, tennis or bowls.</p>
Harm prevention	A range of non-statutory measures which seek to avoid the risk of gambling-related harm from occurring in the first place. These measures focus on protecting those most at risk of gambling-related harm by avoiding access to opportunities to gamble.
Partnership	A relationship between the Maroondah City Council and stakeholders, and between stakeholders themselves involving shared responsibilities for implementing a range of actions that seek to achieve a common goal such as preventing and minimising gambling harm.
Policy	Sets out Council's position with respect to a particular matter. It includes a set of principles and strategic objectives that provide a definite direction for the organisation.
Stakeholder	An individual or group identified with a strong interest in a particular topic regarding Council's decision-making and/or are affected by the outcome of any decisions.
Vulnerable groups	Groups within the community at an elevated risk of gambling-related harms because of their age, socio-economic status, gender, cultural and linguistic background or exposure to opportunities to gamble.

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Wagering	All legal forms of gambling on racing, sporting events and other approved events (e.g., elections). Wagering includes all the racing and sports betting activities. ⁶
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Supporting document

Maroondah Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy 2026 Background Report

¹ [Global Local: Gambling \(Igiu.org\)](http://GlobalLocal:Gambling(Igiu.org))

² Australian Gambling Statistics 40th Edition

³ Browne, M, Langham, E, Rawat, V, Greer, N, Li, E, Rose, J, Rockloff, M, Donaldson, P, Thorne, H, Goodwin, B, Bryden, G & Best, T 2016, Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria: a public health perspective, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

⁴ <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/report/measuring-the-adverse-consequences-from-gambling>

⁵ Australian Gambling Statistics 40th Edition

⁶ Australian Gambling Statistics 40th Edition

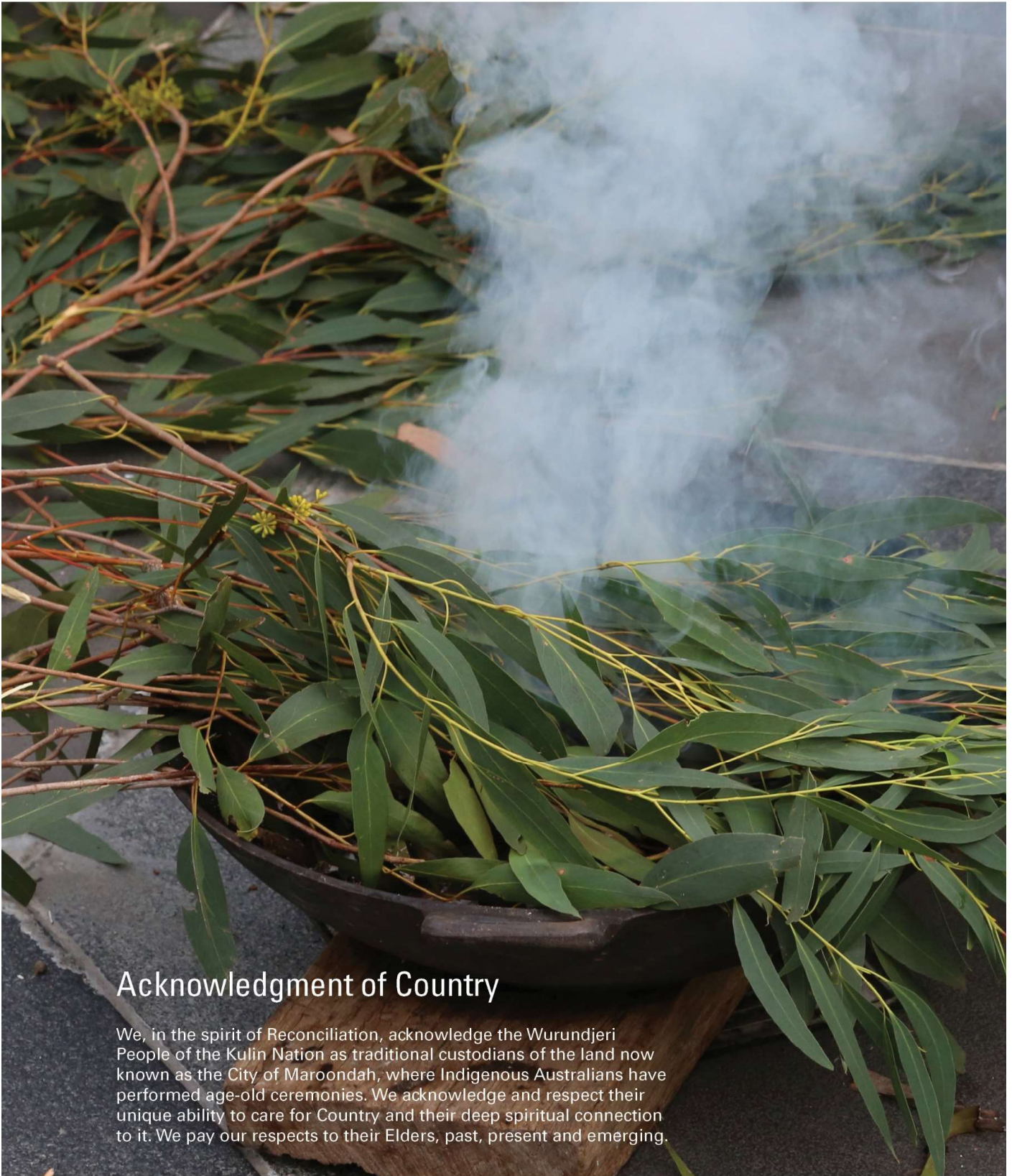
MAROONDAH
2050



Draft Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030

Working towards a healthy, inclusive and connected community





Acknowledgment of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as traditional custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age-old ceremonies. We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Cover image: Mural of Aunty Daphne Milward and Aunty Irene Norman - REALM windows 2023-2026 - artist Amanda Wright.

Acknowledgement page image: Smoking Ceremony Maroondah Reconciliation Week event, 2025.

Mayor's message



It is with great pleasure that I introduce Maroondah's *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030*, a framework that guides our commitment to building stronger, more respectful relationships with First Peoples and fostering genuine reconciliation within our municipality.

This plan represents our collective commitment to acknowledging the truth of our shared history, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of First Peoples, and working together toward a future of mutual respect and understanding. As we move forward, we recognise that reconciliation is not merely a goal but an ongoing journey that requires dedication, education, and meaningful action from all levels of our community.

We understand that true reconciliation involves listening, learning, and working in partnership with First Peoples' communities to create lasting change. In recognition of this, I would like to thank the dedicated members of the *Maroondah Reconciliation Partnership Group* co-chaired by Wurundjeri Elders Aunties Julieanne Axford and Gail Smith, and Karen Milward AO First Peoples' Senior Advisor, for their valuable contributions and thoughtful guidance during the development of this Plan. We are grateful for your time, expertise and passion in helping us to build stronger relationships with First Peoples and move toward meaningful reconciliation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. J. Hancock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cr Linda Hancock
Mayor

Executive summary

The Maroondah *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030* represents Maroondah City Council's commitment to advancing reconciliation between First Peoples and the broader Australian community. Building on 16 years of established initiatives, this Plan outlines a practical, locally focused response that translates research, data, and community consultation into actionable initiatives within Council's areas of responsibility.

The Plan builds upon Maroondah's reconciliation journey, tracing evolution from the Reconciliation Policy Statement 2008 through the Reconciliation Action Plan and its ongoing initiatives. It acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the land for over 35,000 years, with their deep spiritual connection to the Birrarung (Yarra River) and surrounding waterways.

The Plan recognises reconciliation as essential for:

- Healing intergenerational trauma resulting from historical injustices
- Addressing systemic inequality in education, employment, health, justice, and housing
- Building trust through genuine partnerships based on mutual respect
- Respecting inherent rights and sovereignty of First Peoples
- Creating a shared national identity that values First Peoples' cultures as central to Australia's story.

Maroondah City Council leverages its unique position as the closest level of government to communities, enabling direct relationships with Traditional Owners and First Peoples, culturally appropriate service delivery, planning decisions that impact quality of life, and visible leadership that models genuine reconciliation practices.

The Plan incorporates extensive community consultation revealing First Peoples' priorities, which include greater respect, recognition, and inclusion through best practice Acknowledgment of Country, along with opportunities for gatherings and meaningful consultation that foster authentic engagement. The community also expressed a strong desire to celebrate their history and achievements through storytelling, public art, and recognition of leaders, while enhancing visibility through cultural events that showcase creativity and cultural expression. Additionally, there are clear calls for transparent pathways for consultation, appropriate remuneration, and recognition of unique community contributions, alongside targeted and culturally appropriate health services that address specific needs. Finally, improved access to Council facilities, grants, and events was identified as essential for full participation and inclusion within the broader community.

The Reconciliation Plan identifies key themes, outcomes, and objectives as outlined below.

Theme 1: History, Art, and Cultures

Outcome

First Peoples' histories, art, and culture are central to community identity and reconciliation.

Objectives

- Demonstrate respect through acknowledgment of cultural histories and contributions across Council practices
- Honour First Peoples' leadership and achievements through community-led narratives and tributes
- Promote First Peoples' perspectives in public knowledge systems and education policy
- Preserve cultural heritage through festivals and events fostering cross-cultural exchange
- Showcase First Peoples' creativity through exhibitions, public art, and cultural programs

Theme 2: Relationships, Collaboration, and Partnership

Outcome

Maroondah strengthens First Peoples' organisations through sustained support and collaborative partnerships.

Objectives

- Advance reconciliation through respectful engagement and practical support
- Include mechanisms promoting First Peoples' participation across Council initiatives
- Partner with and support existing First Peoples' organisations and advocate for local health services
- Strengthen partnerships with health services for culturally safe and responsive care
- Improve access to Council facilities, services, activities, and grants
- Provide ongoing support for Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place construction and operations

Theme 3: Leadership, Governance, and Economic Participation

Outcome

First Peoples' participation and perspectives in leadership, governance, and economic development are encouraged and supported.

Objectives

- Consider First Peoples' perspectives in Council decision-making through genuine inclusion
- Build Council's cultural capability through ongoing learning and training
- Increase First Peoples' economic participation through procurement, employment, and business development initiatives

Implementation

- **Governance:** Maroondah Reconciliation Partnership Group (MRPG) oversees implementation with quarterly meetings
- **Integration:** Actions appear in relevant Departments' Service Delivery Plans
- **Monitoring:** Progress monitored through annual Council Plan reporting
- **Review:** Interim review in 2027-28, full review and update in 2029-30

This Plan provides a structured, accountable approach to advancing reconciliation that respects First Peoples' self-determination while building a more just, equitable, and inclusive Maroondah for all residents.

Section 1 – Introduction

Maroondah City Council presents its *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030* (the Plan)¹ to guide Council's ongoing commitment to reconciliation. This Plan builds on the initiatives of the *Maroondah Reconciliation Policy Statement 2008* and continued through the *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020*.

Reconciliation is about building understanding and respect between First Peoples' communities and the broader Australian community. It recognises the importance of acknowledging history, strengthening relationships, and working collaboratively towards a future that is fair, inclusive, and respectful of First Peoples' cultures, rights, and histories as part of Australia's shared identity.

Central to reconciliation is the recognition that First Peoples of Australia have experienced enduring injustices and inequities, resulting in significantly fewer life opportunities than those available to the general population. These matters have been examined in detail by the Yoorrook Justice Commission, Victoria's formal truth-telling process, and documented in its final report *Yoorrook: Truth Be Told*. The report draws on extensive evidence and lived experience to reveal how past policies and practices continue to influence negative outcomes for First Peoples today.

The Plan provides a practical and locally focused response by translating research, data, and community consultation into actionable initiatives. It outlines actions that Council will take within its areas of responsibility to strengthen relationships, support respectful engagement, acknowledge the inherent value of First Peoples' cultures, rights, and histories, and contribute to improved outcomes over time. The Plan reflects Council's commitment to listening, learning, and working in partnership. It recognises that local government has an important role to play in supporting reconciliation through measurable, constructive, and community-responsive actions.

The History of Maroondah²

For more than 35,000 years the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation were the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah. The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People have a deep spiritual connection to the land and waterways, and a unique ability to care for Country. Kulin Nation refers to an alliance of five tribes (language groups) who live across a geographical area which encompasses Melbourne and its outer regions. Their collective territory extends around Port Phillip and Western Port bays, up into the Great Dividing Range and the Loddon and Goulburn River valleys. The five Kulin Nation language groups are:

- Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung)
- Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung)
- Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung)
- Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung)
- Woi Wurrung (Woy-wur-rung), of whom the Wurundjeri were the last surviving tribe.

¹ Research and information that has informed this Plan is found in the accompanying *Reconciliation Plan Background Report June 2026*.

² The name 'Maroondah' is a First Peoples' word that means 'throwing leaves'.

These language groups were connected through shared moieties (where everything is split in half but must come together to form a whole), Bunjil (wedge-tailed eagle) and Waa (crow). Bunjil is the creator spirit and Waa the protector of the waterways.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People take their name from the Woi Wurrung language word 'wurun' meaning the Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus Viminalis*) which is common along 'Birrarung' (the Yarra River), and Djeri the grub, which is found in, or near the tree.

The Traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People is defined by natural and environmental features, most significantly by water. The direction of the water flow provides a clear indication of the shape of Country and reflects the cultural understanding of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People as the "people of the Birrarung" (Yarra River). The Birrarung and the waters flowing into it are the Traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People.

The name 'Maroondah' is an Aboriginal word that means 'throwing' and 'Maroon' means 'leaves'.

Section 2 - Why Reconciliation is important

Reconciliation works toward building a more just and equitable Australian society in the following ways.

Healing intergenerational trauma: Reconciliation is important for healing because it acknowledges the ongoing intergenerational trauma that has resulted from historical injustices like the Stolen Generations, massacres, systemic discrimination and land dispossession. This trauma continues to affect First Peoples today through cycles of disadvantage, mental health challenges, and family breakdown. Reconciliation works to prevent the repetition of these wrongs by creating accountability mechanisms, truth-telling processes, and formal apologies that validate the experiences of survivors, and it creates pathways for healing that respect the cultural frameworks of First Peoples.

Addressing systemic inequality: Reconciliation addresses the inequality that exists when life chances are systematically diminished by racial background. It recognises that systemic barriers - whether in education, employment, health, justice, or housing - have created disparities that First Peoples face every day. Reconciliation aims to dismantle these barriers so that First Peoples have equal access to opportunities and services. It's about ensuring that First Peoples' children have the same educational opportunities as other children, that First Peoples' families have access to adequate housing, and that First Peoples' communities have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Building trust through partnership: Reconciliation builds the foundation for trust and respect between all Australians, which is essential for creating a socially cohesive society. Reconciliation works to create genuine partnerships based on mutual respect, understanding, and shared goals. When relationships are strengthened through reconciliation, communities become more resilient, conflicts are resolved more constructively, and everyone benefits from the diverse perspectives and strengths that different cultural traditions bring.

Respecting Rights: Reconciliation addresses the "unfinished business" of early European colonisation by formally recognising and respecting the inherent rights, culture, and history of First Peoples. Reconciliation takes substantive action—whether through the State Government treaty processes, constitutional recognition, Federal land rights agreements, or the local implementation of recommendations from truth and justice commissions. It is about creating a future where First Peoples are not just acknowledged but empowered to shape their own destinies and where their rights and cultures are fully respected and protected.

Creating a shared national identity: Reconciliation helps all Australians value First Peoples' cultures as a central part of our national story. This means recognising that Australia's history is not just 200+ years of European settlement, but 60,000+ years of continuous First Peoples' culture and connection to Country. When First Peoples' cultures, knowledge systems, and perspectives are valued as integral to who we are as a nation, it creates a national identity that is more authentic, more inclusive, and more reflective of the true complexity and diversity of this continent. This shared identity helps build a sense of belonging for all Australians while honouring the unique contributions and continuing presence of First Peoples.

Reconciliation is an essential pathway toward building a just, inclusive, and resilient Australia for all generations. It requires acknowledging the painful truths of the past while actively working to heal intergenerational trauma, dismantle systemic barriers, and build relationships founded on mutual respect and genuine partnership. By valuing First Peoples' cultures as integral to our shared national identity and ensuring First Peoples have equal access to opportunities and self-determination, we help create a future where all Australians can thrive together.

The role of local government

Proximity to community

Local councils have unique advantages as the closest government level to communities. This proximity enables direct relationships with Traditional Owners and First Peoples. Face-to-face engagement allows councils to understand local contexts, respond quickly to issues, and facilitate authentic connections not just between government and First Peoples, but across the broader community. Being embedded locally creates natural spaces for cultural exchange, mutual learning, and trust built through consistent engagement.

Service delivery and planning

Local governments deliver many of the essential services and planning decisions that directly impact First Peoples' quality of life. In land use planning, councils can ensure that cultural heritage sites are protected, that development respects Country, and that First Peoples' voices are heard in decisions about local environments. In service delivery, councils influence kindergartens, aged care facilities, community health services, libraries, and recreation facilities - all areas where culturally appropriate services can demonstrably improve outcomes. By embedding First Peoples' priorities in these core functions, local governments can ensure that services are accessible, respectful, and effective for First Peoples, addressing the specific needs and cultural considerations that often get overlooked in larger service systems.

Closing the gap

Local governments are formally recognised partners in the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, which aims to improve the lives of First Peoples. This Agreement acknowledges that local councils have critical roles to play in improving First Peoples' health, education, and employment outcomes. Local governments can contribute to Closing the Gap through targeted initiatives such as culturally safe health programs, support for First Peoples' education pathways, job training programs, and economic development opportunities that create sustainable employment.

Visibility and leadership

Local councils are highly visible entities in their communities, making them powerful models for what genuine reconciliation looks like. When councils move beyond symbolic gestures like occasional recognition of NAIDOC Week or Sorry Day and instead embed reconciliation in their core operations, they demonstrate commitment through concrete actions. This includes implementing cultural awareness training for all staff, developing procurement policies that support First Peoples' businesses, creating employment pathways for First Peoples' staff, and engaging the community through events that celebrate and respect First Peoples' cultures.

Reconciliation Plans

Through Reconciliation Plans, local governments can create localised, structured, and accountable approaches to advancing reconciliation. These plans provide a roadmap for increasing economic equity through targeted business support, procurement practices, and economic development for supporting self-determination by empowering First Peoples to make decisions about their own futures, and for building understanding and respect through education and cultural exchange programs.

Section 3 - The journey so far

Maroondah City Council's Reconciliation Journey

This section documents Maroondah City Council's 16-year reconciliation journey, tracing our evolution from the *Reconciliation Policy Statement 2008* through the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020* to our current ongoing initiatives that continue to advance this vital work.

1. Maroondah Reconciliation Policy Statement (2008)

In July 2008, Maroondah City Council endorsed the *Maroondah Reconciliation Policy Statement 2008* (the Policy Statement). This document guided the work of Council within the reconciliation space for several years under four key pillars seen below:

Four key pillars

1.1 Cultural Heritage and community education

Work in partnership to provide greater knowledge and appreciation of First Peoples' culture, traditions and history.

1.2 Economic development and employment

Consult with the First Peoples' community to develop socially responsible practices that facilitate:

- Education opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Business development
- Integration into wider and business communities

1.3 Health and wellbeing

Collaboratively work with First Peoples to ensure optimal health, safety and wellbeing which is a holistic concept incorporating

- Respect for culture
- Connection to land
- Spiritual wellbeing
- Identity preservation
- Access to mainstream services

1.4 Governance

Underpin services with principles and practices of good governance including:

- Participative decision-making processes
- Culturally sensitive staff practice.

Significant outcomes were achieved in implementing the Policy Statement. These included:

Cultural recognition and protocols

- Acknowledgement of Traditional Landowners and Welcome to Country Protocol at Council Meetings and civic events
- Permanent flying of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Ringwood, Croydon Civic Centres and EV's Youth Centre

Cultural education and awareness

- Implementation of Cultural Awareness Training with Council staff and Councillors
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Education Sessions covering culture, history, sustainability practices and current issues
- Culturally sensitive toys, posters and educational materials at MCH and immunisation sessions

Artistic and Heritage initiatives

- Acquisition of First Peoples' artworks for Maroondah's Art Collection
- Cultural Heritage Review of the Dandenong Creek Shared Pathway Project

Community engagement and events

- Facilitation of collaborative National Reconciliation Week events
- Collaborating with local First Peoples organisations and individuals on various initiatives, networks and events

Relationship building and partnerships

- Establishing strong relationships between Maternal and Child Health and Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place's playgroups
- Exploration of employment programs and traineeships with First Peoples' Elders

During 2014, Council undertook a research project to identify the most beneficial and advantageous model by which to review, document and progress Council's commitment to reconciliation. In 2015, Maroondah's Councillors and Corporate Management Team endorsed the recommendation to develop Maroondah's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

2. Reconciliation Action Plan (2018-2020) achievements

In 2016, the Maroondah Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (MRAP Working Group) was formed in accordance with the Reconciliation Australia model and comprised of First Peoples and other community representatives from both within and external to Maroondah City Council and chaired by Maroondah's Chief Executive Officer.

Maroondah's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020* was formulated around four key focus areas:

1. Relationships

To build and strengthen respectful and sustainable relationships and understanding between First Peoples and the wider Australian community and to collaboratively work towards achieving our shared reconciliation vision.

2. Respect

Maroondah acknowledges and embraces its responsibility in working collaboratively to enhance understanding, appreciation and celebration of First People's heritages and cultures. We aim to enhance organisational and community awareness of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's, cultures, land, waters and histories.

3. Opportunities

Council aims to be open to and seek out new and innovative opportunities which strive to enhance health, social, cultural, economic, education and employment outcomes for First Peoples.

4. Reporting

Council will report achievements, challenges and learning to Reconciliation Australia and Council.

The following are examples of outcomes that were achieved in the implementation of *Maroondah Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020*:

Formal consultation and partnerships

- Established a formal consultation process with First Peoples' Elders, community and First Peoples' controlled organisations, which informed practice across several disciplines in council including community services, arts and culture, community development, and land use planning
- Long term partnership continued with Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place (MMAGP) including collaboration on grants and support for wellbeing and arts initiatives.
- Establishing strong relationships between Maternal and Child Health and Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place's playgroups
- The Mullum Mullum Creek Biolink Plan stakeholder group included representatives from MMAGP

Economic participation and employment

- Actively recruited First Peoples from the Croydon community to work on the Croydon Activity Centre Carpark and sourced First Peoples' businesses to work on the project
- Exploration of employment programs and traineeships with First Peoples' Elders

Cultural recognition and heritage

- Commissioned artwork from the First Peoples community for Realm, Council Chambers and Ringwood East
- Worked closely with the First Peoples' community and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on the Tarralla Creek Enhancement project
- Cultural Heritage Review of the Dandenong Creek Shared Pathway Project
- Permanent flying of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Ringwood, Croydon Civic Centres and EV's Youth Centre
- First Peoples' perspectives considered for Assets Play and Gathering Strategy. Learnings implemented in open space planning

Staff development and internal networks

- Implementation of Cultural Awareness Training with Council staff and Councillors
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Education Sessions for Council Staff covering culture, history, sustainability practices and current issues
- Established an internal staff Reconciliation Network

Community events

- Facilitation of collaborative National Reconciliation Week events
- Various community events held including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Collaborating with local First Peoples organisations and individuals on various initiatives, networks and events

Health and education programs

- Culturally sensitive toys, posters and educational materials provided at Maternal & Child Health and immunisation sessions
- Maroondah Education and Care developed their own dedicated Reconciliation Action Plan with actions including connecting to Country through art and craft, purchasing appropriate educational materials, and connecting with First Peoples organisations.

3. Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030 - ongoing key themes

Maroondah City Council continues its reconciliation journey in the development of this *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030*, which builds on the themes that run through the *Reconciliation Policy Statement 2008* and the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020*. They include:

- Sustained partnerships and collaboration with First Peoples' communities
- Integration of First Peoples' perspectives into council operations
- Cultural education and awareness initiatives
- Employment and economic development opportunities
- Environmental management that respects cultural values
- Arts and cultural programs that celebrate First Peoples' heritage
- Genuine consultation, respect for cultural heritage, and creating opportunities for First Peoples to thrive in the Maroondah community.

Section 4 – What does the evidence say?

Social and emotional wellbeing of First Peoples

In examining the health and socioeconomic findings of First Peoples as outlined below, it is important to understand them in the context of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework (SEWB) for First Peoples which is a culturally distinct and holistic approach to health.

This framework, established through the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023*, recognises that wellbeing encompasses much more than the absence of mental illness. Instead, it views wellbeing as a complex interconnection of social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural dimensions that are intrinsically linked to connection to land, sea, community, culture, and ancestry. The term "social and emotional wellbeing" itself is preferred by many First Peoples as it better captures the holistic nature of health in their cultural context, acknowledging that what constitutes wellbeing may vary between different cultural groups, age groups, and individuals.

Nationwide findings

The Mental Health Australian Report to the Nation (2023) provides insights into the wellbeing experiences of First Peoples in Australia. First Peoples report significantly poorer mental health outcomes compared to the general population, with an overall mental health rating of 5.4 out of 10 in 2023, substantially lower than the national average of 6.9. This places them alongside LGBTQI+ people and those with mental health conditions as experiencing the lowest mental health ratings among population groups. The impact of Australia's cost of living crisis is particularly acute for First Peoples, with 63% reporting that rising costs are having a big impact on their mental health and 75% reporting significant housing cost impacts - both significantly higher than national averages of 59% and 45% respectively. Despite these challenges, First Peoples demonstrate resilience in their community connections, with 46% feeling part of a community and 58% feeling capable and in control, showing similar levels of self-efficacy to the broader population.

While First Peoples face significant barriers to accessing mental health support, with cost being a barrier for 21%, they do engage with various support systems, primarily relying on colleagues, friends and family (39%), followed by seeing a GP (30%), and accessing professional psychological services (8%). The survey reveals that First Peoples experience disproportionate challenges compared to other Australians, particularly around economic pressures.

Profile of First Peoples in Maroondah

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census of Population and Housing reveals a dynamic and evolving First Peoples' community within the City of Maroondah. Drawing from comprehensive census data (ABS 2022) this portrait captures the demographic, social, and economic characteristics that define Maroondah's First Peoples' community today.

A significant feature of Maroondah's First Peoples' community is its growth. The number of people identifying as First Peoples has increased to 734 individuals, representing a substantial 78% growth between 2011 and 2021.

Demographically, Maroondah's First Peoples' community stands out for its youth. With a median age of just 26 years, the First Peoples' population is significantly younger than the non-First Peoples' median age of 39 years. This is particularly evident in the 5-14 and 15-24 age groups. Conversely, the proportion of First Peoples aged 45 and over is notably lower, especially in the 65 years and above category.

Educational pathways reveal some concerning trends. First Peoples in Maroondah are more likely to have left school before year 11 (35%) compared to the general population (21%). This disparity highlights ongoing challenges in educational engagement and completion that may require targeted support and culturally appropriate approaches to learning.

Despite these educational challenges, the community demonstrates some economic resilience. The median household income for First Peoples households (\$1,825) is comparable to that of non-First Peoples households (\$1,867). However, while household economies function similarly, there are differences at the individual level. First Peoples report a lower median personal income of \$665 compared to \$852 for non-First Peoples. This may indicate potential disparities in individual earning capacity that may reflect broader employment patterns and challenges such as the unemployment rate for First Peoples in Maroondah (6.9%) compared with the wider Maroondah community (4.0%).

The health profile of Maroondah's First Peoples' community reveals both challenges and strengths. First Peoples are more likely to experience profound or severe core activity limitations requiring daily assistance, with 7.3% reporting such disabilities compared to the Maroondah average of 6%. However, the community shows lower rates of certain chronic conditions like arthritis, cancer, and dementia compared to the general population. Concerningly, fewer First Peoples report having "no long-term health condition" (39% compared to 54% of non-First Peoples), showing higher rates of diabetes, asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, lung conditions, and significantly higher mental health conditions including depression and anxiety (20.1% compared to 10.4% of non-First Peoples). These patterns suggest complex health dynamics that require nuanced understanding and culturally responsive healthcare approaches.

First Peoples' households are more likely to be renting (49%) compared to the general population (24%), while being less likely to own a home with a mortgage (31% compared to 40%) or own a home outright (19% compared to 33%). Despite these differences in ownership patterns, First Peoples are more likely to live in separate houses (90% compared to 87% for non-First Peoples), indicating a strong preference for standalone housing that aligns with cultural values around family and community living.

Family structures among First Peoples in Maroondah reveal both traditional patterns and some divergences. The most common family type is couples with children (42%), followed by couples without children (28%), with one-parent families representing 26% of the total. However, when compared to non-First Peoples families, First Peoples are significantly more likely to be single-parent households (27% compared to 15%), suggesting different family dynamics and support systems that may reflect cultural, social, or economic factors.

This portrait of Maroondah's First Peoples community reveals a population that is growing, young, and resilient, while facing significant educational, health, economic, and social challenges. The data reflects both the strength of cultural identity and the ongoing impacts of systemic inequities, presenting a complex picture that requires thoughtful, culturally informed approaches to policy, service delivery, and community development.

Evidence for the three themes in the Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030

This Plan has identified three major themes to guide Council's work in the reconciliation space:

1. History, Art, and Culture
2. Relationships, Collaboration, and Partnerships
3. Leadership, Governance, and Economic Participation

In the following section we present the evidence supporting each theme in this Plan. Community consultation and engagement with First Peoples and other relevant stakeholders in Maroondah reinforced the importance of these themes as is outlined in Section 5 of this Plan (pp 16-18).

Theme 1: History, Art, and Culture

Historical truth-telling

A commitment to historical truth-telling is essential for genuine reconciliation. *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) affirms that truth-telling is a cornerstone of reconciliation processes. Research demonstrates strong support for truth-telling initiatives. The 2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer shows that 87% of First Nations respondents and 83% of the general community support formal truth-telling processes (Reconciliation Australia 2022; ANTA 2023).

Truth-telling is particularly valued by younger generations. Research indicates that 14% of 18-24-year-old non-First Peoples people and 21% of 25-34-year-olds have participated in local truth-telling activities in the past year (Reconciliation Australia 2024). This high level of community recognition underscores the importance of acknowledging historical injustices as a foundation for reconciliation.

Community truth-telling processes are emerging across Australia, with local initiatives helping to create new relationships between First Peoples and non-First Peoples' communities (Payne and Norman 2024). These processes are seen as critical for building mutual understanding.

Art and Cultural participation

Art and cultural participation are powerful tools for healing and community development. Cultural connection is crucial for wellbeing, supporting mental health and community resilience (Payne and Norman 2024). First Peoples' cultural industries contribute significantly to the Australian economy through cultural tourism, heritage management, and artistic expressions that create employment opportunities for First Peoples' communities (Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Communities with strong cultural practices demonstrate better social outcomes. Cultural participation supports employment outcomes and community cohesion, contributing to more inclusive societies (Universities Australia 2022). Cultural connection is particularly important for youth wellbeing. Maintaining cultural connections supports positive mental health outcomes and identity development for First Peoples' young people (Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Cultural recognition

Recognising and valuing First Peoples' cultures enhances social cohesion and community wellbeing. The Uluru Statement from the Heart emphasizes the importance of recognition as part of the reconciliation journey (Uluru Statement Council 2017). Schools that incorporate First Peoples' history and culture show improved educational outcomes. Culturally inclusive education supports better engagement and outcomes for First Peoples' students, while also promoting cross-cultural understanding among all students (Universities Australia 2022). Cross-cultural education initiatives have been shown to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations, contributing to more inclusive communities (Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Economic and social benefits

Investing in First Peoples' cultural programs yields social and economic benefits. Cultural initiatives support employment, business development, and community wellbeing (Reconciliation Australia 2022). Cultural heritage preservation contributes to social cohesion and community identity. The social value of cultural heritage is well-documented in reconciliation research (Payne and Norman 2024).

The importance of action

Failing to invest in history, art, and culture has negative impacts for communities. Historical ignorance perpetuates systemic injustice, and cultural disconnection contributes to social challenges (Payne and Norman 2024). Without acknowledging past wrongs and supporting cultural continuity, meaningful reconciliation cannot occur. Truth-telling, cultural recognition, and economic participation are all essential components of the reconciliation process (United Nations 2007; Uluru Statement Council 2017; Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Theme 2: Relationships, collaboration, and partnerships

A focus on relationship-building is fundamental to successful reconciliation. Reconciliation is about healing broken relationships between peoples. Without addressing the relational aspects of injustice, structural changes alone fail to achieve lasting peace. Relationship-focused approaches create the social trust necessary for meaningful change (Reconciliation Australia 2021).

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer consistently shows that relationship quality is a key indicator of reconciliation progress. Trust between First Peoples and non-First Peoples' Australians is significantly higher in communities where relationship-building is prioritized (Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Collaborative approaches

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer indicates that collaborative processes show higher community engagement rates than top-down approaches (Reconciliation Australia 2022).

Research-practice partnerships are more effective at addressing systemic inequities when they include both community and institutional perspectives (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023). The AIHW emphasizes the importance of "meaningful relationships and partnerships with First Nations people, communities, organisations and businesses to ensure that their insights and perspectives can shape our products and services" (AIHW 2023).

Communities with collaborative reconciliation processes experience more effective healing from historical trauma when community voices are centred in decision-making (Reconciliation Australia 2021). Collaborative approaches also leverage existing community resources more effectively than top-down institutional approaches (CSIRO 2023).

Partnerships

Partnerships that include both research and community perspectives lead to improved diversity of viewpoints and more comprehensive solutions (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023). The AIHW notes that "actively developing and cultivating meaningful relationships and partnerships with First Nations people, communities, organisations and businesses" is crucial for effective reconciliation work (AIHW 2023). Partnerships addressing persistent challenges through collaborative work show measurable improvements in addressing systemic inequities when solutions are culturally appropriate and community-validated (CSIRO 2023).

Partnerships combine different types of knowledge and expertise, create shared ownership of the reconciliation process, and ensure solutions are culturally appropriate and community-validated (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023; CSIRO 2023).

The economic case for collaborative reconciliation

Collaborative reconciliation delivers strong economic returns. Partnerships reduce program costs by leveraging existing community resources more effectively (CSIRO 2023). The Treasury's Reconciliation Action Plan emphasizes the economic benefits of "enabling social and financial participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses" (Treasury 2024).

The cost of non-collaborative approaches

Non-collaborative, top-down initiatives have significantly higher failure rates than partnership-based approaches. Programs that ignore relationship dynamics show lower long-term engagement and higher rates of program abandonment (Reconciliation Australia 2022). The Australian Bureau of Statistics emphasizes that culturally inclusive approaches are essential for achieving meaningful outcomes (ABS 2023).

Specific benefits for First Peoples

First Peoples communities report higher satisfaction with reconciliation processes involving genuine partnership. The Australian Reconciliation Barometer consistently shows that First Peoples prefer collaborative approaches that respect their cultural protocols and decision-making authority (Reconciliation Australia 2022). Collaborative approaches show better outcomes in addressing intergenerational trauma when community-led solutions are implemented (Reconciliation Australia 2021).

Methodological advantages of partnership approaches

Collaborative reconciliation processes allow for more comprehensive documentation of needs and outcomes, enable better sense-making and interpretation of results, and ensure diverse perspectives are included (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023). The ABS notes that "creating a culturally inclusive and safe organisation whose services and products elevate and reflect the voices, lived experiences, and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" is essential for effective reconciliation (ABS 2023).

Theme 3: Leadership, governance, and economic participation

Leadership and governance

Effective reconciliation requires both strong leadership and good governance working in tandem. Participatory governance approaches that include diverse leadership perspectives demonstrate better outcomes. Leadership that incorporates traditional knowledge systems shows higher community acceptance rates when cultural protocols are respected (Reconciliation Australia 2021; 2022).

Economic participation

Economic reconciliation is crucial for building resilient economies and creating opportunities for all. Research shows that focusing on economic reconciliation and inclusion of First Peoples leads to better project outcomes when community partnerships are established (Reconciliation Australia 2021; 2022).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that demographic shifts mean workforce participation must increase to maintain living standards (ABS 2023). First Peoples' communities with strong economic participation show improved economic outcomes when local governance structures are respected (ABS 2023).

The economic case for inclusive participation

Research indicates that inclusive economic participation contributes to overall economic growth and stability. Addressing First Peoples economic participation could significantly contribute to solving workforce challenges (ABS 2023). Economic equality is fundamental to genuine reconciliation. Economic participation builds self-sufficiency, reduces dependency, and creates shared prosperity while reducing social tensions (Reconciliation Australia 2021).

Leadership development and capacity building

Leadership development programs show improvement in reconciliation outcomes when cultural knowledge is integrated (Reconciliation Australia 2022). Capacity building in governance structures demonstrates better long-term sustainability when community-led approaches are implemented (Reconciliation Australia 2021).

International best practice

Countries that integrate First Peoples leadership into governance structures show better reconciliation outcomes when traditional knowledge systems are respected (Reconciliation Australia 2022). Economic participation models that balance traditional knowledge with modern systems demonstrate higher success rates when community partnerships are established (Reconciliation Australia 2021).

Section 5 – What we did and what you told us

Comprehensive community engagement was undertaken to develop the Plan over a two-year period from February 2024 to June 2025.

Karen Milward OAM was engaged as First Peoples' Senior Advisor to Council during this period. Karen has extensive experience as a First Peoples' consultant to all levels of government and many First Peoples' organisations across Australia.

Community engagement comprised of the following:

One-hour online meetings with leaders from the following organisations:

- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders Aunty Gail Smith and Aunty Julianne Axford
- Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place (CEO)
- Oonah Belonging Place (CEO)
- Eastern Community Legal Centre (CEO)
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria (Local Government Senior Project Manager)
- Dhelk Dja (Eastern Metropolitan Region Coordinator)
- Koorie Education Unit, Outer East, Department of Education and Training (Coordinator)
- EACH Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Service - Ngarrang Gulinj-al Boordup Team
- Swinburne University (Associate Professor, Indigenous Studies)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Community Partnerships, Outer East (Senior Advisor)
- Uniting Homelessness Services, Ringwood (Senior Manager)

Engagement with First Peoples community members:

- Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place – two evening online yarning circles (6 participants)
- Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Melbourne - Men's Group (5 participants)
- Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place Trivia Night – table discussions (100 attendees)
- Short online survey (13 responses).

Group discussions with the following Maroondah City Council committees and forums:

- Reconciliation Partnership Group
- Staff Reconciliation Network
- Leadership Forum
- Community Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Access, Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee
- Arts Advisory Committee
- Environment Advisory Committee
- Business Advisory Committee
- Liveability, Safety and Amenity Advisory Committee
- Youth Wellbeing Advocates

Community engagement results: feedback on reconciliation

Through community engagement with First Peoples community, organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, Maroondah Council has heard a clear call for **greater respect, recognition, and inclusion**. First Peoples want best practice in the Acknowledgment of Country, visible recognition in Council communications, and **meaningful opportunities for gatherings and consultation**. The community values their **participation in Council work and wants clear pathways for consultation** and appropriate recognition of the unique value they bring to Maroondah

There is strong interest in celebrating **First Peoples' history and achievements through storytelling, public art such as statues and murals, and regular recognition of leaders and traditional custodians**. The community values expanded cultural learning opportunities including library collections, Elders' Storytime, on-Country tours, and educational programs in schools. Support for First Peoples' festivals, markets, and cultural events is important, as is showcasing creativity through **exhibitions, public art, youth artwork, and artist residencies**. Overall, First Peoples want their culture and contributions to be acknowledged, celebrated, and woven into community life.

First Peoples have emphasized the importance of **education and youth engagement**, wanting their stories, languages, and cultures shared in schools. They seek programs that welcome and support their children, better teacher training on reconciliation, and more inclusive youth programs for First Peoples' young people.

Health and wellbeing are key concerns, with First Peoples asking for more targeted and culturally appropriate health services in Maroondah. They want Council to support First Peoples' organisations, address service gaps, and provide practical resources like office space and mobile clinic parking. There is also a need for mainstream services to be more culturally safe, accessible, and responsive. **Access to Council facilities, grants, and events** is another priority. First Peoples have asked for barriers to participation to be identified and removed, for Council spaces to be welcoming and culturally safe, and for support in accessing community grants. They also want Council to help promote and sponsor key community events and to provide ongoing support for important organisations like the Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place.

The community has expressed a strong desire for the establishment of a dedicated First Peoples' liaison position and Advisory Committee within Council, with active involvement from Councillors. This is seen as essential to ensuring **meaningful voice in decision-making processes**. Oversight of the Reconciliation Plan by a dedicated group is also important to make sure Council policies genuinely reflect a reconciliation perspective and support the aspirations of First Peoples.

There is a clear call for **genuine inclusion of First Peoples in all aspects of Council's work**, including participation in committees, working groups, and evaluation processes, with an emphasis on culturally sensitive and participative governance. The community values **strategic partnerships** such as formal agreements with organisations like Aboriginal Housing Victoria to help reduce bureaucracy, enhance community inclusion, and increase affordable housing options.

Building cultural capability within Council is a priority. The community supports senior management leading the creation of a Cultural Capability Plan, which would include a Cultural Safety Framework, targeted cultural awareness and anti-racism training, and leadership development for both First Peoples and Council leaders. **Economic participation** is important, with suggestions to improve access to Council employment, set procurement targets for First Peoples' businesses, and support First Peoples artists and entrepreneurs through initiatives like BizHub and regional procurement strategies.

The community wants to see First Peoples' culture visibly represented and celebrated in public spaces through **placemaking, signage, and open space planning** that incorporates First Peoples' perspectives.

Finally, there is strong support for initiatives that **build capacity, such as mentorships, mutual secondments, and the development of regional strategies and Treaty frameworks** to support First Peoples' businesses and employment.

Section 6 - Strategic context

The *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030* has been developed in the context of Maroondah's Integrated Planning Framework and responds directly to the following Council strategic documents³.

Maroondah 2050	
Vision	Maroondah is a safe, inclusive, and vibrant community, striving for a green, prosperous, and sustainable future for all
Goal	A healthy, inclusive, and connected community
Community aspiration	Everyone in Maroondah feels valued, welcome and respected, and has opportunities to thrive regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. Community members experiencing vulnerability, marginalisation, or disadvantage have access to the support they need. Opportunities for social connection and to enhance health and wellbeing are encouraged
Key direction	Partnering with the traditional custodians of Maroondah to acknowledge, celebrate and engage with Maroondah's First Peoples' heritage, culture and communities
Council Plan 2025-2029	
Key direction 1.9	Partner with the First Peoples of Maroondah, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation, to acknowledge, celebrate and engage with their heritage, culture, and communities
Key direction 1.10	Partner to advocate for the needs of, and greater opportunities for, Maroondah's First Peoples.
Priority action	Develop and implement Council's Reconciliation Plan
Liveability, Wellbeing, and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031 (Update 2025)	
Key Focus Area	Embracing Diversity
Strategic Priority	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (First Peoples)
Objective	Work collaboratively to celebrate, promote, recognise, and integrate the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (First Peoples) to facilitate equity, respect, understanding and reconciliation

³ For Federal and State Strategic Contexts please see *The Reconciliation Plan Background Paper June 2026*

Section 7 - Strategic Framework

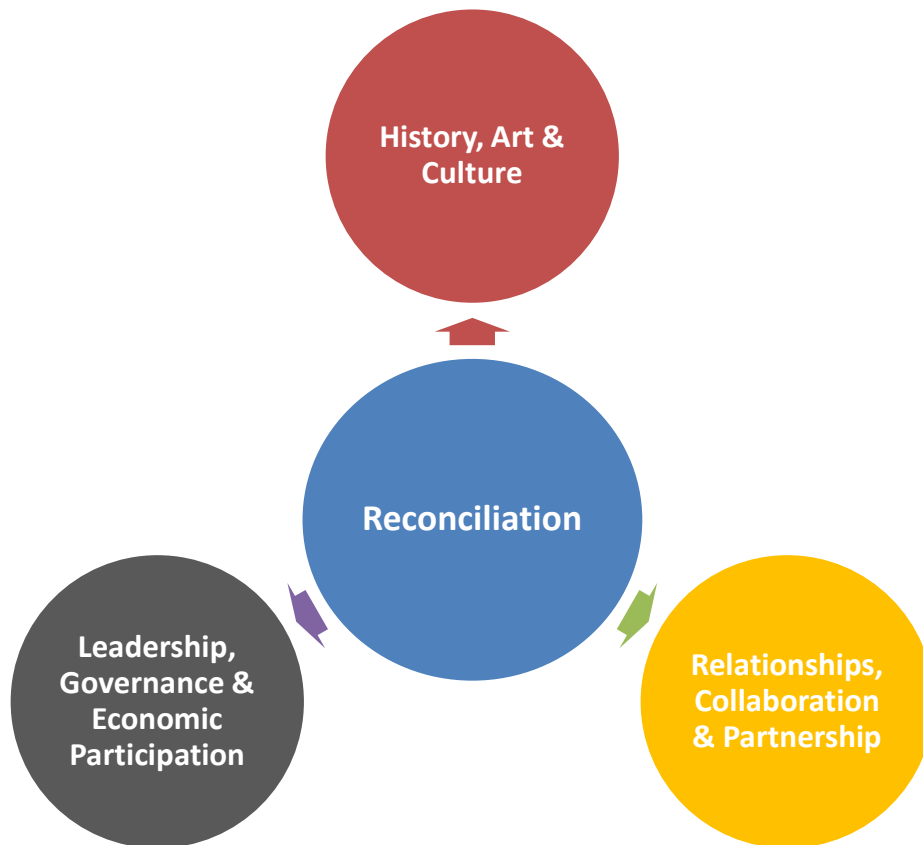
A vision for the Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030

Maroondah City Council is committed to working collaboratively on a journey of meaningful and sustainable reconciliation between First Peoples and non-First Peoples Australians.

Our vision for Maroondah is to be a municipality that:

- Respects and celebrates traditional and contemporary First Peoples cultures, knowledge, and customary practices, honouring the deep connection to land, kinship, and Country.
- Strengthens and promotes collaboration and partnerships with First Peoples' community and organisations built on open communication and respect.
- Strives to enhance First Peoples' participation in leadership and governance processes.

The Reconciliation Plan is structured under three themes as seen in the diagram below:



Theme 1 - History, Art, and Culture

Outcome

First Peoples' histories, cultures and creativity are acknowledged, respected, and promoted.

What the evidence tells us

History, art, and culture are essential to meaningful reconciliation. Australians widely support acknowledging past injustices because it helps with healing and understanding. Cultural participation creates economic opportunities and strengthens communities by bringing people together. When First Peoples' histories, arts, and cultural practices are included in education and public life, we see real benefits: students do better in school, prejudice decreases, and people understand different cultures better. Other countries have shown that cultural recognition helps build more inclusive societies. Communities that focus on cultural connection and truth-telling have better social outcomes, stronger economies, and more resilient societies. For Australia's reconciliation journey to succeed, we need to keep valuing First Peoples' cultures, acknowledging their histories, and building a society where everyone can share in the benefits of true reconciliation.

What the community has told us

From engagement with First Peoples, Maroondah Council has heard a clear call for greater respect, recognition, and inclusion. First Peoples want best practice in the Acknowledgment of Country, visible recognition in Council communications, and opportunities for gatherings and meaningful consultation. There is strong interest in celebrating First Peoples' history and achievements through storytelling, public art (such as statues and murals), and regular recognition of leaders and traditional custodians. First Peoples also value more opportunities for cultural learning—such as expanded library collections, Elders' Storytime, on-Country tours, and educational programs in schools. Greater support for First Peoples' festivals, markets, and cultural events is important, as is showcasing creativity through exhibitions, public art, youth artwork, and artist residencies. Overall, First Peoples want their culture and contributions to be acknowledged, celebrated, and woven into community life.

Objectives

- 1.1 Demonstrate respect for and recognition of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Maroondah's First Peoples by acknowledging their cultural histories and contributions across Council's practices.
- 1.2 Honour and promote First Peoples' leadership and achievements through community-led narratives and knowledge-sharing, and culturally significant tributes.
- 1.3 Promote First Peoples' perspectives across public knowledge systems, strengthen community-led storytelling, and advocate for the inclusion of First Peoples' culture, history and contributions in education policy and curriculum
- 1.4 Preserve and celebrate First Peoples' cultural heritage by delivering festivals and cultural events that foster broad community participation and cross-cultural exchange.
- 1.5 Foster and showcase First Peoples' creativity through curated exhibitions, public art installations and cultural programs that enhance visibility and recognition

Theme 2 - Relationships, collaboration and partnership

Outcome

Maroondah strengthens First Peoples' organisations through sustained support and collaborative partnerships.

What the evidence tells us

The evidence demonstrates that relationships, collaboration, and partnerships are fundamental for achieving meaningful and sustainable reconciliation. Collaborative approaches deliver better results, higher community engagement, greater sustainability, and stronger economic returns. Partnerships help heal communities by bringing together different ways of knowing, sharing responsibility, and making sure solutions work for everyone involved.

The statistical evidence from Australian Reconciliation Barometer surveys and organisational reports demonstrates that investment in collaborative reconciliation delivers substantial returns: better healing outcomes, stronger communities, more sustainable change, and greater social cohesion.

What the community has told us

First Peoples have expressed a strong desire for greater recognition and inclusion within the community, especially through education and youth engagement. They have highlighted the importance of sharing First Peoples' stories, languages, and cultures in schools, and want more programs that welcome and support their children. There is a call for teachers to be better equipped to discuss reconciliation, and for youth programs to be more inclusive of First Peoples' young people.

First Peoples have also told Council that their participation in Council work should be valued and supported. They want clear pathways for consultation, appropriate remuneration for their contributions, and recognition of the unique value they bring to the community.

Health and wellbeing are key concerns, with First Peoples asking for more targeted and culturally appropriate health services in Maroondah. They want Council to support First Peoples' organisations, address service gaps, and provide practical resources like office space and mobile clinic parking. There is also a need for mainstream services to be more culturally safe, accessible, and responsive to the experiences of First Peoples.

Access to Council facilities, grants, and events is another priority. First Peoples have asked for barriers to participation to be identified and removed, for Council spaces to be welcoming and culturally safe, and for support in accessing community grants. They also want Council to help promote and sponsor key community events and to provide ongoing support for important organisations like the Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Overall, First Peoples are seeking genuine partnership, ongoing support, and meaningful opportunities to shape the services and community spaces that affect their lives.

Objectives

- 2.1 Advance reconciliation within Council and in the community through respectful engagement with First Peoples, recognising and promoting their histories and cultures, and delivering sustained, practical support.
- 2.2 Include mechanisms to promote and support First Peoples' participation and engagement across Council's initiatives.
- 2.3 Partner with and support existing First Peoples' organisations and advocate for the establishment of targeted locally based First Peoples' health services.
- 2.4 Strengthen partnerships with Council's health and wellbeing services to deliver culturally safe and responsive services to First Peoples.
- 2.5 Foster inclusion by improving First Peoples' access to Council facilities, services, activities and grants, and by actively encouraging participation to strengthen social connection and community engagement.
- 2.6 Provide ongoing support for the construction and operations of the Mullum Mullum Aboriginal Gathering Place through advocacy and partnerships.

Theme 3 - Leadership, governance, and economic participation

Outcome

First Peoples' participation and perspectives in leadership, governance, and economic development is encouraged and supported.

What the evidence tells us

Good leadership, governance, and economic participation are key to making reconciliation work. Strong leadership drives better outcomes, good governance provides sustainable frameworks, and economic participation creates genuine equality and shared prosperity. The research from Australian Reconciliation Barometer surveys and organisational reports reveals that inclusive approaches deliver substantial returns: better community engagement, improved project outcomes, and more sustainable change.

Research consistently shows that reconciliation efforts excluding First Peoples' voices from leadership, governance, and economic decision-making fail to achieve meaningful or sustainable outcomes. In contrast, approaches that include and empower First Peoples' participation demonstrate significantly better results across all measured indicators.

What the community has told us

The First Peoples community has expressed a strong desire for the establishment of a dedicated First Peoples' position and Advisory Committee within Council, with active involvement from Councillors. This is seen as essential to ensuring that First Peoples have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes. Oversight of the Reconciliation Plan by a dedicated group is also important, to make sure Council policies and plans genuinely reflect a reconciliation perspective and support the aspirations of First Peoples.

There is a clear call for genuine inclusion of First Peoples in all aspects of Council's work. This includes participation in committees, working groups, and evaluation processes, with an emphasis on culturally sensitive and participative governance. The community also values the development of strategic partnerships, such as formal agreements with organisations like Aboriginal Housing Victoria, to help reduce bureaucracy, enhance community inclusion, and increase affordable housing options for First Peoples.

Building cultural capability within Council is a priority. The community supports senior management leading the creation of a Cultural Capability Plan, which would include a Cultural Safety Framework, targeted cultural awareness and anti-racism training, and leadership development for both First Peoples and Council leaders. Economic participation is also important, with suggestions to improve access to Council employment, set procurement targets for First Peoples' businesses, and support Indigenous artists and entrepreneurs through initiatives like BizHub and regional procurement strategies.

Finally, the community wants to see First Peoples' culture visibly represented and celebrated in public spaces, through placemaking, signage, and open space planning. There is also strong support for initiatives that build capacity, such as mentorships, mutual secondments, and the development of regional strategies and treaty frameworks to support Indigenous businesses and employment.

Overall, the community's feedback highlights the need to embed First Peoples' leadership and voices across all areas of Council activity, fostering cultural capability, economic participation, and meaningful partnerships.

Objectives

- 3.1 Consider First Peoples' perspectives in Council decision-making by promoting genuine inclusion in Council processes and committees through culturally sensitive practices.
- 3.2 Build Council's cultural capability by delivering ongoing learning, development and training to enable respectful, effective engagement with First Peoples.
- 3.3 Increase First Peoples' economic participation through Council procurement, employment pathways, and business development initiatives.

Tracking our progress

The **Maroondah Reconciliation Partnership Group (MRPG)** will oversee the implementation of the *Reconciliation Plan 2026-2030*. The MRPG meets quarterly and consists of Senior Council Officers, Wurundjeri Elders, and representatives from key First Peoples' organisations, and State Government Department agencies.

The Plan will be supported by actions responding to each objective in the three themes above that will appear in relevant Departments' Service Delivery Plans. Progress on these actions will be monitored and reported on through the annual Council Plan reporting process.

In the 2027-28 financial year, we will conduct an interim review of the Plan to evaluate progress on the objectives and actions, before a full review and update in 2029-30.

Key terms

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO)

Independent, not-for-profit organisations run and managed by local First Peoples in their own communities. These organisations make decisions about their own services and programs based on what their communities need.

Closing the Gap

A national effort to improve the lives of First Peoples by addressing the gaps between their health, education, employment, and living conditions compared to other Australians.

Country

For First Peoples, Country is more than just land. It includes everything - the soil, water, plants, animals, and air - and their connection to it is spiritual, cultural, and physical. It's their home, identity, and responsibility.

Cultural Safety

When services and environments are safe and respectful for First Peoples. This means understanding their culture, history, and experiences, and not doing anything that might cause harm or disrespect.

First Peoples

The preferred term to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. This term acknowledges that they were the first people to live on this land before European settlement.

Intergenerational Trauma

When the hurt and pain caused by past injustices (like being taken from families, losing land, and discrimination) continues to affect current and future generations of people.

NAIDOC Week

A week in July that celebrates First Peoples' cultures, achievements, and contributions to Australia. It's a time for everyone to learn about and respect First Peoples' history and culture.

Native Title

The recognition that First Peoples have rights to their traditional lands and waters, based on their continuous connection to Country since before European settlement.

Reconciliation

The process of improving relationships between First Peoples and non-First Peoples Australians. It involves acknowledging past wrongs, understanding each other's perspectives, and working together to build a fairer and more respectful future for everyone.

Self-determination

The right of First Peoples to make their own decisions about their lives, communities, and futures. It means having control over things that affect them rather than having decisions made by others who don't fully understand their culture and needs.

Treaty

An agreement between governments and First Peoples that recognises their rights, addresses past injustices, and outlines how they will work together in the future. It's about creating a fair and respectful relationship.

Truth-telling

The process of honestly discussing and documenting the true history of what happened to First Peoples, including the painful parts that have often been ignored or hidden. This helps with healing and understanding the present.

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung

The specific First Peoples who are the Traditional Custodians of the land that is now Maroondah. They have lived here for over 35,000 years.

Section 8 – References

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Attachment: Maroondah Arts and Cultural Grants 2026-2027

Applicant	Initiative	Funding Allocation 2026-27
Heartsleeve Creatives	<i>Twelfth Night</i> : Local theatre company to perform Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night in the rear gardens at Wyreena Community Arts Centre across several evenings during Summer 2027.	\$4,500
Fresh Theatre for Social Change	<i>Young at Arts</i> : School holiday theatre program and workshops over 3 days including performance, for a variety of youth cohorts providing a safe space for up to 80+ young people to be creative and learn new skills.	\$8,955
Ringwood Art Society	<i>Maroondah Art Fair: A Community Celebration of Creativity</i> : A community arts event for local artists, students, and residents to feature an exhibition, artist stalls, workshops, and live demonstrations, providing opportunities for creatives to showcase and sell their work. Partnering with Ringwood Secondary College and Central Ringwood Community Centre.	\$6,300
Barbara Ruth Davidson	<i>Triple Art Murals Heathmont</i> : In collaboration with VMCH Disability Services and a local artist, this project brings together local community through the creation of a public artwork at the walk-through from Salisbury Court to Heathmont Village.	\$7,508
Mullum Netball Club	<i>Indigenous Collaboration with Mullum Netball Club</i> : Mullum Netball Club will engage Aboriginal artist, Simone Thomson (Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta) to design a culturally meaningful artwork to be used on all club players and volunteer uniforms, website, and social media and communications.	\$2,200
Maroondah Symphony Orchestra Incorporated	<i>Handel’s Messiah: A Community Choral-Orchestral Collaboration</i> : MSO will present Handel’s Messiah as a one-off large-scale choral-orchestral performance for public in November 2026 at George Wood Performing Arts Centre. This project will bring together a community orchestra, choir, four guest solo singers and a specialist trumpeter.	\$1,950
Yarra Valley Singers	<i>Handel’s Messiah - A Collaboration with Maroondah Symphony Orchestra</i> : This 30-year anniversary collaboration will deliver a high-quality local performance, strengthening community connection and supporting mental wellbeing. Grant includes accompanist, music scores and movement of equipment to the venue.	\$3,000
Total Allocation		\$34,413

Attachment A: Maroondah Community Grants Funding Program 2026-27 - Summary

Changemaker Grants Program 2026-28

Applicant	Initiative	Funding recommendation 2026-28
Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)	<p>Maroondah Burmese Social Enterprise Pathways</p> <p>This project will engage 50 newly arrived Burmese women in Maroondah to co-design pathways for social and economic participation. Through community consultation and partnerships with SisterWorks, Parks Victoria, and the Business Council, Year 1 will identify one preferred enterprise model (sewing, cooking, or gardening) for pilot implementation in Year 2.</p>	\$20,000
Empowered Women in Trades	<p>THRIVE: Building Human-Centred Workplaces in Maroondah</p> <p>The THRIVE program is a targeted initiative in Maroondah, offering six interactive workshops and one-on-one consultations to help employers create inclusive, psychologically safe, and gender-equitable workplaces, especially in trades. Supported by Swinburne University and the Local Jobs Program, THRIVE aims to reduce barriers for women, strengthen workplace culture, and build a resilient local economy.</p>	\$18,000
		\$38,000

Emergency Relief Grants Program 2026-27

Applicant	Initiative	Funding Recommendation
1. Outer East Foodshare Inc.	OEF to supply food to Maroondah relief agencies, reducing their costs and enabling them to support more clients.	\$6,000
2. Feed One Feed All Inc	FoFA Volunteers to prepare 2,800 meals for Maroondah residents in need in 2026/27.	\$6,000
3. New Community Ringwood	Provide meals and connection for vulnerable people in Ringwood and Croydon, in partnership with local volunteers and community groups.	\$ 5,000
4. Maroondah Winter Shelter	Program to assist men experiencing homelessness, including meals and accommodation during winter.	\$7,000
5. Hope City Mission Inc.	Home delivery service, providing food relief to vulnerable Maroondah residents who cannot access services due to transport, health, or age barriers.	\$6,000
6. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ringwood	Good Shepherd and Croydon Hills Baptist Church to provide a nutritious weekly dinner, fostering community and belonging for Winter Shelter guests.	\$3,500
7. Eastern Food Rescue	EFR to ensure resilient, innovative, and uninterrupted food relief for Maroondah residents via daily free markets from a new venue provided by Eastland.	\$6,000
8. The Freedom Initiative	Foodbank Program, providing food, vouchers, and referrals to vulnerable Maroondah households to address food insecurity and strengthen community wellbeing.	\$3,500
9. Urban Life Care	Support for food, toiletries, and clothing relief for Maroondah residents facing hardship.	\$3,500
10. Croydon North Community Meals	Community Service Days at Croydon North provide meals, support, and referrals, fostering connection and inclusion for all attendees.	\$6,000
11. North Ringwood Care	NRCare offers essential groceries, health and financial support, and referrals, while assisting Winter Shelter and local school meal programs, always prioritising dignity and nutrition.	\$4,000

Applicant	Initiative	Funding Recommendation
12. TLC Support Inc	TLC Church Foodbank supports Bayswater North and nearby communities by providing essential food and hygiene items to families facing financial hardship.	\$2,000
13. The Dining Room Mission Inc	The Dining Room Mission Meal Service offers a weekly dine-in or takeaway meal and welfare support for people in Croydon who are experiencing hardship	\$5,500
14. Croydon Uniting Church Helping Hand	Croydon UC Helping Hand Project offers emergency food and toiletries to Maroondah locals, letting clients select what they need.	\$ 5,500
		\$69,500

Annual Community Grants Program - Funding Recommendations 2026-27

Organisation	Project Description	Recommended Funding
1. 4tk Australia Ltd	4Tk in the Wild provides excursions and sessions to engage youth and raise awareness of Biolink environmental issues.	\$2,000
2. Australian Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne) Inc.	Upskilling program for Chin community leaders to strengthen engagement, improve operations, and deliver quality programs.	\$7,000
3. Australian Skateboarding Federation	Deliver Croydon Shred: free, elite-led skateboarding workshops giving youth, women, and CALD communities the skills and confidence to enjoy local skateparks.	\$5,000
4. Croydon Hills Community Care	A Healthy Senior Refugee Community. Growing older offers opportunities to share experiences, connect with others, and enjoy fun, meaningful activities in the community.	\$3,000
5. Deshan Chinese Seniors Community Groups Inc.	A wellbeing program for Chinese-speaking seniors, offering group activities, peer support, and dementia education.	\$3,000
6. Greek Elderly Citizens Club of Maroondah	Weekly lunches, games, and outings for Greek seniors to reduce isolation and support affordable community connection.	\$2,000
7. Interchange Outer East	Evolve Social Hub offers activities like arts & crafts, board games, food, and a sensory space, providing a safe and inclusive environment for people with disabilities to connect and socialise.	\$5,000
8. Life's Little Treasures Foundation	Teddy Bears Picnic supports Maroondah families affected by premature babies with activities, connection, and community awareness at Ringwood Lake.	\$3,000
9. Maroondah Indian Community Inc.	A 12-week program offering health education, movement, and peer support for South and Southeast Asian adults.	\$10,000
10. Maroondah Italian Senior Citizens Club	Community wellbeing initiative for older Italian residents, offering regular lunches, social events, and outings to reduce social isolation and celebrate cultural identity.	\$2,000
11. Maroondah Volleyball	"Volleyball to You" program uses volleyball to build relationships and connections between the Chin/Burmese community and the wider Maroondah community.	\$3,000
12. Melbourne Eastern Netball Association	MENA's Festival of Netball welcomes all ages, focusing on disability and seniors, supporting connection, fitness, and wellbeing.	\$2,550

Organisation	Project Description	Recommended Funding
13. Mullum Netball Club	Mullum Netball Club will partner with a local Indigenous artist to create a culturally meaningful artwork for tops, website, social media, and communications.	\$2,200
14. NFP Tech	A digital project connecting community workers to a shared service-mapping app, improving referrals and coordination for vulnerable residents.	\$10,000
15. Ringwood Church of Christ	A free English conversation program using interactive learning to help migrants and job seekers improve language skills.	\$5,000
16. Ringwood Japanese Playgroup	Weekly playgroup for Japanese families, offering play, learning, and cultural activities to support child development.	\$1,000
17. Ringwood Spiders All-abilities Sports Club	Ringwood Spiders' Developing Lives program enriches members' wellbeing and skills, promoting inclusion and lifelong personal development through football.	\$2,550
18. SalamFest Incorporated	SalamFest's Islamic cultural program features workshops and talks, fostering social connection, inclusion, and celebrating Maroondah's diversity.	\$4,000
19. Sharing Hope	Stories & Strides unites Myanmar refugee youth and community through storytelling and sports, building inclusion, cultural pride, friendships, and a sense of belonging.	\$8,000
20. St Kilda Gatehouse Incorporated	Specialist outreach and early intervention program for young women, disrupting exploitation and strengthening safety and wellbeing.	\$5,000
21. TeamSports4All	Sports participation project covering costs and supporting disadvantaged kids and families to join local sporting clubs.	\$5,000
22. The Onemda Association Inc.	Inclusive pathways project for young people with intellectual disability, building work, volunteering, and community participation opportunities.	\$9,700
		\$ 100,000