

**Attachment 1 - 20220609 - DRAFT Reconciliation Action Plan - Snowy Valleys Council**



Snowy Valleys Council recognises the Wiradjuri, Ngarigo and Wolgalu (Walgaloos) people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are predominantly located. Council also recognises the many other First Nations community members across the region who make up the vibrant communities to which our organisation provides services.

The significance of First Nations Peoples in Australian culture is important to our history and identity as a Local Government Area and broader community. Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a commitment to address the gaps of acknowledgement, learning and understanding of First Nations histories and cultures to make a genuine contribution to reconciliation through our business and activities.

We commit to working positively both now and into the future with the Wiradjuri, Ngarigo and Wolgalu peoples and other First Nations community members to foster greater acknowledgment and learning among our broader community. The process is a shared long term journey. **MESSAGE FROM SNOWY VALLEYS COUNCIL**

I am proud to release the first Snowy Valleys Council Reconciliation Action Plan (SVC RAP). This RAP builds on our understanding, commitment and respect for First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

Council has worked with Reconciliation Australia to embed Council's values of Safety, Integrity and Respect into the SVC RAP framework, enhancing our commitment to ensuring the Plan's actions in the areas of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance are meaningful and achieved.

We thank Reconciliation Australia for the guidance and support provided during the development of the SVC RAP and the Snowy Valleys Aboriginal Liaison Committee for their input, consideration and comment.

I acknowledge that as an organisation, we must strive to continually improve our knowledge and understanding about the First Nations Peoples represented across SVC and our efforts to recognise the significance of First Nations Peoples in Australian culture.

This plan is about turning good intentions and talk into real actions to create meaningful relationships with local First Nations People and make a genuine contribution to the national reconciliation effort.

We are committed to regularly reviewing and reporting on our actions and working together with the local community to achieve our vision for reconciliation. This is our first important step as Snowy Valleys Council.

Matthew Hyde  
Chief Executive Officer  
Snowy Valleys Council

**MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA**

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

Snowy Valleys Council joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Karen Mundine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia

## Our Region

The Snowy Valleys Council is a local government area located in the South West Slopes region of New South Wales. The region encompasses a total land area of 8,960 square kilometres and is located at the western foothills of the Snowy Mountains, bordered by Kosciuszko National Park in the south. Tumut and Tumbarumba, the two main industrial and population centres, are both located within a three-hour drive from the nation's capital of Canberra and a five-hour drive from Sydney. The region encompasses the towns and villages of Adelong, Batlow, Brungle, Jingellic, Khancoban, Rosewood, Talbingo and Tooma, and includes the lands, waters and communities of Wiradjuri, Ngarigo and Wolgalu people.

We acknowledge that the First Nations peoples' histories of this area are significant, due to the movement of First Nations People through this local government area for food availability and abundance, social gatherings, rituals, and seasonal change. Snowy valleys Council pays tradition to more than one Nation of First Peoples inhabiting the Local Government area. This was furthermore complicated by the inhabitation of land by white settlers.

The Brungle township was originally developed as a station whereby the uniqueness of Brungle established in 1887 as a settlement for Wiradjuri and the Wolgalu peoples between Gundagai and Tumut and the dwellings, are on ground officially described as a station yet know as a settlement, reserve or mission and was the responsibility of the Aboriginal Welfare Board of NSW in which a white Manager was in charge of managing the station.

In 1945 the manager was removed and in 1955 the Aboriginal Welfare Board decided that the land was of no further use and the housing is either owned privately or is now managed by the Brungle/Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council. The land at Brungle remains very important to these Wiradjuri and the Wolgalu (Walgalo) peoples, as a site of shared memories and links with past traditions

The Snowy Valleys region is endowed with an abundance of fertile soil, water supply and climatic conditions conducive to agriculture and plantation forestry. The region has a diverse human resource base, a good climate, affordable quality housing, an abundance of water, exceptional community services and facilities, quality physical infrastructure and a supportive business environment. The agricultural and softwood timber industries, including Australia's largest softwood processing mill, underpin the region's economic base.

The softwood timber industry is the Snowy Valleys' largest employer, centred around the Visy and Carter Holt Harvey softwood processing mills in Tumut and the Hyne mill in Tumbarumba. Beef cattle farming also employs a significant portion of working residents of the Snowy Valleys with other key industries including viticulture, retail, healthcare, hydro-electricity generation, tourism, horticulture and National Parks.

## Our Community

Snowy Valleys Council has a population of around 14,000, of which 4.4% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

In the Snowy Valleys region, we live a primarily rural lifestyle with major town centres in Tumbarumba and Tumut, and smaller towns and villages across the council area including Adelong, Batlow, Brungle, Cabramurra, Jingellic, Khancoban, Rosewood, Talbingo and Tooma.

The Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan sets our future vision as:

*We enjoy and are proud of our beautiful scenery, clean waterways and natural landscape and recognise and respect the environment and First Nations people of the country. We value community, encourage belonging, and support one another. We have an excellent standard of living with infrastructure and services that support us through all stages of life. We are free to enjoy the peace and quiet regional life and remain well-connected through technology and high-quality transport accessibility. Our communities enjoy diverse employment and education opportunities, and we continue to innovate and promote our area to ensure we prosper in the future.*

This vision seeks to ensure that the following strategic objectives are achieved:

*Our Community:* Our communities are connected and inclusive, supported by services that nurture health, wellbeing and identity.

*Our Economy:* Our diverse economy supports community longevity, vibrancy and a sustainable future.

*Our Environment:* Our natural environment is cared for and protected to ensure future generations can experience and enjoy its beauty.

*Our Infrastructure:* Our local infrastructure is sustainable and facilitates our way of life.

*Our Civic Leadership:* Our civic leadership and organisational governance foster open and transparent partnership with our community.

## About Council

Snowy Valleys Council is committed to our vision of leading, engaging and supporting strong and vibrant communities. This vision is built into our everyday activities, actions and the extensive suite of services we deliver across the Snowy Valleys local government area.

Snowy Valleys Council is a major employer in the local government area, employing 313 people, of which four (4) people identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. The main Council chambers are located in the towns of Tumut and Tumbarumba. Council depots, libraries and community services are located right across the region.

Council's Delivery Program details the principal activities that will guide Council to prioritise resource allocation and actions to achieve the community's priorities and goals as set out in the Community Strategic Plan.

All of Council's services, programs and projects are aligned to these outcomes.

## Our Reconciliation Journey

Snowy Valleys Council has an unwavering commitment to building better communities and through our interactions with community and on the advice of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee, the need for a formal reconciliation journey was identified.

Consistent with Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan 2042 and the 2022-2026 Delivery Program, Council is committed to enhancing the knowledge and understanding of our communities about the history, heritage, and cultures of Aboriginal Australians.

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) aligns with the Our Community strategic direction which encompasses the activities Council delivers and supports to improve community wellbeing, build resilience and to bring the community together. It includes programs, services and community infrastructure that Council delivers for cultural, recreational and lifelong learning activities.

Developing this Reflect RAP supports Council in recognising the areas where we need to build deeper and more meaningful relationships with First Nations Peoples and peak groups across all areas of our business and community.

## Our Partnerships and Activities

Snowy Valleys Council values the current relationships it has with First Nations Peoples in our communities and workplace.

The Aboriginal flags are flown at our main administration buildings, Welcome to Country is performed at key civic events and an Acknowledgment of Country is given at all council meetings and gatherings.

The Chief Executive Officer of Snowy Valleys Council champion the Reflect RAP. Two councillors are active members of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee. The Place Activation team facilitates the delivery of initiatives

Partnerships and activities that are inclusive and foster a sense of pride, belonging and community harmony , underpin the start of our reconciliation journey and this Reflect RAP.

These partnerships and activities have included:

### **Aboriginal Liaison Committee**

The Aboriginal Liaison Committee was formed as a committee of Council to provide communication between Council and the Aboriginal Community.

The main objectives of this committee are to raise the profile of Aboriginal issues within the Council, to facilitate and support objectives to create and enhance the quality of life for Aboriginal people; and to work with Aboriginal people to obtain common goals.

The Aboriginal Liaison Committee has been instrumental in identifying the needs of the Aboriginal community across the Snowy Valleys and has provided support for a number of projects and activities including:

- **Collaboration and Recognition** - NAIDOC week activities, Welcome to Country and opening of events are collaborated through Council's relationship with the Aboriginal Liaison Committee.
- **Bila Park** - The "Bila Park – Gathering Place" project of a parkland sculpture aims to revere and respect the local Aboriginal history and culture, by telling the traditional story in artistic elements within the landscape site. The 'Gathering Place' is located in parkland acquired by Council in 2002 adjacent to the Tumut River and is bounded by Fitzroy, Merivale and Wynyard Streets in Tumut. The Gathering Place has a local and regional level of significance



- **Brungle Health Facility** - The Brungle Health Facility was officially opened in June 2005. The Management Committee are citizens from the Aboriginal Community in Brungle.
- **Shared Responsibility Agreement** - Council has supported a Shared Responsibility Agreement between Tumut and Brungle First Nations communities and the Commonwealth of Australia through the Wagga Wagga Indigenous Coordination Centre. Council was the host employer for a CDEP training program that involved between three and seven workers at different times over a 6-month period.
- **Feasibility Study for Aboriginal Cultural Centre** - A feasibility study for the proposed Aboriginal Cultural Centre, to be situated at the corner of the Snowy Mountains Highway and Capper Street, was carried out in early 2005 by the Riverina Business Enterprise Centre. The project will require considerable finance to become a reality.
- **Memorandum of Understanding** - In March 2010 Council adopted the Memorandum of Understanding with the Aboriginal community.
- **Leo Kelly Arts and Culture Award for NAIDOC Week Celebrations** – The Tumut Library, on behalf of Snowy Valleys Council, partnered with the local Wiradjuri community and National Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver events during NAIDOC week 2018. The events included a talk from Nova Peris OAM, the first Aboriginal Australian to win Olympic Gold and Australia's first indigenous female to be elected to federal parliament. The celebrations saw the Snowy Valleys Council efforts recognised through receipt of the Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award at the NSW Local Government Awards. The Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award celebrates outstanding achievement by local government organisations in strategic planning for arts and culture.
- **Cultural Education for High School Students** - Snowy Valleys Council are working with Petaurus Education Group and Tumut High School to develop a cultural education program aimed at high school students, enabling them to act as leaders in their own learning regarding appreciating and protecting cultural and environmental Meeting Places. The program has been funded by the NSW State Government under their 2020 Stronger Country Community Program.
- **Eastern Riverina Arts Cultural Programs** – Snowy Valleys Council regularly work with Eastern Riverina Arts supporting cultural art programs and initiatives within the region such as the [2020 Lagoon Project](#).



## SNOWY VALLEYS COUNCIL RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN – REFLECT – 2022-2023

## RELATIONSHIPS

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
1	<b>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations</b>	Identify First Nations peoples, communities, stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence, with the intent of connecting with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations to inform future activities	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Review the Community Engagement strategy to ensure inclusion of Aboriginal stakeholders in council led engagement	December 2022	Community Development Officer
		Continue to facilitate the Aboriginal Liaison Committee, as a forum for discussion and a source of information for protocols and key information.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer
2	<b>National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	Ongoing	Community Development Officer
		Investigate funding to support the appropriate council staff participation in an external NRW event.	June 2023	Co-ordinator Place Activation Co-ordinator People and Culture

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
3	<b>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</b>	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff through: Council and committees of council minutes (Acknowledgement of Country) Staff gatherings (Acknowledgement of Country) Provide an understanding and reminder of significant Aboriginal days e.g., NAIDOC week and Sorry Day Reinforcement of the Council Values	Ongoing	Chief Executive Officer
		Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with to support our reconciliation journey	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Promote our RAP and commitment to reconciliation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing and implementing a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP</li> <li>Promoting the RAP on Council's webpage</li> <li>Promoting NRW, NAIDOC and relevant events and activities</li> </ul> Inclusion and reporting on progress in the Delivery Program, Operational Plan and budget	December 2021	Co-ordinator Communication and Engagement
4	<b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies</b>	Identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs as part of the scheduled review of HR policies and procedures	June 2023	Co-ordinator People and Culture
		Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination to inform future policy development	June 2023	Co-ordinator People and Culture

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
5	<b>Understanding value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning</b>	Work with internal stakeholders to develop a program to increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June 2023	Co-ordinator People and Culture
		Confirm resourcing requirements for implementation of the program	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Include a provision in the Council onboarding program to cover: A high-level overview of Council's diverse Aboriginal community. A copy of the RAP and related documents.	June 2023	Co-ordinator People and Culture
6	<b>Raise awareness of cultural protocols</b>	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within the Snowy Valleys Local Government Area (LGA).	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Work with stakeholders to coordinate the development of a map that indicates traditional custodianship of the lands and waters within the Snowy Valleys LGA.	June 2023	Community Development Officer
		Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understand the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).	December 2022	Community Development Officer
		Encourage Aboriginal representatives to provide a Welcome to Country at relevant Council organized and civic events.	June 2023	Chief Executive Officer Community Development Officer
		Include an Acknowledgement of Country on our public website	June 2023	Co-ordinator Communications and Engagement

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
		Include appropriate wording for Acknowledgement of Country in our email signatures	December 2021	Community Development Officer
7	<b>Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week</b>	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Chief Executive Officer Community Development Officer
		Share promotional information for community organized NAIDOC events through Council's digital channels	July 2022	Co-ordinator Communications and Engagement
		Host flag raising ceremonies to recognise NAIDOC week annually	July 2022	Chief Executive Officer Community Development Officer
		Promote NAIDOC week activities to the workforce and encourage participation	July 2022	Chief Executive Officer Community Development Officer
		Encourage the RAP working group to support and participate in an external NAIDOC event.	July 2022	Chief Executive Officer Community Development Officer

**OPPORTUNITIES**

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
8	<b>Develop employment opportunities for First Nations people</b>	Increase exposure of Council's employment opportunities through: Aboriginal Liaison Committee members and their networks First Nations Employment Services such as NCAP Promoting traineeship opportunities through First Nations Liaison Officers and corporate business. Existing work with local school communities	March 2023	Co-ordinator People and Culture
		Build understanding of current First Nations staffing profile to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	September 2022	Co-ordinator People and Culture
		Continue to investigate opportunities for Aboriginal identified roles within the SVC outdoor and indoor teams, including school based traineeships	March 2023	Greater Leadership Team Co-ordinator People and Culture
		Support staff who identify as First Nations Peoples to participate in the Consultative Committee and provide input regarding positive employment opportunities and outcomes for First Nations Peoples.	December 2021	Co-ordinator People and Culture
9	<b>Investigate First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>	Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses	March 2023	Chief Financial Officer
		Investigate Supply Nation membership	June 2023	Manager Utilities, Open Space and Facilities

**GOVERNANCE**

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
10	<b>Review and maintain an effective internal RAP Working Group (RWG)</b>	Formalise the RWG to support the RAP implementation	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team
		Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG for approval by the Executive	September 2022	Governance Executive Director Community and Corporate
		Recruit to the RWG ensuring appropriate First Nations staff representation	September 2022	Governance Executive Director Community and Corporate
		Establish a reporting and evaluation program that aligns with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework	September 2022	Co-ordinator Place Activation Co-ordinator Communication and Engagement
11	<b>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments</b>	Define annual resourcing requirements for RAP implementation and include in Operational Plan and budget process	October 2022	Co-ordinator Place Activation
		Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments as integrated into the annual Operational Plan and budget.	June 2023	Chief Executive Officer
		Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments consistent with the IPR framework.	December 2021	Co-ordinator Communications and Engagement



	Action	Deliverable	Timeline/ Target	Responsibility
12	<b>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally</b>	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	July 2023	Co-ordinator Place Activation
		Complete and present an annual progress report including the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire as part of Council's Annual report.	November 2022	Community Development Officer
		Promote the RAP progress report through Council's communication channels alongside the Annual Report.	November 2022	Coordinator Communications and Engagement
		Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to commence development of next Innovate RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	September 2023	Community Development Officer

**Contact Details***Position: Executive Director Corporate & Community**Phone: 1300 275 782**Email: [info@svc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@svc.nsw.gov.au)*



## REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2022-2023

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