



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP) REFERENCE GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Gladstone Regional Council acknowledges First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda peoples who are the traditional owners of our region. We respect and recognise First Nations values, cultural practices, knowledge and skills, including their spiritual connection to the land and their right to self-determination.

1. Background

- 1.1 Gladstone Regional Council is committed to creating lasting and meaningful relationships that encourage, respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region.
- 1.2 Gladstone Regional Council developed its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2018 to support a lasting and successful commitment to reconciliation. The formation of Gladstone Regional Councils RAP Reference Group will inform and guide this work now and into the future.
- 1.3 In 2020 an Innovate RAP was developed and was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and Gladstone Regional Council in January 2021.
- 1.4 The second Innovate RAP and Council's third RAP was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and Gladstone Regional Council in June 2023.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The RAP Reference Group's purpose is to provide Gladstone Regional Council with strategic advice on the views, needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Gladstone region.
- 2.2 The RAP Reference Group will inform and monitor Gladstone Regional Council's RAP implementation through collaboration, communication and positive relationships.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 Develop and maintain strong relationships between Council and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the Gladstone region.
- 3.2 Provide feedback and comment in relation to Gladstone Regional Council's RAP.
- 3.3 Monitor the progress of Gladstone Regional Council's RAP deliverables.
- 3.4 Provide input into the review, evaluation and development of future RAPs developed by Gladstone Regional Council.

- 3.5 Inform and advise the community of actions that have taken place as a direct result of the RAP.
- 3.6 Raise awareness and advocate for improved access to Council services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultural relevance and appropriateness of Council services, policies and programs.
- 3.7 Facilitate Council's access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, businesses, stakeholders and community leaders.
- 3.8 Assist Council to identify and remove barriers to equal participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community.
- 3.9 Advocate for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, promoting recognition of contribution to community.

4. Membership

- 4.1 Membership of the RAP Reference Group shall consist of:
 - Two (2) Gladstone region Councillors, one of which shall be a Co-Chairperson.
 - Up to seven (7) community members consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, service providers or business owners.
 - One (1) Council staff member that identifies as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

5. Membership diversity

- 5.1 The membership of the group should be diverse and reflect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in the Gladstone region.
- 5.2 The RAP Reference Group will seek to build and reflect diversity within its membership and have inclusive practice.

6. Role of members

Members of the RAP Reference group will fulfill their role by:

- 6.1 Regularly attending meetings and making a commitment to actively contribute to the agenda and RAP activities.
- 6.2 Advocating on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to build a collaborative relationship with Gladstone Regional Council.
- 6.3 Providing input, views and advice on the implementation of Gladstone Regional Council's RAP.
- 6.4 Provide advice to Council on the development of new and existing policies and strategies using a cultural lens to highlight potential barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 6.5 Assist with the shaping and promoting of a range of projects, notably Council's NAIDOC celebrations, and other significant events.
- 6.6 Assist Council to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations and its networks, taking into account the different perspectives, cultural complexities and diversity.

6.7 Working with Council to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be a part of the RAP Reference Group.

7. Terms and Method of Nomination

7.1 Nomination for the appointment to the RAP Reference Group will be called through an expression of interest process and reviewed by an internal Council selection panel of three (3) Council Officers. The selection panel will make a recommendation to Council on the successful community candidates.

7.2 Appointments to the RAP Reference Group will be for a minimum two years, with an option to renew.

7.3 Three months prior to the end of the term the First Nations Liaison Officer will review appointments and a subsequent expression of interest will be invited.

7.4 Appointments will be via a Gladstone Regional Council resolution.

8. Replacement of Members

8.1 If a community member resigns within six months of appointment, the selection panel will reconvene and select a replacement from candidates that submitted an expression of interest from the most recent application round.

8.2 If a suitable replacement is not available from the previous application round, an expression of interest process will be initiated.

8.3 If a community member resigns within six months of the end of their term, they will not be replaced until the next scheduled expression of interest cycle.

8.4 If a community member resigns at any other time, the RAP Reference Group will determine an appropriate mechanism for selecting a replacement, with appointments being made by Council resolution.

8.5 If a Councillor appointed to the RAP Reference Group resigns from Council at any time, a replacement will be appointed by Council at the next practicable Council General meeting.

8.6 If a member does not attend three consecutive meetings, their position will be considered vacant and the Co-Chairpersons are responsible for advising the member.

9. Meetings and Voting

9.1 The RAP Reference Group will meet a maximum of eight (8) times during the first year of a new RAP, reducing to a minimum of four (4) thereafter, with the option to arrange additional meetings as required.

9.2 Dates and times will be set in advance for RAP Reference Group meetings.

9.3 Should a change in meeting room or time be required, members of the Group will be notified by Council's First Nations Liaison Officer, or other Council Officer in the absence of the First Nations Liaison Officer.

- 9.4 Members unable to attend a scheduled meeting are required to notify Council's First Nations Liaison Officer prior to the meeting.
- 9.5 Council's Community Partnerships Team will provide secretariat services to the Group in the absence of the First Nations Liaison Officer.
- 9.6 Other Council Officers whose work complement the work of the RAP Reference Group may be invited to attend meetings on an as needs basis in an ex-officio capacity.
- 9.7 Where specialist advice is required on a specific issue and the expertise is not available within the RAP Reference Group, suitable stakeholder representatives will be invited to attend meetings on a as needs basis.
- 9.8 A quorum of current group members is required for a meeting to take place, which is a majority of members, and where membership is an even number, a quorum is 50% plus one (membership of 10 requires six members to form a quorum).
- 9.9 Voting at a meeting must be open and a question is decided by a majority of the votes of members present.
- 9.10 Each member present has a vote on each question to be decided, and if the votes are equal, the Co-Chairperson presiding over the meeting, has the casting vote and if a member fails to vote, the member is taken to have voted in the negative.

10. Minutes

- 10.1 Minutes of the meeting must include the names of Councillors and group members present at the meeting and if a division is called on a question, the names of all persons voting and how they voted must be included.
- 10.2 At each meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting must be confirmed by the group members present.

11. Co-Chairpersons

- 11.1 The RAP Reference Group will have two Co-Chairpersons.
- 11.2 One Co-Chairperson will be a Councillor and the other a Community Co-Chairperson.
- 11.3 The Community Co-Chairperson will be an Aboriginal community representative and / or a Torres Strait Islander community representative that will be chosen by the group by majority vote.
- 11.4 The Community Co-Chairperson will hold the position for two years and may extend for another term.
- 11.5 The Co-Chairpersons will rotate Chairperson responsibilities by alternating as Chairperson each meeting.

12. Co-Chairperson Responsibilities

- 12.1 Formally declare the meeting open, after ascertaining that a quorum is present, welcome guest speakers and visitors.
- 12.2 Preside over and facilitate the meeting and conduct it impartially according to the Terms of Reference.
- 12.3 Ensure debates are conducted in a respectful, collaborative and culturally appropriate way.
- 12.4 Declare results of all votes.
- 12.5 Ensure opportunity for members to declare conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting.
- 12.6 Adjourn (when so resolved) or formally declare the meeting closed when business has concluded.
- 12.7 Manage any disputes arising from RAP Reference Group meetings.

13. Observers

- 13.1 Non-members of the RAP Reference Group can attend the meeting with the permission of the Co-Chairpersons of the Group.
- 13.2 Non-members of the RAP Reference Group can observe the meeting but are unable to participate in discussions or commentary unless invited by the meeting, or to provide specialist advice.
- 13.3 Non-members at the meeting are not able to propose recommendations and have no voting rights.
- 13.4 If the Co-Chairperson presiding over the meeting deems a non-member/s to be disrupting proceedings or causing offence to any person in attendance, they may be asked to leave the building where the meeting is taking place with immediate effect for the remainder of proceedings.

14. Managing Culturally Sensitive Matters

- 14.1 Where an issue that is identified as culturally sensitive by Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander members, the RAP Reference Group can form a time limited working group to discuss the matter.
- 14.2 A working group does not have the ability to make recommendations directly to Council; all recommendations that the working group would like presented to Council must be presented at the next RAP Reference Group for consideration.
- 14.3 Any working group established must record attendance of the members present at meetings and any decision it would like the RAP Reference Group to consider is to be voted on in accordance with item 9.9 and recorded in the minutes.

15. Reporting and Accountability

- 15.1 Council representatives attending the RAP Reference Group will report the advice of the Group back to Council in a timely manner.

- 15.2 Members of the RAP Reference Group are encouraged to report back to their respective community members on the group's advice and Council decisions.
- 15.3 The RAP Reference Group has no decision-making responsibilities over Council's operational function or staff. The role of the RAP Reference Group is to offer advice, support and guidance to Council.
- 15.4 Where a decision is required, the RAP Reference Group must present a recommendation to a Council General Meeting for resolution.

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: Insert Date
RESOLUTION NO.: Insert Resolution No.