



Reconciliation Action Plan 2015–18



Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidhawal (Bidwell) people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council recognises the impacts of colonisation and that past government policies contributed to the erosion of Aboriginal culture in East Gippsland. Council aspires to strengthen partnerships and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Indigenous Cultural processes for East Gippsland Shire Council. We recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision making now and in the future.

The values of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities are the foundation on which true Reconciliation stands, and it is these values that will guide Council and its staff through their journey of Reconciliation. Reconciliation is about healing the wounds of the past and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia and White Australia coming together.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the contribution Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations have had and continue to have in our community.

These organisations deliver a number of services to East Gippsland Communities, including health services, land management, youth programs, men's and women's programs, cultural support, and education. Collectively, they provide employment for hundreds of East Gippsland residents, use local services, and are major contributors to the East Gippsland economy.

East Gippsland Shire Council thanks and Acknowledges the following organisations:

- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative – Bairnsdale
- Moogji Aboriginal Council – Orbost
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation – Bairnsdale
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association – Lakes Entrance
- Djillay Nglau – Lakes Entrance
- Yoowinna Wurnalung – Lakes Entrance
- Lakes Tyers Aboriginal Trust – Lake Tyers
- Lake Tyers Health and Children's Services – Lake Tyers
- East Gippsland School for Aboriginal Health Professionals – Bairnsdale

Artist biography

CASSIE LEATHAM

Cassie Leatham is from the Kulin nation the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people.

At a young age Cassie demonstrated a talent in art using a variety of different mediums. It was through finding out about her heritage she began a journey of exploring aboriginal art and painting her own stories.

Cassie devotes a lot of her time to youth and education and feels the responsibility to keep the culture alive through conducting workshops, teaching skills and techniques in art, bush tucker and Aboriginal culture.

Cassie explores different mediums such as Pastels on Paper, Charcoal, Lino cut and Printmaking, Wood burning, Jewellery making, Acrylic on Canvas, Watercolours, Basket Weaving, Sculptures, Etching and Mosaic.

Cassie's artwork is inspired by her family, life experience and stories she has been told, by her community and elders. Cassie's work has been shown and sold, both nationally and internationally.

ARTWORK STORY

Over Time We Come Together has my family's hands blending together to come as one, and the sun is at the center of the artwork, as the giver of life. The artwork representing reconciliation means acknowledging a multicultural community, building bridges, working together and understanding each other.



Over Time We Come Together by Cassie Leatham

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY	4
OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION	6
The Commitment made by East Gippsland Shire Council in the 2013/2017 Council Plan	7
What is the Role of East Gippsland Shire Council?	7
JOURNEY TOWARDS RECONCILIATION	9
RELATIONSHIPS	10
RESPECT	16
OPPORTUNITIES	24
TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING	27
THANK YOU'S	28

Our Vision for Reconciliation

We aim to create a future of mutual respect and harmony by collaborating with East Gippsland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to develop actions that embed cultural change in the organisation through increased mutual understanding and effective partnerships.

We will improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members by incorporating community input, involvement and contribution from the Shire's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The need for representation and protection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage is increasingly recognised and the role in decision making about the future of East Gippsland is represented and protected.

THE COMMITMENT MADE BY EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL IN THE 2013/2017 COUNCIL PLAN

Our communities are connected and inclusive

Council Plan 1.1.1.2

“Council will collaborate with East Gippsland’s Aboriginal community to develop and implement a reconciliation action plan that embeds cultural change in the organisation through increased mutual understanding and effective partnerships.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL?

East Gippsland Shire covers over 21,000 square kilometres, stretching from west of Bairnsdale to the NSW border. This diverse region makes up 10 per cent of the state, with over 70 per cent as National Park, State forest or other Crown land.

East Gippsland has an abundance of natural and environmental resources: a temperate climate, Australia’s largest navigable inland lake system, an extensive coastline and areas of stunning beauty make the Shire a popular choice for sea and tree-change lifestyle seekers.

The Shire’s diversity and strengths also create resourcing and development challenges for Council. The high proportion of public land limits Council’s rate base, and dispersed communities spread demand and limit economies of scale for service delivery.

East Gippsland Shire Council is a public statutory body that operates under the legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 1989. The Act sets out the role of Council as an elected body to provide leadership for the good governance of East Gippsland.

Council’s elected members and employees work within a framework of systems and processes, to ensure they comply with the Act and follow good business practice.

Council is responsible for setting the organisation’s direction and monitoring its performance on behalf of the community.

The primary goal of East Gippsland Shire Council is to achieve the best outcomes for its local community. It does this by striving to:

- Provide a wide range of service and facilities, and support many others;
- Protect the community, making sure the environment is safe and clean;
- Plan for the future of the community;
- Represent the needs and desires of local communities to the wider community, other levels of Government and organisations; and
- Provide open, responsive and accountable governance, ensuring the resources available are used fairly, efficiently and effectively.



Journey towards Reconciliation

East Gippsland Shire, as a Local Government Authority, has a responsibility to represent the interests of and engage with all sectors of the community, and this responsibility is acknowledged in a range of key strategic documents endorsed by Council. In a Victorian context, East Gippsland is a municipality that has a significant proportion of the community who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

2011 census data records East Gippsland Shire has 43,000 residents of which 1,332 identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. East Gippsland Shire Council currently employs 529 staff of which 3 are Aboriginal. The identified actions within the RAP and Diversity Access Plans are a response to greater diversity within the East Gippsland Shire workplace.

East Gippsland Shire is a significant and very visible organisation in East Gippsland, with a large workforce in all parts of the municipality. The Shire also has a very broad interaction with community members and a wide range of different agencies and organisations in many different areas of interest and location and can play a very influential role in the community.

It was felt that Council would provide a first step towards encouraging and providing guidance to other organisations in East Gippsland. The Shire would be a catalyst organisation.

One of the effective ways to achieve this objective within an organisation is to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A RAP is a plan that converts 'good intentions' into real actions, and creates respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Aboriginal Australians.

A RAP publicly formalises an organisation's contribution to reconciliation by identifying clear actions with realistic targets and is developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and leaders.

RAPs are also about embedding cultural change within a whole organisation through building good relationships, respecting the special contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and creating opportunities. East Gippsland Shire Council has been active in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities for many years. We've had success in participating in community events, employment outcomes, arts projects and partnership with Aboriginal Organisations in East Gippsland.

In the 2013–2017 East Gippsland Shire Council Plan, Council's vision for its community is a future of mutual respect and harmony. Council endeavour to have improved working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, therefore the developing a Reconciliation Action Plan has been encouraged and endorsed by Council.

Relationships

East Gippsland Shire Council's vision for its community is a future of mutual respect and harmony.

East Gippsland Shire Council will endeavour to improve inclusion by engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and developing meaningful relationships.



Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Working Group continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions and tracking progress	Working Group Chairperson	Review June annually	Following RAP endorsement working group to meet quarterly
	Working Group Chairperson	Review June annually	RAP working group to participate in cross cultural training
	Working Group Chairperson	Review June annually	EGSC Directors will commit to reporting to the RAP working group at least twice annually
2. Develop consultation methods to improve communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Community Programs Coordinator	December 30 2015	Develop an East Gippsland Aboriginal directory of contacts, services, events and artists to be available on the East Gippsland Shire website
	Community Programs Coordinator	December 30 2015	Development of Aboriginal Community Consultation and Communication Plan for staff to access
	Working Group Chairperson	December 30 2015	Actions taken to encourage and educate staff to learn about and participate in Aboriginal events

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
3. Participate more fully in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Networks and Organisations	Community Programs Coordinator	December annually	Increased opportunities to align effort with East Gippsland Aboriginal Controlled Organisations to improve relationships and outcomes in the community
	Community Programs Coordinator	Review June annually	Attendance and participate in East Gippsland Aboriginal Network groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (LAJAC); - Local Indigenous Network - Participation in relevant community events

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4. Provide opportunities for all staff and Councillors to participate in National Reconciliation Week celebrations	Community Programs Coordinator	Annually	Council participate in National Reconciliation Week activities
	Community Programs Coordinator	Annually	The number of staff participate in Reconciliation events is increased
	Community Programs Coordinator	Annually	Council promotes Reconciliation to all East Gippsland communities by providing opportunities during Reconciliation Week for East Gippsland Shire staff and wider community to come together
	Working Group Chairperson	May - June	Organise at least one internal National Reconciliation Week event for Council staff

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
5. Increase public education activities that strengthen wider community relationships	Community Programs Coordinator	June 2016	Increasing stakeholder opportunities to develop and promote local education and reconciliation resources for wider community to increase understanding of local Aboriginal history for the wider community
	Community Programs Coordinator	December 2016	Increased Library programs that support wider community relationships for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities
	Community Programs Coordinator	June annually	Continue to build and provide educational resources through the East Gippsland Shire Library
6. Investigate mechanisms that encourage the development and adoption of RAPs by large business throughout East Gippsland	Manager Strategic Planning	June annually	Showcase East Gippsland Shire Council's RAP in the East Gippsland community to provide leadership for reconciliation for East Gippsland



Respect

We will value, support and help to develop our diverse community.

We will respect the views of others and act with courtesy and consideration in all our interactions.



Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Provide a Cultural Awareness Training program for East Gippsland Shire Council that aligns and is specific to the various sectors of the Organisation	Manager Organisation Development	May 2015	Develop a Cultural Awareness Training strategy for all East Gippsland Shire Staff
	Manager Organisation Development	December 2015	All councillors and senior staff to complete Cultural Awareness Training
	Manager Organisation Development	June 2015	Increase the percentage of staff members who will participate in Cultural Awareness Training
	Manager Organisation Development	June Annually	Incorporate Cultural Awareness Training in the induction process
	Manager Organisation Development	December 2016	Conduct internal survey to measure employees improvement in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols are observed as a part of all Council activities	Manager Communications and Corporate Strategy	June 2015	Adopt the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation Welcome to Country protocol and guidelines
	Manager Communications and Corporate Strategy	June 2016	Adopt a policy that ensures Acknowledgment of Country at all community events
	Manager Communications and Corporate Strategy	June 2016	Where appropriate use Aboriginal artwork in Council documents
3. Engage employees in understanding the protocols around Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies to ensure a greater understanding and respect for ceremony.	Director Planning and Community	June 2015	Review internal policy and staff awareness to increase Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and events
	Manager Organisation Development	June 2015	Implement external providers policy to ensure all external trainers and relevant service providers begin training with an Acknowledgement of Country

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4. Support participation of the Organisation to Aboriginal celebration and events	Community Programs Coordinator	June annually	Staff are supported to participate in events in the local community
	Community Programs Coordinator	June annually	Council continues to be active participants in NAIDOC week across East Gippsland
	Community Programs Coordinator	June annually	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in local NAIDOC Week events
	Community Programs Coordinator	June annually	Increase in the number of staff participating in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events each year
	Manager Organisation Development	June 2016	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in NAIDOC

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
5. East Gippsland Shire to provide leadership in the promotion of reconciliation in East Gippsland	Manager Major Projects and Economic Development	June 2015	Encourage East Gippsland Shire supported events to include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country ceremony
	Director Planning and Community	June 2015	Implementation of Acknowledgement of Country in all staff email signature
	Senior Social Planner	June 2016	As signatories to the 'Racism Stops With Me' campaign, develop strategies and actions that invites East Gippsland community to increase the awareness of the 'Racism Stops With Me' campaign
	Community Infrastructure Planner	December 2016	Council partners with organisations to provide a memorial plaque in recognition for Aboriginal service men and women at the Bairnsdale cenotaph

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
6. Continue to fly the Aboriginal flag	Manager Executive Services	December 2015	Council develop policy to provide protocols for flying the Aboriginal flag at Council facilities
7. Recognise significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Community Programs Coordinator	January annually	Significant dates are included on the Council calendar of events
	Community Programs Coordinator	January annually	Recognition and awareness of significant dates are uploaded on the Hive and Council Website

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
8. Provide opportunities for the promotion of Aboriginal Arts and Culture	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Where appropriate, use local Aboriginal artwork on Council documents
	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Continue to support Aboriginal Artists through Brabuwoolooong Gallery
	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Commitment to holding Aboriginal Art exhibitions throughout the year
	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Provide exhibition space for Aboriginal artwork in suitable Council venues throughout the Shire
	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Council partners with East Gippsland Art Gallery to hold an annual Aboriginal Art exhibition through NAIDOC week/month
	Manager Library and Community Programs	June annually	Engage a minimum of one Aboriginal Touring Product in the Forge Theatre per year
9. In partnership with stakeholders, deliver a major Public Arts project	Arts and Culture Coordinator	December 2015	Partnership developed to deliver a major Aboriginal Arts project within East Gippsland Shire



Opportunities

Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to assist Council in its goal improve inclusion and create mutual understanding and effective partnerships.



Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Council adopts a strategy to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within the organisation	Manager Organisation Development	June 2016	Aboriginal Employment strategies are embedded and implemented within the Council employment strategy
	Manager Organisation Development	June annually	Council grows its Aboriginal workforce
2. Participate in partnership opportunities that encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and education pathways	Manager Communications and Corporate Strategy	December annually	Continue sponsorship of events that supports the achievements of Aboriginal people in East Gippsland;
	Manager Major Projects and Economic Development	December 2016	Further opportunities are explored in the East Gippsland Shire Education Vision to support Aboriginal education outcomes in East Gippsland.
3. Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in organisations and businesses within East Gippsland's local community.	Manager Property and Risk	December 2015	Review Social Procurement guidelines to look at opportunities to encourage and influence good Aboriginal employment practices across a range of businesses and organisations who currently provide goods and services to Council

Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4. Investigate opportunities to increase procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses as part of Council's procurement policy	Manager Organisation Development	June 2016	Complete documentation on the network of Aboriginal business owners currently established in East Gippsland and investigate possible business opportunities between Council and each business
5. Investigate opportunities to develop a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander made and or designed corporate gifts	Manager Executive Services	December 2015	Local Aboriginal Businesses are informed of opportunities to supply East Gippsland Shire Council corporate gifts
	Manager Executive Services	December 2015	Current Council gift collateral is reviewed to include Aboriginal gift opportunities
6. Investigate Aboriginal tourism opportunity for Lakes Entrance that supports sustainable economic growth for the region	Manager Strategic Planning	July 2015	Council Plans and Community Plans are examined for increasing Aboriginal tourism
	Manager Major Projects and Economic Development	December 2016	Commit to supporting a project that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the Tourism sector

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report	RAP Working Group Responsible Managers	September annually	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually
2. Review and monitor RAP actions process using evaluation process	RAP Working Group Responsible Managers	Quarterly	Progress made against the measurable targets set out in the RAP

Thank yous

East Gippsland Shire Council would like to thank the following for their contribution in the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

- Aunty Rachel Mullett
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
- Moogji Aboriginal Council
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association
- East Gippsland Local Indigenous Network
- Jason King, Chief Executive Officer – Victoria Aboriginal Health Service
- Christine Milliken, Board Member – Moogji Aboriginal Council
- Aileen Mongta – Nindi Ngiyam Ngarigo Monero Aboriginal Corporation
- Scott King, Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Project Officer, Department of Justice, Local Indigenous Network Chairperson
- Aunty Dotty Moffatt

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

- Barry Kenny, Chief Executive Officer – Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
- Ricky Mullett, Cultural Heritage Manager – Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

- Tammy Bundle, Primary Health Care Manager – Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative
- Alice Patten – Local Gunai Community Person
- Alice Pepper – Manager – Djillay Ngalu
- Rob Hudson, Manager Krowathunkooloong – Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative
- Paula Morgan, Executive Officer – Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association
- Chris Waites, Director Operations – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Kate Nelson, Director Planning and Community – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Paul Holton, Director Development – East Gippsland Shire Council
- David Radford, Manager Executive Services – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Bianca Bassett, Advancing Country Towns Project Officer – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Ashley Higman, Asset Maintenance Engineer – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Jaine Watt, Employee Relations Officer – East Gippsland Shire Council
- Stephen Kleinitz, Events and Business Facilitator – East Gippsland Shire Council

Contact us

Telephone

Residents' Information Line: 1300 555 886 (business hours)

Citizen Service Centre: (03) 5153 9500 (business hours)

National Relay Service: 133 677

Post

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Web www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

Email feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au

In person

Bairnsdale: 273 Main Street

Lakes Entrance: 18 Mechanics Street

Mallacoota: 70 Maurice Avenue

Omeo: 179 Day Avenue

Orbost: 1 Ruskin Street

Paynesville: 55 The Esplanade

Outreach Centres

Bendoc Outreach Centre -

18 Dowling Street

Buchan Resource Centre -

6 Centre Road

Cann River Community Centre -

Princes Highway