

Final Innovate RAP

Version control table

Version	Date	Changes
Draft	March 2023	Initial draft supplied by Reconciliation Officer
Draft v1	27 April 2023	Changes applied by Stacey Hutt based on meeting with Manager Community and Coord Comm Development
Draft v2	3/4 May 2023	Manager Community review, action table added, RAP requirements checked by Stacey Hutt.
Draft v3	12 May 2023	Manager Community refinements for on-sending to Mindeera Advisory Group
Draft v4	25 May 2023	Changes applied following feedback from the Mindeera Advisory Group – marked in red.
Draft v5	31 May 2023	Changes applied following feedback from the Mindeera Advisory Group – marked in red
Draft v6	6 June 2023	Consolidation of feedback from Mindeera Advisory group. All changes now accepted.
Draft v7	7 June 2023	Document disseminated to Council via the Portal for initial feedback (2 week period)
Draft v8	26 June 2023	Consolidation of feedback from EMs
Draft v9	8 August 2023	Consolidation of feedback from RA, submitted to RA 15/8/2023
Draft v10	13 September 2023	Consolidation of Conditional Endorsement feedback from RA
Draft v11	12 December 2023	Final version presented to Council for advertising (OCM - Oct 2023), and then subsequent endorsement (OCM - Dec 2023).



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

2023-2025



TOWN OF
VICTORIA PARK

Acknowledgement of Country

Ngany kaaditj Noongar moort kenya kaadak nidja Wadjak Noongar boodja. Ngany kaaditj nidja Noongar birdiya – koora, ye-ye, boorda, baalapiny moorditj Noongar kaaditjin, moort, wer boodja ye-ye.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and respect all past, present and emerging leaders, their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, which continues to be important today.

Language used

While Noongar is identified as a single language there are variations in both pronunciation and spelling with some words. The Town uses 'Noongar' which is reflected in this document. Some other words are spelt in different ways throughout this document, as advised by the Mindeera Advisory Group.

Cultural Sensitivity Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain images and names of deceased persons.

Acknowledgement of Diversity

The Town acknowledges that the diversity of our residents is what makes our community unique. Diversity can be reflected in a number of ways including:

- ethnicity and race
- disability
- language
- gender
- sexual orientation
- age and generation
- socioeconomic status
- religion, faith and other beliefs.

This diversity means our business practices need an understanding of how social and cultural background can influence interpretation and participation in the community. We acknowledge these impacts, and we strive to present all communications as inclusive and available to everyone.

If you or someone you know needs this document explained or in another format, please call the Community Development Officer (Reconciliation) on 9311 8111 or by emailing admin@vicpark.wa.gov.au.

About the artwork

This painting represents my perspective of our Whadjuk community gathering place at Mindeera. This spring or water hole, Mindeera Spring was especially important to all Whadjuk people as it was a neutral place pre colonisation for Noongar people to gather.

The painting is of the waterholes and surrounding wetlands which people used to camp near. Bush food and gathering tools such as coolamon and dishes and digging sticks are placed nearby. Also featured are Yanjet (bullrushes) and travelling bidi (paths) and the ever present wargle who watches over our water ways and Country.

The six seasons are depicted by the colours of our Country during the seasonal change. We know all the food and resources to survive off the land, during the seasons of Djilba, Kambarang, Birak, Bunuru, Djeran and Makaru.

Roni Gray Forrest, February 2023



Special thanks

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Town's Mindeera Advisory Group, RAP Internal Working Group, and all participants who assisted in the development of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. Without your input, this would not have been possible.

Mindeera Advisory Group

Kelsi Forrest (Chairperson)
Murray Masters (Deputy Chairperson)
Roni Forrest
Jordanna Rebbeck
Flavia Pardini
Stephanie Ludekens
Xanthe Shaw
Gerard Siero

Amber Ugle-Hayward
Cr Jesvin Karimi
Cr Peter Devereux
Cr Vicki Potter

This group includes four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

RAP Internal Working Group

Chief Executive Officer
Chief Community Planner (RAP Champion)
Manager Community
Manager People and Culture
Manager Stakeholder Relations
Manager Place Planning
Manager Infrastructure Operations
Manager Strategy and Governance
Strategic Projects Manager
Manager Strategic Waste, Environment and Asset Management
Manager Development Services
Library Services Manager

Coordinator Community Development
Coordinator Events, Arts and Funding
Community Development Officer – Reconciliation
Coordinator Strategy and Governance
Coordinator Communications and Engagement
Financial Services Controller
Social Impact Specialist
Corporate Performance Advisor
Urban Forest Officer
Customer Relations Officer

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Our plan

Message from Mindeera Advisory Group Chairperson

I am proud to share the Town of Victoria Park's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. I co-founded the Mindeera Advisory group with Dylan Collard 10 years ago and it is exciting to see the Town of Victoria Park take the next step on our reconciliation journey. There have been many ups and downs along the way and it has taken us longer than expected to move onto our next RAP but we have remained committed on the reconciliation journey together.

I love where I live and I hope to continue to help guide the Town of Victoria Park to make this place a more inclusive and respectful community. As we move onto the next phase of our RAP, we have embarked on a truth telling journey together and look forward to reinvigorating the places in our Town that make it so special to us as Noongar people, particularly the Mindeera Spring. Reconciliation is the most important movement we can embark on as Australians together because we must learn from the past in order to understand and realise our shared future.

Kelsi Forrest
Wadjak Barladong Mineng Nyungar
Chairperson, Mindeera Advisory Group

Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to present the Town's new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as we continue to move forward on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations peoples.

Facilitating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity is a key priority in our Strategic Community Plan, endorsed in 2022. As a Council, we know that there is a growing awareness and inclusivity around reconciliation both within the Town as an organisation, and within our local community. This RAP is both a means to value the enduring knowledge and connection that Whadjuk Noongar peoples have to their Country within our Town, and to create opportunities to support empowerment of all First Nations peoples.

This RAP was developed through a collaborative process between our community, the Mindeera Advisory Group, the Town's staff and Council, and I thank everyone for their efforts in bringing this plan to life.

We hope this RAP will convey the respect and solidarity the Town has with First Nations peoples, our understanding that reconciliation is a shared responsibility, and will be an expression of our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable future for our entire community.

Message from the CEO

I'm honoured to be playing a part in the Town of Victoria Park's reconciliation journey with the launch of this Innovate - Reconciliation Action Plan. I believe we cannot truly call the Town a place for everyone without truth telling, and acknowledging the history and unique knowledge of the land's traditional custodians, the Whadjuk Noongar people.

I hope that this document will provide context, understanding and a way forward for those who live and work in the Town. Together, we can celebrate the land on which we stand, sincerely engage with people from all cultural backgrounds and create a future in which everyone belongs.

Endorsement from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Town of Victoria Park on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Town of Victoria Park to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Town of Victoria Park will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Town of Victoria Park is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Town of Victoria Park's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Town of Victoria Park on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer

Reconciliation Australia

Uluru Statement from the Heart

The Town of Victoria Park Council endorsed support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart on 21 March 2023 (54/2023), which:

- acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Owners of this Country and pays respect to their ongoing spiritual and cultural connections.
- recognises the need for constitutional change that goes beyond symbolism, and the benefits that a Voice to Parliament offers all Australians as we move towards a reconciled Australia.

Read more at www.ulurustatement.org

Our vision for Reconciliation

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a guiding document for how our organisation will proceed on its reconciliation journey.

The Town of Victoria Park developed a vision for reconciliation for its Innovate RAP through community engagement and collaboration with the Mindeera Advisory Group and Elected Members over 2022. This aided a deep reflection of Town's reconciliation journey – the steps taken and the steps that are still there to take. From these conversations arose a future commitment defined by courage, honesty and respect.

Innovate RAP Vision

The Town of Victoria Park is located on land that is now and always was Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. We acknowledge the devastating impacts of our colonial history, widespread dispossession, violence and racism, and are committed to the truth-telling needed to initiate healing.

We will show respect, acknowledge and celebrate Noongar culture and Country, build relationships and promote the voice of Noongar people and their self-determination. We will learn from Noongar people and their long standing historical experience in the area so the Town of Victoria Park becomes a leader in caring for Country and people.

Town Commitment

The Town of Victoria Park (the Town) supports the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Voice to Parliament that this represents. By doing so, it is acknowledged that this action enhances our vision of being a 'dynamic place for everyone'.

This commitment expresses the Town's consciousness of the ways in which reconciliation is not only a local but also a regional and national narrative. It is also recognition of the way, each of these conversations relates to and impacts the next conversation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are and have always been one of diversity and connection.

It is through recognising and celebrating our history and diversity at a local level, while connecting to ongoing changes at the state and the national level, that we can authentically participate in a reconciled Australia.

Story of Country

Source: Jordanna Rebbeck (April 2023) Mindeera Advisory Group Member with editorial assistance from Dirima Cuthbert and Joe Dortch.

The persistent theme throughout our Town's history has been the sustained cultural resilience and agency of Whadjuk people in the face of dispossession of land, water, and sovereign rights.

For at least the last 38,000 years, Whadjuk people cultivated the cultural landscapes now known as the Town of Victoria Park. Colonial violence, starvation, epidemics, and increased restrictions were constants from the 1830s and each of these had serious implications for sacred cultural practices, including camping, birthing, hunting, gathering, fishing, ceremony, trade, and burials. Despite this cruelty, Whadjuk people made repeated attempts to help colonists understand and appreciate their Lore and culture.

Prior to colonisation, the cultural landscape of the Town and its surrounds were maintained through a complex system of community and Lore that aligned with the six seasons. The swales of this area held a mosaic of seasonal creek lines and swamps that crisscrossed between the Swan and Canning Rivers.

The alluvial floodplains of the Swan River enabled fields of native grasses underneath an open forest studded with large jarrah trees. Further inland, a dense banksia woodland grew on the dune and swale system of the ancient Bassendean Sands. The banks of the rivers had muddy soils with open jarrah forest and native grasses growing thickly in the floodplains, maintained through cultural burning to discourage overgrowth, and enabled easy travel, open sites for camping, and plenty of herbage and open areas for hunting and gathering by Whadjuk people.

Travelling southeast from Perth, when crossing the Swan River and heading towards Mindeera Spring, one would have come across the mud flats of present-day Heirisson Island. Before the dredging and reclamation of the Swan River, a group of several islands in the middle of the Swan River could be reached by walking in knee-deep Matagarup (mud).

The islands of these mud flats are sacred sites, with their oyster shell beds left behind as part of the Waugyl's creation journey from the hills through to the mudflats, where he was caught and shook off scales, now seen as oyster shells. These islands, Yoonderup, Kakaroomup, and Goonagar, were encircled by reeds. Kakaroomup island was the birthing site of well-known Whadjuk woman Fanny Balbuk's mother.

Further upstream from the islands, along the present-day Burswood Peninsula, was a Whadjuk well with fresh spring water. Located just south of the Heirisson Island crossing point in the Swan River, the freshwater Mindeera Spring connected Whadjuk trails north and south of the river to camping sites, birthing sites, and burial sites. This crossroads was a meeting place and neutral ground providing safe passage for families travelling through. Northeast from Mindeera Spring, the present-day Burswood Peninsula was a popular area for camping sites and freshwater sources. It was also the Country

of Windan, a prominent female leader of the Mooro people, and the mother of the leader Yellagonga. Windan's burial, as well as other Whadjuk people's burials, are still within this peninsula today.

At the point of colonial contact, these Whadjuk cultural landscapes were managed by and in the custodianship of the kin of Fanny Balbuk, as well as several other Whadjuk leaders including Balbuk's uncles Beenan, Yoorgan, and Kareen; Dygan (Kareen's daughter); Windan and her daughter Ngalgoonga. Their land extends from the Canning River on the western edges of present-day South Perth through to the Town, north-eastward towards Heirisson Island and the Burswood Peninsula, southward towards the Canning River, and extending southeast towards Welshpool. These Whadjuk families identified as a mixture of Ballarok and Nagarnook skin groups, which tied into the complex kinship moieties that empowered family members as custodians across their cultural landscapes.

As wetter Noongar seasons encroached, the Ballarok and Nagarnook Whadjuk people would begin moving away from the riverbanks to avoid being flooded, and travel further inland. In the drier seasons, they would travel back towards the rivers and camp along the floodplain, as the inland banksia woodlands were relatively dry.

The cultural landscape at the point of contact in the Perth area looked like an English parkland to colonists, and they set about applying the values, methods, and constructs from home. The 1830s saw colonial systems introduced to Whadjuk Country which would exploit human and animal labour, hoard resources, and plotting land onto maps and in contracts

that entirely excluded Traditional Owners. The colonists ringbarked and killed old jarrah and marri trees, cleared thick banksia woodlands, and their introduced stock wiped out endemic grasses and herbage. The colonists took the most fertile areas along the Swan and Canning Rivers for themselves, locking Whadjuk people out of their own Country.

The violence experienced by Whadjuk people from colonists' shooting and killing in the Perth area (including south of the river) was viewed by those in England at the time as "acts of injustice committed by the new settlers...not sufficiently checked at the outset by the leaders of the colonists," and that the Whadjuk people during this time were "exposed to cruelty and injustice," by the inhabitants of the colony. Despite these statements, some colonists in the Canning River Estate felt justified in continued violence and aggression towards Whadjuk people and their visitors in the area, advocating against "sparing the rod".


The effects that the European diseases of smallpox, influenza, measles, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted diseases had on Whadjuk people, who had no immunity to these diseases, were devastating. Smallpox, Australia's first pandemic, deeply affected Aboriginal people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as survivors were often left without community leaders or family. Though it is an under-researched area in Southwest Australia, epidemiological case studies in Southeast Australia have analysed contributions and effects of the major colonial epidemics that First Nations people have survived. The consequences of the smallpox epidemic alone caused at least a 30% loss of Aboriginal populations in the Southeast. Subsequent colonial epidemics continued to barrage First

Nations communities at such rapid rates, that there was barely enough time for Aboriginal immune systems, let alone their culture and Country to adapt.

Despite the devastating impacts of colonisation in and since the nineteenth

century, Whadjuk people still follow their Lore, with Elders and leaders advocating for the protection of sacred sites, the value of fresh water, and the rehabilitation of endemic cultural landscapes over many decades.


Pre-1900s Whadjuk Historical Themes in the Town of Victoria Park



Whadjuk Cultural Landscapes of the Swan Coastal Plain:

- fertile alluvial floodplains along the Swan River
- dense banksia woodland on the Bassendean Sands

Both cultural landscapes were and remain important to Whadjuk people for water sources, camping, fishing, hunting, gathering, ceremony, birthing, and burial sites



Colonists imprinted ideologies of exploitation, resource hoarding, and commercialisation onto Whadjuk land

Whadjuk people sustained cultural resilience and agency by trying to help colonists understand Whadjuk culture and maintaining Lore



Introduction

What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.

As a movement reconciliation has a long history, with the collective voices from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the rightful protection of their Country and cultures being decades long and consistent. These have resulted in some substantial changes and some disappointing setbacks, both important dimensions to the story of reconciliation.

The goal of reconciliation is that there is widespread acceptance of our nation's history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated— there is truth, justice, healing and historical acceptance.

Reconciliation is defined by core changes to our society, our culture and our ways of understanding our shared and troubled history. It is the invitation to build an honest, harmonious and respectful future, together.

Why have a RAP?

The Town acknowledges that First Nations' sovereignty was never ceded and coexists with the Crown's sovereignty today, that sovereignty comes from a different source to the sovereignty claimed by the Crown, from the ancestral tie between the land and its people (Uluru Statement from the Heart).

The Town uses the RAP to address the **five** four dimensions of reconciliation in everything we do. It helps us to:

- Define priorities, and short and long-term goals and actions
- Prioritise budget and resource allocations
- Collect and evaluate performance measures

Mindeera Advisory Group

The Town has a 12 member Mindeera Advisory Group that have been actively involved in the development of the Innovate RAP. This group meets regularly to provide advice on:

- Implementation of the RAP
- Advising on the Town's approach to rReconciliation
- Engaging stakeholders to action reconciliation elements through various Town projects, events, and services, as well as works on Country across environmental, social, economic and sustainability projects.

Our Reconciliation journey

Significant steps in the reconciliation journey in the Town started in 2013 with the formation of an Aboriginal Advisory Group led by Kelsi Forrest, Dylan Collard, Simon and Roni Forrest, which was renamed to be the Mindeera Advisory Group. This group has been dedicated to building relationships and respect between other Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Together with this group, the Town embarked in 2016 on the development of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2018 - 2022, providing a framework for the Town to work towards reconciliation, through completing actions, deliverables and timelines related to the following outcomes:

Outcome 1 – Relationships

At the heart of reconciliation is the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that tackle racism. Examples of Relationships in action - RAP 2018 -2022:

- Implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan and awareness built in the organisation and community of its importance
- The Town hosts annual events to celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Observance Committee Week (NAIDOC Week) which in 2022 included the Noongar Community Choir and Noongar Flashmob events
- Establishment and ongoing collaboration with the Town's Mindeera Advisory Group
- Partnering with community groups to run the Know your Nation and Know your Community story-telling and exhibition programs and workshops
- Working with schools to create a community bush-medicine garden and the production of Our

Languages Matter, NAIDOC week video

- Increased internal and external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community
- Healing and caring for Country through annual tree planting events and Town led restoration projects
- Teaching of Noongar language at the Town library and within the Town administration to both staff and elected members
- Sharing of Noongar wisdom through Noongar led Walks on Country

Outcome 2 – Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of doing things, builds respectful relationships. Pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage is needed to foster a shared national identity. Understanding the wrongs of the past is essential to ensuring these wrongs are never repeated. Examples of Respect in action - RAP 2018 -2022:

- Raise staff understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and protocols

- Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in the Town
- Raise awareness amongst Town's staff of the meaning of the RAP, NRW and NAIDOC Week
- Renaming of Town Administrative Centre meeting rooms to represent the Noongar six seasons
- Renaming of parks and laneways in the Town to Noongar names, including Bidi Walk and the Jirdarup Bushlands
- The flying of the Aboriginal flag at the Town Administration building
- The commissioning of Aboriginal artwork in numerous locations throughout the Town
- Recognition and endorsement of cultural protocols at Town led meetings and events
- Production of Community Canvas artworks
- Hosting important conversations regarding the 26 January and refraining from celebrations or colonial recognition of this date

Outcome 3 – Opportunities

Equal participation in a range of life opportunities is crucial for the well-being of all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Large and unacceptable gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians exist on all social, health, education and economic indicators.

Examples of opportunities in action - RAP 2018 -2022:

- Engage with the West Coast Eagles and Waalitj Foundation to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included in community initiatives

- Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Walking Trail in Victoria Park
- Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities
- Conduct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth projects

Key learnings

- The importance of actively demonstrating respect as an organisation for the time and energy of contributions from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- Engaging across our organisation so that the right projects are shared with the Mindeera Advisory Group and RAP Internal Working Group for feedback and focus
- A dedicated Town resource (a RAP Officer) is invaluable to get real momentum in this space
- The need to demonstrate ownership and leadership for reconciliation at all levels of our organisation
- Council learning and change from revoking the previous decision regarding 26 January
- The importance of staff investing in relationship building time and energy outside of meetings
- The importance placed on Council endorsing the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Voice to Parliament
- The importance of shared roles and responsibilities for implementation for genuine reconciliation to occur
- The need for more truth telling

Who we are

The Town of Victoria Park is a vibrant, diverse, community-minded urban local government located just 10 minutes from Perth's CBD, across the Causeway on the south side of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River). Covering 17.9 square kilometres, it is centred around the bustling main street of Albany Highway.

The Town is graced by its location on the ancient lands of the Swan Coastal Plain, set against the Darling Ranges, and bounded by the beauty and breadth of the Derbal Yerrigan.

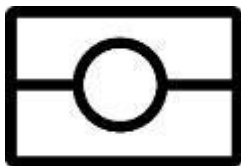
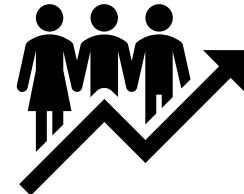


The Town employs 453 employees equal to 185 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) excluding Casuals, across six locations all based within the local government area. Of these 0.8% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. (Note: employees are not obliged to provide their cultural background, so this number may be higher). The Town has two wards, Jarrah and Banksia, with nine elected members representing constituents, including a publicly elected Mayor.



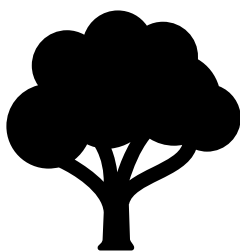
There are many native creatures who find home here, including the Ngoolark (Carnaby cockatoo), the Kaarak (red tailed forest cockatoo), and the Quenda (Southern brown bandicoot) to name a few. The Town is also home to the Waalitj Foundation, the West Coast Eagles HQ, Optus Stadium, Ed Millen House, Jirdarup Bushland, a thriving library, many humble and deeply committed community centres, and a foodies haven with a plethora of entertainment.

The population of the area is approximately 38,327 (2023). It is anticipated that in the next ten years, there will be approximately another ten thousand people, choosing to call [the Town of Victoria Park](#) home. This will pose both challenges and opportunities for the communities in the Town and will be a factor in our ongoing reconciliation journey.



The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Town is approximately 619 people, comprising 1.7% of the current population. Across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples tend to comprise two to three percent of the population. The Town is sitting slightly below this national average. It is likely that this ratio will lessen further, as the population of the Town continues to grow, reinforcing the need for affirmative action across reconciliation.

In the Town there are many sites that are and have always been of great significance to the Whadjuk Noongar people, including what were the original wetlands along the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River), an area that is now the foreshore, and to the northern area of Wardoolier (Burswood) which until the 1920's was still home for Whadjuk Noongar families.



Another site of significance is Matagarup (Heirisson Island) the birthplace of prominent Whadjuk woman Yoreel (Fanny) Balbuk's mother, who was a well-known and fearless activist for Whadjuk Noongar culture and Country. Yoreel's mother would have some hundred years ago, walked across the mudflats, to Joorolup/Place of the Jarrahs (McCallum Park). Here she may have rested beneath the trees, before finding her way across the ancient plains to Mindeera.

At Mindeera she would have gathered with family, drunk fresh water from the Spring, set up camp, and rested – for Mindeera was always a place of peace and rest. Where the Mindeera [Spring](#) once was, is now a roundabout on the [corner](#) of Hordern and Oswald streets, a significant opportunity where in time, the Town aspires to restore culture and Country.



Guiding Principles

The following principles have guided the development of the Innovate RAP and associated [action-implementation](#) plan.

Strengths Based

Community and stakeholder assets, strengths and capacities are recognised and built on.

Culturally Safe and Inclusive

Culturally safe and inclusive approaches are used within the work that the Town facilitates, supports and undertakes.

Evidence Based

An evidenced based approach is used by the Town, with a focus on early intervention to enhance the level and scope of social impact.

Shared Responsibility

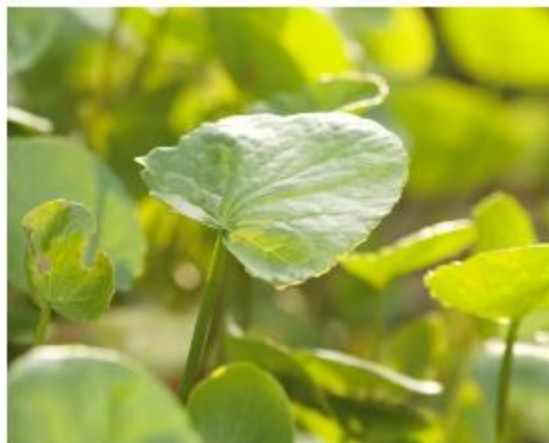
Addressing reconciliation barriers is a shared responsibility to create an inclusive community. The Town is supportive of creating environments that foster a shared responsibility.

Innovation and Better Practice

The Town seeks innovative ideas and better practice solutions, with reconciliation themes and principles integrated into Town policies, procedures and practices.

Sustainability

Integrating sustainability principles in the Town's approach, resourcing and delivery of reconciliation endeavours.



*Centella asiatica at G.O. Edwards Park, Town of Victoria Park, on Whadjuk Country.
An example of endemic herbage that historically would have been found near winter swamps in the
Town.*

(Photograph by Jordanna Rebbeck)

Our organisation

The Town of Victoria Park was proclaimed on 1 July 1994 as a local government authority. Many of the Town's functions have an impact on reconciliation.

The Town is committed to using its influence and resources to work proactively within its functions to facilitate and encourage the 5 dimensions of reconciliation: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance across the community. To do this effectively, partnership is needed with community, local organisations, businesses and other government agencies.

Functions of the Town include:

Public open space and infrastructure

- Environmental landcare of Town owned public reserves and parks including 2.5km²'s of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River)
- Footpaths, cycleways, street lighting, street furniture and public toilets
- Town buildings and community meeting places

Recreation and cultural services

- Recreation and aquatic facilities and services
- Health and wellbeing services
- Library and information services
- Community and cultural facilities and events
- Sporting facilities

Town Planning and Development

- Local Planning Strategy & Scheme
- Place Plans
- Environmental planning
- Transport planning

Community Development and Planning

- Community capacity building and facilitating collaboration
- Strategic action across Youth, Community Safety, Access and Inclusion and Reconciliation
- Community arts and events
- Grant funding

Regulatory Services

- Building approvals
- Environmental health services
- Ranger services

Organisational Leadership

- Corporate planning
- Organisational development
- People management
- Financial management
- Customer service
- Advocacy

Key Findings

Community engagement was completed over an extensive six week period from May to July 2022, resulting in 371 local people submitting their feedback to help develop this plan. The big insights gained from this process included:

- A call to being truthful, accepting responsibility for historical wrongs and moving forward in recognition, harmony and respect.
- People want the Town to engage and involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- People want the Town to help make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures more accessible and tangible, with increased opportunities to learn about Noongar language, protocols and

- cultural celebrations though local schools and other community spaces
- People want the Town to be courageous, genuine and inclusive in their approach to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and in so doing, rename places and spaces throughout the Town.
- When asked, 73.1% of respondents opposed the celebration of Australia day on 26 January.
- When asked, 91% of respondents strongly supported dual naming the Town, to reflect Noongar custodianship, which was also reinforced through free text survey questions.

Wishing well: Community wishes for reconciliation

"To have noongar culture as part of everyday life".

"I wish that we can all come together to learn about our true shared history, with open minds and open hearts. That we can heal Country and heal together"

"More opportunities for cultural, historical and language education"

"Healing through truth telling"

"Care for Country"

"Bring back noongar names"

"Dual language signage"

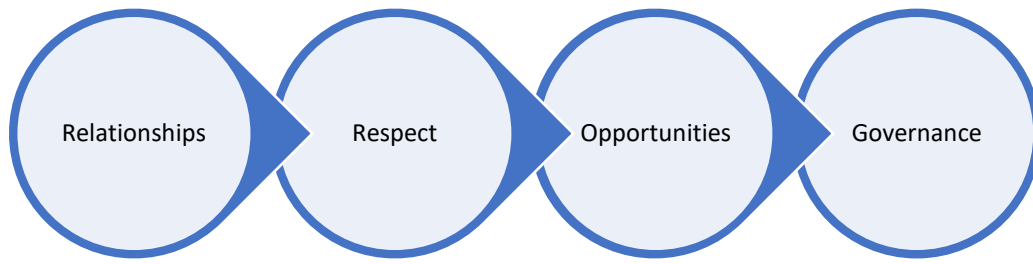
"Meeting and connecting with Noongar elders"

"Understanding Aboriginal peoples connection to Country"

"Change the date"

"Rehabilitation of sacred underground well"

RAP action areas



Action Plan

* = Priority Deliverable / purple text indicates Deliverables over and above Innovate RAP template base requirements

Relationships			
Building stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians to strengthen our organisational activities by connecting people, sharing experiences, and through consistent leadership, governance, communication, engagement and partnerships.			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Continue to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1* Support the continuation of the Mindeera Advisory Group and ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented on it.	January 2024	Reconciliation Officer
	1.2* Consult with the Mindeera Advisory Group and relevant service providers on appropriate actions and protocols to follow when engaging with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	June 2024	Reconciliation Officer
	1.3* Develop and implement an engagement plan to maximise connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	February 2025	Reconciliation Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating	2.1* Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer

National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.2* RAP Internal Working Group members to participate in and lend support to, at least one NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.3* Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.4* Organise and coordinate at least one NRW event each year.	27 May - 3 June 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.5* Register all of our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
3. Promote reconciliation across all sector areas internally and to key community stakeholders to help drive our commitment to reconciliation.	3.1* Develop and implement an internal communication plan to inform and engage our staff in our reconciliation journey, which includes an overview of the RAP as part of employee and Councillor induction processes.	December 2025	Manager Stakeholder Relations
	3.2* Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.3* Provide updates and information to community on RAP achievements and opportunities, via the Town's social media page, website and Town newsletters.	Nov, Feb, May, Aug 2024,2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.4 Explore opportunities for collaboration with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies and ensure all Town processes and procedures are equitable and inclusive.	4.1* Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2024	Manager People and Culture
	4.2 Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation with a particular focus on Town service spaces.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
	4.3 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
	4.4* Educate senior leaders and Elected Members on the effects of racism and the ways in which it is perpetuated through business as usual operations.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture

Respect

Showing respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights is key to building strong relationships and we show respect by demonstrating pride in cultures and histories, truth-telling, listening, understanding, appreciation, acknowledgment, caring for Country, learning, success and celebration. We show respect by supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of	1.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through continuous cultural learning.	1.2 Consult with our Mindeera Advisory Group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and RAP Internal Working Group to inform our cultural learning strategy.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
	1.3 Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff and Elected Members, which includes opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to participate.	Dec 2024	Manager People and Culture
	1.4 Identify significant sites where cultural learning education opportunities can take place including for staff and Elected Members.	December 2024	Reconciliation Officer
	1.5* Provide opportunities for RAP Internal Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff and Elected Members to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	2.1* Consult with the Mindeera Advisory Group and the RAP Internal Working Group to develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.2* Train Senior staff and service area leads in the purpose of and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. Ensure the trained staff communicate this understanding with all staff in their service area.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer

	2.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	December 2025	Coordinator Events, Arts and Funding
	2.4* Continue to include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.5* Ensure that Acknowledgment of Country is prominent and easily visible on Town's website and that the website reflects Noongar culture and Country.	December 2024	Manager Stakeholder Relations
	2.6 Ensure all Town facilities and public meeting spaces are culturally representative and inclusive including Acknowledgement of Country signage.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.7 Facilitate the opportunity for yarning spaces in reconciliation meetings, advisory meetings and other events where it is culturally significant or appropriate.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	3.1 Support one or more external NAIDOC week events. RAP Internal Working Group to participate in at least one of these events.	First week in July 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.2 Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	March 2024, 2025	Manager People and Culture

	3.3 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff including removing any barriers.	June 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
4. Care for Country and promote connection to Country in the Town	4.1* Engage the Mindeera Advisory Group and Aboriginal stakeholders on Town projects or collaborations to understand the cultural significance of care on the flora, fauna and waterways in the Town.	January 2024, December 2025	Strategic Projects Manager
	4.2 Continue with existing native planting program and restoration of wildlife corridors and habitat with regular engagement of the Mindeera Advisory Group, including identification of endemic native plants to the area.	January 2024, December 2025	Manager Infrastructure Operations
	4.3* Conduct research and consultation with Elders and the Whadjuk Cultural Advice Committee to develop dual naming process and protocols for the Town.	December 2024	Reconciliation Officer
5. Promote healing, and flora and fauna restoration, at local sites of significance to promote reconciliation.	5.1 Work with Mindeera Advisory Group and other Aboriginal stakeholders to scope the feasibility of restoring the Mindeera Spring to more natural conditions ("daylighting" of the Spring.)	December 2025	Strategic Projects Manager
	5.2 Identify local sites of significance and, in consultation with Traditional Owners, promote storytelling, ceremonial activity and truth telling in these places.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer

6. Develop and sustain a commitment to truth telling through Town communications, events, dates of significance, and community engagement.	6.1 Build on opportunities for changing the date (26 January) within the Town and holding a public ceremony on an alternate date that celebrates and is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	6.2 Create, implement and convey a Reconciliation Community Engagement and Communication Plan grounded on the Uluru Statement from the Heart, that includes cultural knowledge sharing, truth telling of Noongar local and regional history and Noongar Boodja (past and present), for our community.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer

Opportunities

Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities are important to progressing social equity and justice in our community across employment, procurement, professional development, retention, enabling access to systems and processes. By creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Town is adhering to our core values of inclusivity and integrity and upholding our commitment to champion an environment where reconciliation is advanced.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	1.1* Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
	1.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2024	Manager People and Culture

	1.3 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
	1.4 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
	1.5* Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	December 2025	Manager People and Culture
2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	2.1* Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement management practice.	December 2024	Financial Services Controller
	2.2 Investigate using Supply Nation and similar membership organisations / agencies that promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2025	Financial Services Controller
	2.3* Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2025	Financial Services Controller
	2.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2025	Financial Services Controller
	2.5 Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2025	Financial Services Controller

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Continue to maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	1.1* Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Mindeera Advisory Group and RAP Internal Working Group.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	1.2* Create, review and update the Terms of Reference for the RAP Internal Working Group and Mindeera Advisory Group.	May 2024,2025	Reconciliation Officer
	1.3* Internal Working Group and Mindeera Advisory Group to meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	May, Aug, Nov, Feb 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	2.1* Define resource needs for RAP implementation and partnership.	February 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.2* Engage our senior leaders, Elected Members and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2025	Chief Community Planner
	2.3* Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	2.4* Appoint and maintain internal RAP Champions from senior management.	December 2025	Manager Community

3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	3.1* Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.2* Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.3* Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sept 2024, 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.4* Report RAP progress to all staff, senior leaders and the Mindeera Advisory Group quarterly.	April, July, October, January annually	Reconciliation Officer
	3.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	December 2025	Manager Stakeholder Relations
	3.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	3.7* Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	December 2025	Reconciliation Officer
4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	4.1* Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2025	Reconciliation Officer

Theory of Change

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change (TOC) is a tool used by organisational program managers and evaluators to describe how a program is expected to work. It is a framework that visually shows how the opportunity or problem a program is expected to address, within a particular situation, and the assumptions underpinning the development of the program.

A TOC also identifies the expected pathway between various elements of a program and expected social outcomes for the stakeholders involved with the program.

With a TOC, the elements of a program are the planned activities developed by an organisation to bring about expected social outcomes.

What are social outcomes?

Social outcomes are the changes in the knowledge, skills, awareness, behaviour, level of functioning or status, experienced by stakeholders, resulting from their involvement with the planned activities. Stakeholders within the context of a TOC are those people or organisations that experience this change.

Demonstrating social impact

As a tool describing how a program is expected to work, a TOC can also show the connection between planned activities and social outcomes applicable to each stakeholder group, over the immediate, medium, and long-term. A long-term social outcome is often described as a social impact. Impact is considered as the expected fundamental change, occurring in a community, as the result of a program being delivered over at least five years.

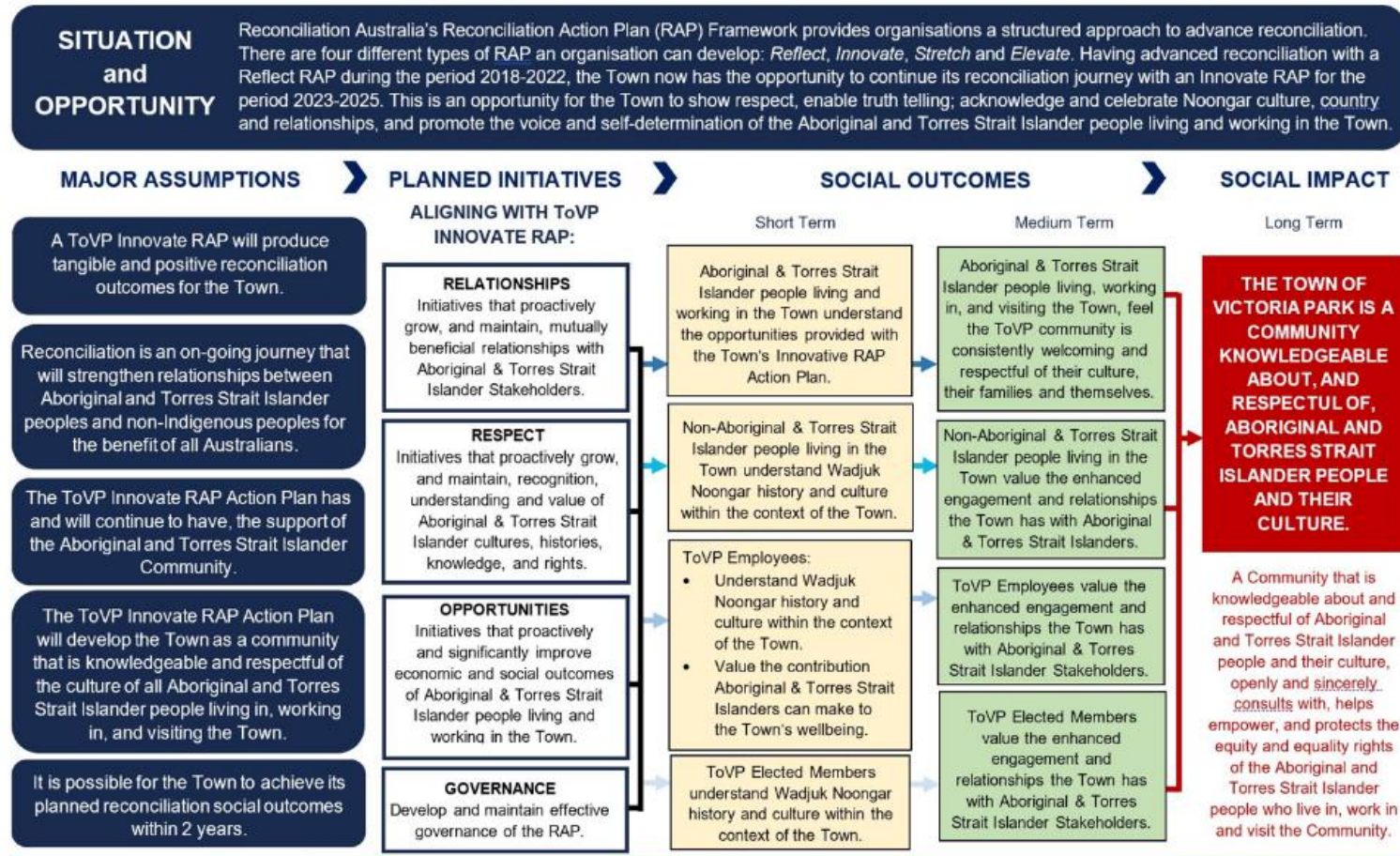
The TOC for this plan is depicted as five Inclusion Initiatives, which capture the deliverables identified throughout this plan.

Key Stakeholders

In developing the TOC, the Town has identified four key stakeholder groups central to its delivery:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living, working in, and visiting the Town
2. Non-Indigenous people living, working in, and visiting the Town
3. Employees of the Town
4. Elected Members of the Town

Theory of Change Model



Town of Victoria Park Innovate RAP 2023-2025 Theory of Change

Graphic design changes to the Theory of Change image above

- Reconciliation Australia feedback – remove the inclusion of Reconciliation Australia framework from line one.
- Remove 'Action Plan' inclusions from the table as the 'RAP' acronym stands for Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Change the spelling of 'Wadjuk' to 'Whadjuk' for consistency with the Town's spelling used across strategic documents (noting that the Story of Country authors use a different spelling to the Town).

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation Plan

The Town will develop an annual implementation plan for this RAP to support delivery of the plan, aligned to the Town's annual budget.

The implementation plan will be updated each year, and as required, to meet the Town's available resources, while aiming to deliver on community and stakeholder expectations. Priority actions within the Innovate RAP have been identified to assist this process.

Tasks may be added, removed or modified from the annual implementation plan to reflect items that have been completed, that need to be refined, budget changes and new priorities.

The plan will be delivered by officers, agents and contractors. The Town's Internal Diversity Working Group, Reconciliation Action Plan Internal Working Group, and Mindeera Advisory Group will be regularly engaged, as well as all of the Town's employees and leaders who share the responsibility for reconciliation.

The Town will continue to foster partnership and collaborations with key stakeholders, including the broader community, to successfully deliver this plan.

Reporting

Progress on the plan will be reported to Council and the community and other partners on a regular basis. Reports will be shared via the Town's website, social media platforms, and as part of the Town's annual report. A progress report is provided to Reconciliation Australia annually.

Evaluation

The Town will evaluate this plan through an Organisational Reconciliation Scorecard, aligned to the Town Reconciliation Theory of Change. This, as along with other planning and evaluation tools, will be used to monitor the degree of social change arising from this plan, and will assist the Town's ongoing evaluation of its performance.

References

National Context

Final Report of the Referendum Council, Uluru Statement from the Heart – June 2017 - <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/>

Reconciliation Australian: 2021 State of Reconciliation in Australia - <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/2021-state-of-reconciliation/>

Reconciliation Australia: 2019 Local Government Truth-Telling Workshops Report - <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/local-government-truth-telling-workshops-report/>

State Context

Koorah, Nitja, Boordahwan (Past, Present, Future) Recognition Act 2016 and South West Native Title Settlement Information - <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/south-west-native-title-settlement>

South West Land and Sea Council: Kaartdijin Noongar - Noongar Knowledge <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/>

Local Context

Strategic Community Plan 2022 -2032
[Our plan for the future - Victoria Park](#)

Report: Pre-1900s Noongar History in the Town of Victoria Park. Short Report prepared for Whadjuk People and Town of Victoria Park by Jordanna Rebbeck with editorial assistance from Dirima Cuthbert and Joe Dortch, April 2023

Council Notice of Motion decision [\(54/2023\)](#) 21 March 2023 - regarding the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament

Population Profile

Town of Victoria Park – Community Profile
<https://profile.id.com.au/victoria-park>

Town of Victoria Park – Population Forecasts
<https://forecast.id.com.au/victoria-park>

If you or someone you know needs this document explained or in another format, please call the Community Development Officer (Reconciliation) on 9311 8111 or by emailing admin@vicpark.wa.gov.au.

(NB: to be added to the very last page - which is currently a graphic)



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