



## **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Reference Group**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Gladstone Regional Council acknowledges the Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang and Taribelang people as the traditional owners of the land and respects and recognises Aboriginal communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing 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 Australians within its 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 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Reference Group will inform and guide this work now and into the future.

#### **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 Torres Strait Islander people in the Gladstone Region.
- 2.2 The RAP Reference Group will inform and monitor Gladstone Regional Councils Reconciliation Action Plan 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 Gladstone.
- 3.2 Provide feedback and comment in relation to Gladstone Regional Councils Reconciliation Action Plan.
- 3.3 Monitor the progress of Gladstone Regional Council's Reconciliation Action Plan deliverables.
- 3.4 Provide input into the review, evaluation and development of future Reconciliation Action Plans developed by Gladstone Regional Council.
- 3.5 Inform and advise the community of actions that have taken place as a direct result of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

- 3.6 Raise awareness and advocate for improved access to Council services by Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, cultural relevance and appropriateness of all Council Services, policies and programs.
- 3.7 Facilitate Council's access to Aboriginal 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 people and community.
- 3.9 Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, promoting recognition of contribution to community.

#### **4. Membership**

- 4.1 Membership of the group shall consist of:
  - Two (2) Councillor's, one of which shall be a Co-chairperson.
  - Up to seven (7) community members consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and service providers.
  - One (1) Council staff member that identifies as Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander.

#### **5. Membership diversity**

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

#### **6. Role of members**

- 6.1 Members of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Reference group will fulfill their role by:
  - Attending meetings and making a commitment to actively contribute to the activities of the Group.
  - Advocating on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and build a collaborative relationship with Council.
  - Providing input, views and advice on the implementation of Gladstone Regional Councils Reconciliation Action Plan.
  - Providing advice to Council on the development of new policies and strategies using a cultural lens to highlight potential barriers to access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
  - Assisting in the shaping and promoting, but not limited to, of a range of projects, notably Councils NAIDOC celebrations and other significant events.
  - Facilitating Councils engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community and assisting Council to connect with Aboriginal organisations, people and its networks; taking into account the different perspective, diversity and cultural complexities.

## **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 Council Officers. The selection panel will make a recommendation to Council on the successful community candidates.
- 7.2 Appointments to the Group will be for a period of two years.
- 7.3 Three months prior to the end of the term the Reconciliation Action Plan Officer will review appointments and a subsequent expression of interest will be invited.
- 7.4 Members will only have the option of a further two-year appointment (4 years in total, per community member).
- 7.5 All appointments will be determined by Council resolution.
- 7.6 If a member does not attend at least three meetings (half the minimum number of meetings to be held per year) without prior notification, their position may be considered vacant.

## **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 Advisory Group will determine an appropriate mechanism for selecting replacement, with any appointments being made by Council resolution.
- 8.5 If a Councillor resigns at any time, a replacement will be appointed by Council at the next practicable Council General meeting.
- 8.6 Members may be replaced at any time by resolution of Council.

## **9. Meetings and Voting**

- 9.1 The Gladstone Regional RAP Reference Group will meet a minimum of six times a year, during its first year of operation, reducing to a minimum of four thereafter, with the possibility to arrange additional meetings as required.
- 9.2 Dates and times of the meeting will be set in advance at the first meeting of the Gladstone Regional Council RAP Reference Group.
- 9.3 Should a change in meeting room or time be required, members of the Group will be notified by the Gladstone Regional Council secretariat.

- 9.4 Members unable to attend a scheduled meeting are required to notify the Chairperson or the Gladstone Regional Council secretariat prior to the meeting.
- 9.5 Councils Community Development and Events team will provide secretariat services to the Group.
- 9.6 Other Council staff whose work complement the work of the 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 Reference Group, suitable stakeholder representatives will be invited to attend meetings on as needs basis.
- 9.8 A quorum of current group members is required for a meeting to take place, with a quorum being a majority of current membership.
- 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 chairperson presiding has the casting vote and if a member fails to vote, the member is taken to have voted in the negative.

## **10.0 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. Chairperson and Co-Chairperson**

- 11.1 Meetings will be Chaired by the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson.
- 11.2 The Chairperson will be Councillor as nominated Council resolution.
- 11.3 The Co-Chairperson will be a community representative that will be chosen at the inaugural meeting of the Group by majority vote.
- 11.4 The Co-Chairperson will hold the position for the length of their first term on the Group.
- 11.5 The Chairperson and Co-Chairperson will rotate Chairperson responsibilities by alternating as Chairperson each meeting.

## **12. Chairperson and 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.

### **13. Observers**

- 13.1 Non-Members of the Group can attend the meeting with the permission of the Chairperson of the Group, for the meeting they are observing.
- 13.2 Non-members of the Group are able to observe the meeting but are unable to partake in discussions or commentary unless invited to the meeting to provide specialist advice.
- 13.3 Observers to the meeting are not able to propose recommendations and have no voting rights.
- 13.4 If the Chairperson of the meeting deems an observer/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 When an issue that is identified as culturally sensitive by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, the Group is able to 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 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 Reference Group to consider as per 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 groups advice and Council decisions.
- 15.3 The RAP Reference Group has no decision-making responsibilities over Councils operational function or staff. The role of the 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.