**Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG)**

**Terms of Reference**

***Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this***

***land.***

***Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia’s identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to***

***Elders past, present and future.***

1. **Background**

Hume City has long been home to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan and to many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia, who have contributed to, and been supported by community and other organisations.

In 2001, Hume City Council recognised the unique status of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk as the original custodians of the land upon which Hume City is situated. Council committed itself to working with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City to address past and present injustices.

A former advisory committee, the Hume Indigenous Advisory Committee (HIAC), was established in 2002 to act as Council’s key consultative body on Aboriginal matters and support the work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City and organisations. The committee’s achievements during this time included:

* Contributing to NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events.
* Supporting to the development of the Hume Recognition Policy with the result that the Aboriginal Flag is flown in front of Council facilities.
* The development of the Westmeadows Indigenous Community Garden.
* The establishment of the Hume Home and Community Care Aboriginal Community Liaison Position.
* Supporting the Hume Aboriginal Employment Program.

After a review of the direction and purpose of the committee, the HIAC was suspended in 2010. Since then there has been no formal advisory body to Council representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

In June 2019, Hume City Council established the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG). The group has met monthly since and has had substantially influenced the work of Hume City Council and enhanced outcomes for the community. Achievements during this time have included:

* Improved engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
* Improved relationships with key Aboriginal stakeholders including the Traditional Owner Group, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
* Increased staff knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history through the delivery of cultural competency and cultural safety training.
* More events sharing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and knowledge.
* Increased interest from the public about engaging with the Hume’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
* The establishment of the Stolen Generations Marker Working Group (SGMWG) and the implementation of the Stolen Generations Marker Project.
1. **Objectives of the RAPWG:**

The Objectives of the RAPWG are to:

* Develop and maintain strong relationships between Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City.
* Improve communication, consultation and information sharing between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City and Hume City Council.
* Advise Council of the key issues, concerns and priorities of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City, particularly as they relate to Council business and responsibilities.
* Assist Council to identify and remove barriers to appropriate and equitable access of Council services, facilities and programs for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City.
* Provide feedback and advice to Council on its policies, plans, projects, events and service provision for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City.
* Monitor Council’s progress and provide feedback on the implementation of the Hume Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2022.
* Provide input into the review and evaluation of the Hume Reconciliation Action Plan, including assisting in the development of future plans and yearly action plans.
1. **RAPWG values:**

The agreed values of the working group include:

* Cultural Foundation: Recognise the importance of country as a place where ceremony is practiced, and cultural protocols are continued.
* Responsiveness: The members do their best to be responsive to the priorities of the diverse groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within Hume City.
* Integrity, honesty and reliability.
* Partnership: Partner with Council and other relevant stakeholders to achieve outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City.
* Consensus: Decision making is guided by the principles of dialogue and deep listening established in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander political movement.
1. **Committee Membership**

Advisory Committee membership will consist of one Councillor and up to 10 Community members (excluding Council Officers as required) including:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.
* Traditional Owner representatives.
* Councillor, as nominated. An alternate Councillor will be appointed to fill in for the appointed Councillor if they are not available.
* Council officers as required.
1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

***5.1 Role of Advisory Committee members:***

* Agree to, and act in a manner consistent with the roles, values and priorities of the RAPWG and Hume City Council.
* Contribute to agendas and meeting topics/issues.
* Prepare for, attend and actively participate in meetings.
* Communicate the views of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City to Council.
* Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City and build a collaborative relationship with Council.
* Respond to requests for input into and/or feedback on Council initiatives, policies and reports; applying a cultural lens.
* Notify the meeting organiser prior to the meeting taking place if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
* Support Council’s engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City and assist Council to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and networks.
* Seek and receive approval from Council prior to making public statements, submissions or announcements or issuing correspondence (including emails) to external stakeholders on behalf of the Committee or Council.

***5.2. Role of Councillor(s):***

* Attend and participate in meetings.
* Listen and learn from the life experiences of the committee members.
* Share knowledge and experience as a Councillor with committee members.
* Use this knowledge to be better prepared for enacting true reconciliation in Hume.
* Act as the liaison between the RAPWG and Councillors.

***5.3. Role of Chair:***

* Guide the meeting according to the agenda and time available.
* Facilitate productive discussions, that are within the scope of the committee.
* Assist members to abide by the roles and responsibilities of the RAPWG and code of conduct.
* The Chair will be determined by the RAPWG and will be a rotating position between the RAPWG members.

***5.4. Role of Secretariat***

A Hume City Council Community Development Officer will take responsibility for Secretariat to the RAPWG and will:

* Establish agendas and meeting topics/issues in consultation with members as relevant.
* Provide executive support to the Committee including the provision of meeting agendas and minutes.
* Report back to the RAPWG regarding the status of input and advice previously provided by RAPWG members. This will usually occur in written format via the minutes or a document outlining the status of RAPWG input and recommendations.
1. **Selection process:**
* Appointment to the RAPWG will be through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. EOIs for membership will be advertised for a minimum of 14 days and must be provide in writing. Advertising will be through appropriate promotion in local newspapers, on Council's website, social media platforms and distribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Hume City organisations and stakeholders where deemed appropriate.
* A selection panel of three members comprising two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Hume City (Elders or respected community members), along with the Manager Community Strengthening (or delegated officer), will consider the nominations for the RAPWG. The panel will assess the nominations against the selection criteria below.
* The selection panel will aim for committee members to be reflective of the diversity of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City as possible (e.g. Elders, young people, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people residing in Hume), and to have equal gender representation.
* Council will determine and appoint a Councillor Representative. The Councillor will be appointed for a 12-month period.
1. **Selection criteria:**

RAPWG members will be able to demonstrate:

***Essential Criteria:***

* Knowledge and understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City’s priorities.
* An interest and involvement in local and / or broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community affairs, advocacy and networks;
* Direct links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Hume City’s community and / or organisations; and
* An ability and willingness to contribute to the strategic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia policy at local government level.

***Desirable Criteria:***

* Experience and / or understanding of the role of an advisory committee.
* An interest and/or understanding of Local Government services and programs from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City’s perspective.
1. **Terms of Appointment**
* It is expected that each member attend a minimum of 60% of all meetings for each year. If this does not occur and no reason is given, the selection panel may be formed to consider appointment options.
* Membership of the Committee will be for a two-year term with an opportunity for reappointment subject to recommendation by the selection panel.
* Members can serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
* Members are free to resign from the RAPWG at any time. Previous nominations may be considered to fill the vacancy. An EOI process will be undertaken if there are no previous nominations that meet the selection criteria.
1. **Relationship to existing Aboriginal committees, networks and forums**
* The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Inclusion Committee is an internal committee, made up of staff across various divisions of Council, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Hume City Council Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2022 and The Social Justice Charter.
* Council officers will provide a summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee meetings to the RAPWG after each meeting.
1. **Relationship to Council**
* The RAPWG may make recommendations to Council in an advisory capacity. The RAPWG was established to inform Council of the key priorities of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City and to provide advice, input and feedback on Council’s policies, plans, projects, events and service provision relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hume City.
1. **Meeting Frequency, Duration and Sitting Fee:**
* The RAPWG will determine the meeting schedule and this will be reviewed regularly.
* Council will provide Aboriginal members with a nominal sitting fee of $60.00. This fee is to:
	+ Allow diversity in participation;
	+ Consider the multiple responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Hume City have to their cultural obligations, both in their work roles and wider community responsibilities; and
	+ To acknowledge and value Aboriginal member’s cultural knowledge, advice and guidance.
1. **Code of Conduct**

Members will:

* Act with integrity, honesty and reliability, and treat others with respect.
* Exercise reasonable care and diligence.
* Where there is a requirement for confidentiality, this is to be noted in the minutes if the matter arises during a meeting, or made clear to members if arising in communication outside of a meeting (e.g. provision of a draft policy ahead of a meeting, for discussion and feedback at the meeting), and addressed accordingly.
* Members must declare a conflict of interest in relation to any matter the working group is concerned with or that the group will, or is likely to, consider or discuss. The conflict of interest, including the nature of the relevant interest, must be disclosed before the matter is considered and must be recorded in the minutes.
* Members of the RAPWG are not authorised to speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the RAPWG or Council, unless the member is a Councillor. In that case, any engagement with the media will be in accordance with Council’s standard media and communications policy.
* Members are authorised to disclose general information such as objectives of the working group, membership procedures, list of activities and information regarding any priorities that have already been previously dealt with and approved in the Committee's discussions.
* Members must ensure that new topics raised by the public or community are brought back to the RAPWG for consideration before any public information or response is provided publicly in relation to the issue.
* A quorum shall consist of 50% working group members, plus one, being a majority of eligible members. Meetings can be held without a quorum present. However, a quorum will be required should any major decision need to be made.
1. **Monitoring and reporting:**
* Draft Committee agendas will be forwarded to RAPWG members by email no later than one week (five working days) before a scheduled meeting.
* Minutes will be provided to working group members no later than two weeks (ten working days) after a scheduled meeting, including details of proceedings and clearly expressed resolutions (where applicable), and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary.
1. **Evaluation and Review:**
* The operations of the RAPWG will be evaluated by Hume City Council staff in collaboration with the RAPWG annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
* The RAPWG Terms of Reference and membership will be reviewed as required for any significant changes.
1. **Recommendations to Council and Extent of Authority:**
* The RAPWG will provide advice to Council but has not been delegated any powers from Council as per Section 86 of the Local Government Act.
* Where the Committee makes recommendations to Council, a consensus of all members present will be sought.