



Alice Springs Town Council
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
May 2024 - May 2025

Acknowledgement of First Nations People

Alice Springs Town Council acknowledges the Central Arrernte People, the Traditional Owners and custodians of Mparntwe/Alice Springs, and pays respect to their Elders: past, present and future.

Alice Springs Town Council Mparntwe-arenye mape itele-areme, apmere nhenhe Arrernte-kenhe. Anwerne akaltyirreme itneke. Anwerne arrwekelenye mape uthene apmereke-artweye mape uthene itele-aretyeke.

Translation provided by the Alice Springs Language Centre.

References

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan has been guided by the following documents and work:

- » Reconciliation Australia Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan Template
- » Feedback from Council staff through interviews conducted by Ken Johnson AM PhD, of Desert Connections
- » Feedback from Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation
- » Alice Springs Liveability and Sustainability 2030

Scope

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been written with the reconciliation journey of Alice Springs Town Council as its focus with the Reflect RAP template prescribed by Reconciliation Australia as its basis. It is an internal document, though viewable by the public. It is not intended to be a plan for the broader town of Alice Springs, though Council is supportive of reconciliation initiatives locally, regionally and nationally. However, it is important that the RAP contain actions that are tangible and deliverable, within the organisation's sphere of direct influence and with available resources.

2021 Upcycle Art Prize- Two Malpas (friends) devoted countless hours to weaving this artwork, expressing - 'For us desert women weaving is our meditation, a chance to forget our worries and be with friends. In Anangu culture the land is our chair. It's the place we sit. Chairs like this were introduced and become waste. But we want to care for country as our ancestors taught us.'



Credit: **Malpa Chair by Julie Anderson and Margaret Smith.**

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Message from Matt Paterson, Mayor - Alice Springs Town Council

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) has a rich and storied history that goes back thousands of years. We are steeped in heritage and our community is truly one of the most unique and culturally significant places on Earth.

This history belongs to the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land, the Arrernte people. Central Arrernte people have lived in this area for centuries and today we have an estimated population of 25,912 with 20.6 per cent identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Custodians past, present and emerging.

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is something I am proud to endorse and present to the Alice Springs community. Alice Springs Town Council is proud of our community's cultural identity and have a desire to reflect that in our everyday lives.

This document shows Alice Springs Town Council's commitment to genuine reconciliation, continuing our journey along this path. It is more than just a plan, it is a pledge—a commitment to the journey of healing, respect, and unity between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Alice Springs community.

The Reconciliation Action Plan is a step forward in our collective journey towards a more inclusive and equitable society. It outlines practical actions and goals aimed at creating significant and lasting opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Alice Springs Town Council welcomes the endorsement of this Reconciliation Action Plan, but it is by no means the end of our journey. We are steadfast in our commitment to making Alice Springs a place where all cultures live in unison, paving the way for a brighter future of inclusivity and respect for all.

Matt Paterson
Mayor
Alice Springs Town Council



Message from Karen Mundine, Reconciliation Australia's CEO

Reconciliation Australia congratulates Alice Springs Town Council on continuing its reconciliation journey by formally endorsing Alice Springs Town Council's second Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Through this plan, Alice Springs Town Council continues to play an important role in a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP continues the journey and primes the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also to increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Alice Springs Town Council to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Alice Springs Town Council on your second Reflect RAP, and I look forward to following your continuing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Overview of Council

Alice Springs Town Council provides local government services and advocacy for the community of Mparntwe or Alice Springs. The municipality is located in the heart of Central Australia, on the traditional lands of the Central Arrernte people, and serves as a regional hub for a range of services and activities. There are roughly 13 local Aboriginal language groups, with languages still spoken fluently in and around Central Australia by Aboriginal residents and visitors to Mparntwe.

Alice Springs Town Council provides local government services to the municipality and has a broad regional influence, working in cooperation with neighbouring councils and organisations, as well as Territory and Federal governments, to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents. Specifically, services include maintenance of Council's public facilities, such as the Alice Springs Public Library, Alice Springs Aquatic & Leisure Centre, Regional Waste Management

Facility, sporting facilities and ovals, parks and open spaces, plus management of roads, pathways and waste collection.

Council regularly provides free community events, develop programs for families, seniors and youth, and hosts civic functions including four annual citizenship ceremonies.

Council consists of nine Elected Members, including the Mayor, who discuss and direct decision-making on behalf of the community. Council's services are delivered by its employees of which there are currently 169 permanent staff, with 17 (10.6%) identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Council is one of the largest and longest standing employers in Alice Springs, recognising that its workplace culture also influences interactions with the community.

The Council Chamber and the main administration centre are located within the Alice Springs central business district (CBD) at the Civic Centre, adjacent to the Todd River (Lhere Mparntwe), with four more service offices located within the township.



Council Rangers engaging with the community at a 2023 Night Market



Permanently raising the Aboriginal Flag on Anzac Oval, 9 July 2018



Launch of Indigemoji @ the Library, 22nd November 2019

Background

Alice Springs Town Council has developed a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to take meaningful steps forward, in the organisation's culture and practice, towards a respectful, relationships-based approach to work and service provision. Council acknowledges that its activities within the municipality of Mparntwe or Alice Springs takes place on the traditional lands of the Central Arrernte people. Each year, within our facilities and the community, Council staff are interacting with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people representing diverse language groups, for many of whom, English may be a third or fourth language.

A Reconciliation Action Plan provides a helpful framework for developing relationships and understanding together. Despite our organisation having more frequent interaction and greater exposure to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures than many other local government authorities in Australia, Council acknowledges that, for change to be lasting and effective, our journey will not have a finish line.

The initial RAP Working Group was established in 2017 and carried out preliminary work in the development of Council's first Reflect RAP. In 2018, an independent local consultant was engaged to interview 25 Council staff, drawn from horizontal and vertical cross-sections of the workforce, 11 of whom identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Interviewees were invited to offer personal opinions on the organisation's cultural literacy, its relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, and also for views on how the organisation might improve as a welcoming workplace.

The Reflect RAP of 2019-2020 was not implemented due to high staff turnover of key members in the Working Group. Therefore, Council has made the decision to initiate its reconciliation journey again by revitalizing the previous RAP and ensure identified actions are implemented. Council has re-consulted where necessary to ensure views are current and reflected correctly. Council acknowledges the shortcomings of the implementation of the previous Reflect RAP and will be committed to carrying out all actions with sufficient human resources.

Council's Partnerships

Community partnerships

Alice Springs Town Council (ASTC) has a formal Partnership Agreement in place with Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation, acknowledging the organisation as the peak body for matters affecting Aboriginal people in Mparntwe or Alice Springs.

ASTC also has in place a Memorandum of Understanding with Tangentyere Council establishing cooperation between both organisations to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Mparntwe or Alice Springs.

Internal activities / initiatives

- » ASTC has historically supported NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Weeks with the Community and Cultural Development Unit and Alice Springs Public Library, in particular, hosting free community events and programs for the general public in support of these key initiatives. Council events are often promoted as opportunities for members of the public to engage directly with Elected Members and Council staff. Additionally, ASTC offers support to the NAIDOC committee in the form of human resources and monetary value each year.
- » A component of ASTC's induction process for new permanent staff is cultural awareness training, including appropriate communication and response, which is facilitated by a local Aboriginal trainer. Staff are given an overview of language, kinship, connection to Country as well as contemporary issues faced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Having a yarn and cooking damper in Lhere Mparntwe @ the 2022 Pop Up Park (above & below)



Alice Springs Public Library staff on the BBQ for the 2019 Roo Tail Cook Up





Relationships

Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
01 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	May, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
02 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Increase staff participation in external NRW events each year.	27 May – 3 June, 2024	Director Community Development
	• 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	Director Community Development
03 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation and RAP Actions to all staff (all staff email from CEO, statement from CEO and / or Mayor at all-staff Coffee Morning, ASTC RAP Launch event.)	March 2024, then ongoing	Lead: CEO Support: Director, Manager People & Culture
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on the reconciliation journey.	June, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that could be approached to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	June, 2024	Manager Community and Cultural Development
04 4. Promote positive race relations anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May, 2024	Manager People and Culture



Respect

Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
01 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June, 2024	Director Community Development
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Engage a qualified and experienced Central Arrernte consultant to prepare and deliver cultural awareness training appropriate to the needs of Council staff.	June, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Embed cultural awareness training into employee on-boarding and compulsory annual refreshers.	July, 2024	Manager People and Culture
02 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	June, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Directors & Managers
	• Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Directors & Managers
03 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer



Opportunities

Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
01 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	May, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Establish relationships with key Aboriginal employment and training organisations to promote Council job vacancies	October, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Explore expansion of ASTC Contact Officer positions to include additional Indigenous Contact Officers at Depot, Regional Waste Management Facility and Civic Centre/Library	July, 2024	Manager People and Culture
	• Investigate renumerated and non-renumerated options to enhance flexibility of cultural leave provisions including recognition of extended leave with no threat to job security.	August, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Directors & Manager People and Culture
02 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June, 2024	Manager Finance
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June, 2024	Senior Finance Officer



Governance

Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
01 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May, 2024	Community and Cultural Development Unit
	• Draft Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May, 2024	Director Community Development
	• Establish Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
02 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May, 2024	Director Community Development
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May, 2024	RAP Working Group Chair
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	May, 2024	Director Community Development
03 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	July, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer
04 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	August, 2024	Community Inclusion Officer

Artist Profile

Mervyn Rubuntja

Creator of front cover artwork 'Mt Gillen, NT'

Mervyn was born at the Telegraph Station in Mparntwe or Alice Springs. His father, Mr Wenten Rubuntja Pengarte, was a famous painter and played an important role model for him being a senior lawman and respected member of the community who worked hard to protect Aboriginal land rights and assisting the Mabo agreement. Following his father's footsteps, Mervyn watched his uncles closely while using watercolours and once he returned to Alice Springs after residing in Ntaria or Hermannsburg he began participating in projects, group exhibitions and collections all over Australia for over two decades now, as well as, being nominated and awarded numerous awards. Mervyn's artwork can be spotted all around town and he continues to contribute to the town's thriving arts sector.



*Credit: Mervyn Rubuntja,
Itja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre*



*The colours
& graphics in
this publication
are inspired by
our front cover
artwork 'Mt
Gillen, NT' by
Mervyn
Rubuntja*



*Credit: Mervyn Rubuntja /
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Contact us

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Reconciliation Action Plan please contact:

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