

Shellharbour City Council

Business Paper

27 June 2023

Item no. 10.3.4 - Attachment 1.

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2024







Reconciliation Action Plan 2023 - 2024





Coastal Communities Coastal Walk (2022)

Artwork By Lorraine Brown and Narelle Thomas Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation

"Along our coastal areas we have the connection of our coastal communities our walking lines for foods of the oceans".



Acknowledgement

Shellharbour City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country and recognises their continued connection to the land.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and the contribution they make to the life of this City.



Contents

Acknowledgement	3
A message from Reconciliation Australia CEO	5
Our Commitment to Reconciliation	6
Our Business	7
Our Reconcilation Action Plan	12
Our History of Reconciliation	14
Our Partnerships and Local connections	15
Action Plan	16
Relationships	17 - 18
Respect	19 - 20
Opportunities	21
Governance	22 - 23

A message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Shellharbour City Council to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Shellharbour City Council joins a network of more than 1,100 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 will lay the foundations, priming 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 increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Shellharbour City 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 first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Shellharbour City Council, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia







Our Commitment to Reconciliation

On behalf of Shellharbour City Council and our local community, I am proud to introduce Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our Council has a long history of working towards reconciliation, which contributes to the strong connections we have with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Council is especially proud that our words of reconciliation are equally matched by our actions, as we strive to celebrate and share local Aboriginal culture through the inclusion of both Aboriginal artworks at the Civic Centre and public artworks across the city, as well as Yirran Muru - an interpretive play space that teaches Dharawal language and history.

This RAP represents a formal and detailed commitment to reconciliation and it is the first of its kind for Shellharbour City. I look forward to watching this RAP take life and support a greater level of understanding and respect for everyone who lives, works and plays within Shellharbour City. This Plan will offer us, both as a Council and as a community, the opportunity to reflect on our reconciliation journey so far, and find ways that we can build on and improve our reconciliation commitments long into the future.

I would like to extend my most sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who was involved in the journey of developing the Reflect RAP. Thank you in particular to members of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Elders, community members, representatives from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and services, and of course our Council staff.

We are proud to partner with Reconciliation Australia and to use our sphere of influence to ensure reconciliation remains a key priority for our community.

Chris Homer Mayor, Shellharbour City

As CEO of Shellharbour City Council, I am both proud and excited to be delivering our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). As a council, we are the layer of government closest to the community and we aim to lead by example. This RAP will provide strategic and tangible directions for our organisation that will benefit both staff and the community. This RAP outlines the actions we will take to further develop the foundations we need towards reconciliation.

This is the first official RAP for our organisation and marks not a beginning, but a continuation of our reconciliation journey. We are proud to have a long history working with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities towards a shared vision of respect and reconciliation.

Mike Archer Chief Executive Officer, Shellharbour City Council



Our Business

Shellharbour City Council (SCC) is a local government authority (LGA) in NSW. We are responsible for making decisions and providing services that supports residents, businesses, customers and visitors to Shellharbour City.

Council is committed to sustainable planning for the future of Shellharbour and we do this by working closely with the local community. Our Community Vision for Shellharbour and the people that live, play and work here is to be a...

"Naturally balanced, vibrant and connected community"

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Council works to achieve this Vision for our four key stakeholders – Community, Councillors, Customers and Council – and to ensure Shellharbour City is well planned for the future. SCC's Core Values of collaboration, accountability, integrity, respect and sustainability, provide the foundation for our organisational culture and the way in which we interact with, and provide services to, our Community, Councillors, and Customers.

SCC's Community Strategic Plan provides the City with a clear understanding of what matters most to our community and guides the way in which we plan for the future and deliver services. It outlines the objectives of Councils four focus areas:



Community

Shellharbour City is a valued place to call home. We have built our resilience and connection and wish to maintain this. Having opportunities to celebrate with one another is important.



Environment

The preservation and enhancement of our natural environment is important, as is the efficient use of our natural resources and a sustainable and healthy built environment.



Economy

Tourism is a significant industry and needs to be supported. The continuation of development and activation of Shell Cove is important to the ongoing development of Shellharbour City. Training opportunities, strong local businesses and local jobs for local people are also key to the success of Shellharbour's economic future.



Leadership

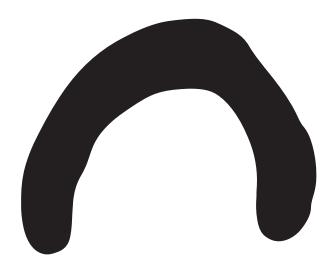
The community values fair and honest representative government that is transparent and accountable. They wish to see innovative future planning, sustainable outcomes and the opportunity to engage with Council in deciding the future of Shellharbour.





To help us achieve the Vision and Objectives of the CSP, Council has a substantial workforce with 629 employees. We have 375 permanent, 197 casual and 57 temporary staff. There are 14 staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people within our organisation, which makes up 2.2% of our total workforce.

375 permanent 197 casual 57 temporary



14 staff identify as Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait islander

2.2% of our total workforce

Shellharbour City is located on Dharawal Country .

Shellharbour City is approximately 147 square kilometres in size and is situated on the south coast of NSW. Together with the LGAs of Wollongong and Kiama, we make up the Illawarra Region.

Our LGA offers several unique services that bring people from across the region to Shellharbour City. These range from our natural assets like Bass Point Reserve, Killalea State Park, Lake Illawarra, Blackbutt Forest and Macquarie Pass National Park; to the retail services our LGA offers. These services bring people from not only the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region, but also further afield including the Southern Highlands and southern Sydney.

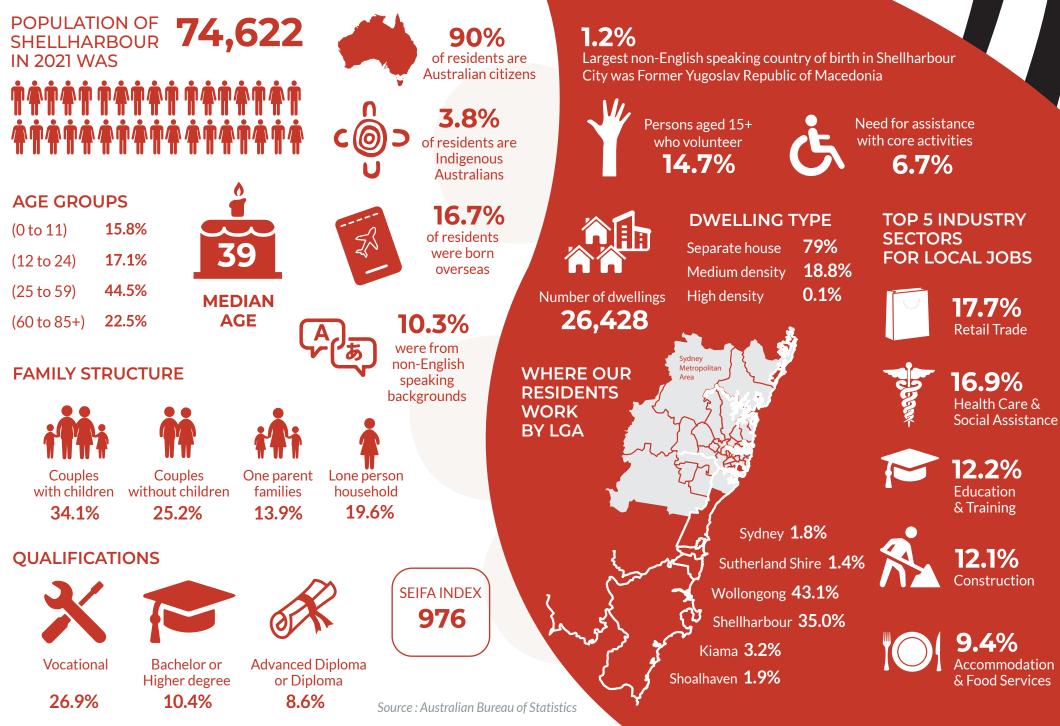
The Shellharbour Airport is a regionally strategic asset that connects the region with larger markets elsewhere in Australia. It provides freight and passenger access to the region and also supports a number of aviation and tourism related businesses. Shellharbour City Centre is a major regional centre that offers a variety of services to the region. This includes the growing health and education precinct that is comprised of Shellharbour Hospital and TAFE NSW Shellharbour, which is increasingly supporting the growing population in the region. Shellharbour City Centre also offers one of the largest retail destinations in the region, with a diversity of retail facilities that draws visitors from across the region to our LGA.

Another unique distinction of the Shellharbour City LGA and what we offer the region is The Waterfront, Shell Cove Project. This is a major coastal master-planned residential, commercial and tourist development.

Shellharbour City includes the suburbs and rural localities of Albion Park (Elouri / Goongar / Thampa), Albion Park Rail (Guuna / Koona / Thampa), Barrack Heights (Wonwin / Berrick), Barrack Point (Berrick), Blackbutt (Wonwin), Calderwood, Croom (Thampa), Dunmore, Flinders (Wonwin), Lake Illawarra (Jubborsay), Macquarie Pass, Mount Warrigal (Warrigal), North Macquarie, Oak Flats, Shell Cove (Wonwin / Araringong), Shellharbour City Centre, Shellharbour Village (Wonwin), Tongarra, Tullimbar, Warilla (Wahrilla) and Yellow Rock.

*Names in italics are Dharawal language names for the locations of suburbs.

Shellharbour





Our RAP

At Shellharbour City Council (SCC) we value, acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of our community. Council has had a long history of working towards reconciliation within our City. Some of our major achievements include the 1997 Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Australians; the creation of our Aboriginal Advisory Committee in 1998; employment of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer; annual celebrations and recognition of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC weeks; the development of the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Assessment toolkit; and the development of key internal processes including the Aboriginal Cultural Protocols document and Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country and Elders protocol document.

Council will build on these achievements by implementing a Reflect RAP which will give us strategic guidance on strengthening our relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, organisations and services. We will continue to build the levels of respect within our organisation, community, Councillors and customers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories. We also aim to provide an opportunity to be accountable and investigate what we can do within our organisation and community to work towards reconciliation.

Council's Preliminary RAP working group have identified the following objectives that will guide our Reflect RAP:

- 1. Embed, nurture and enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within our organisation and community
- 2. Strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the wider community
- 3. Ensure Council is culturally safe, responsible and accountable
- 4. Strengthen the way we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- 5. Become a leader of reconciliation within our City and the broader Illawarra Community
- 6. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase economic equity and self determination
- 7. Support and guide our work addressing the actions of the Closing the Gap NSW implementation plan
- 8. Ensure that reconciliation is everyone's business, and everyone's responsibility within the Council

The development of a Reflect RAP is in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan and will address the community and leadership focus areas.

Community



1.1.2 Sharing stories from the past and present1.1.3.02 Contribute to a City that supports and celebrates reconciliation

Leadership



4.1.4 Acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal community as the traditional custodians of the land 4.1.4.01 Support engagement with the Aboriginal community and stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal culture and heritage is recognised, protected and celebrated

13

Council has committed to the establishment of a RAP Working Group. The working group will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members, managers, and a cross section of indoor and outdoor staff members. The working group will be co-chaired by the Group Manager Community Connections and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, with the Group Manager acting as the RAP Champion. Once the REFLECT RAP is adopted by Council an internal RAP working group will be established to oversee the implementation of the REFLECT RAP over a 12 month period from May 2023 – May 2024.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAP Reference group will be established to provide local perspectives on the deliverables of the Reflect RAP. This will include members of Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and individuals. Updates will be provided to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Senior Management Team (SMT), Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Councillors to ensure key decision makers are accountable for the implementation of the RAP. We aim to identify champions at the ELT and SMT level to guide, role model, lead and promote Councils Reflect RAP.



Our History of Reconciliation

SCC has a long-standing interest in reconciliation and have implemented the following initiatives:

1997	Council adopted Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Australians
1998	Council established the Aboriginal Advisory Committee – one of the longest continuous committees of its kind
1998	Council has a dedicated Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO). The ACLO is a vital link between Shellharbour City Council and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
2005	Council established the Bass Point Indigenous Cultural Walk
2009	Inaugural Reconciliation Schools Flag Walk was held – the event is now held annually
2011	Inaugural Local Government Regional NAIDOC Awards – the event is now hosted annually on a rotating basis between Wollongong, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Shellharbour Councils
2013	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Development Assessment Toolkit developed and adopted
2016	Council made a commitment to pursue the development of an Aboriginal Interpretive Centre in Shellharbour and endorsed the Aboriginal Interpretive Centre (AIC) Feasibility Report
2021	Council adopted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols and The Welcome / Acknowledgement of Country and Elders Protocol
2021	Council's Executive Leadership Team and elected Council committed to the development of a REFLECT RAP and endorsed the development of a RAP working group



Our Partnerships and Local connections

The major formal partnership that Council has with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is through the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC). The purpose of Shellharbour City Council's AAC is to provide professional and strategic advice to Council on issues affecting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to provide guidance on the implementation of strategies including:

Statement of Commitment 1997

Shellharbour City Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The AAC is an advisory body facilitated by Council which discusses and makes recommendations on matters which arise between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Shellharbour City Council's Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Australians was resolved by Council on the 1 July 1997 and affirmed by Council on 11 July 1997. Shellharbour City Council's 'Statement of Commitment towards supporting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and earmarks Council's enthusiasm to engage in work towards reconciliation.

On the 2 November 1998 Council convened a workshop with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, facilitated by the Department of Local Government and Local Government & Shires staff. Subsequently, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee was established and held its first meeting on 25th November 1998.

The success of the 'Statement of Commitment' is achieved through the contributions and enthusiasm of the Shellharbour community at a local grass roots level, and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee is the mechanism which ensures consultation takes place.

The membership of the AAC includes a total of ten (10) Community Representatives including one Male and one Female Elder, elected every two (2) years. The AAC also has one non-voting representatives from local Aboriginal Community Organisations:

- Illawarra Koori Men's Support Group,
- Shellharbour Aboriginal Community Youth Organisation,
- Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council,
- Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation
- Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation
- Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Services
- Illawarra Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group







Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	July 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
Islander stakeholders and organisations.	 Maintain and strengthen current relationships with local Aboriginal Community Organisations through the Aboriginal Advisory Committee 	August 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
	 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	September 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). • RAP Working Grou Reconciliation Wee • RAP Working Grou Walk event during N • Encourage and sup	 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2024	Lead: Senior Marketing Officer Support: ACLO
	 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event. 	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members
	RAP Working Group members to participate in Reconciliation Schools Flag Walk event during National Reconciliation Week	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members
	 Encourage and support wider Council staff attendance at Reconciliation Schools Flag Walk event during National Reconciliation Week 	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to also attend external National Reconciliation Week events to increase their connection with Community 	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and to the Community – this includes publishing our RAP on Council's website. 	June 2023	Lead: Senior Marketing Officer Support: ACLO
	 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	July 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	July 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	 Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-dis- crimination. 	August 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: Team Leader HR
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-dis- crimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2023	Lead: Team Leader HR Support: Manager Community Life





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, awareness, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	October 2023	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2023	Lead: HR Learning and Development Support: ACLO
	Research, identify and implement cultural awareness / safety / immersion training for the organisation.	December 2023	Lead: HR Learning and Development Support: ACLO
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing	 Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	December 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
cultural protocols.	 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	December 2023	Lead: HR Learning and Development Support: ACLO
	Review and update Council's Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols	December 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff in the lead up to NAIDOC Week about the value and importance of this celebration.	June 2023	Lead: Senior Marketing Officer Support: ACLO
NAIDOC Week.	Hold information session with Customer Service to provide upcoming community NAIDOC events and a Q and A on cultural protocols in lead up to NAIDOC week to assist in responding to community requests.	June 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO

19



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Respect

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating	 Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	June 2023	Lead: Senior Marketing Officer Support: ACLO
Z	NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members







Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruit- ment, retention and professional development. Build understanding of current Abo	 Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	February 2024	Lead: Group Manager HR Support: Manager Community Life
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2024	Lead: Group Manager HR Support: Manager Community Life
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. 	April 2024	Lead: Manager Procurement and Supply Support: Manager Community Life
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	April 2024	Lead: Manager Procurement and Supply Support: Manager Community Life
Contribute to the Closing the Gap NSW implementation Plan priority reform areas	Investigate opportunities for Council to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and stakeholders on Closing the Gap initiatives	May 2024	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
	Develop an Action Plan for Council's Closing the Gap initiatives and actions, to be implemented during Councils next Innovate RAP	May 2024	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	June 2023	Lead: Group Manager Communit Connections Support: Working Group members
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2023	Lead: Group Manager Communi Connections Support: Working Group members
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June 2023	Lead: Group Manager Communi Connections Support: Working Group members
Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group	 Form an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group to provide advice and guidance to RAP implementation. 	July 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group	July 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2023	Lead: Group Manager Communi Connections Support: Working Group members





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	 Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	July 2023	Lead: Group Manager Community Connections Support: Working Group members
	 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	June 2023	Lead: Group Manage Organisational Performance Support: Manager Community Life
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	September 2023	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
Continue our reconciliation ourney by developing our next RAP.	 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP 	May 2024	Lead: Manager Community Life Support: ACLO
	Shellharbour City Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, 2023 - 2024	23	



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