

# Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny

*'Many Hands Firmly United Going Forward'*

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2018/2019





**The City of Kwinana is committed to the journey of conciliation and respects Aboriginal people's connection to Country as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The City of Kwinana's vision is to work together with the Kwinana community to build positive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Throughout this journey the City aims to promote and assist with the development of pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable.**

*City of Kwinana official Conciliation Statement of Intent, which was announced during National Reconciliation Week in May 2018.*

**The City of Kwinana acknowledges the Nyoongar (Noongar) people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.**

Cover artwork was created by the Kwinana community during NAIDOC Week 2015: We All Stand in Sacred Ground, facilitated by artist Deborah Bonar.

*Left:* Harry McGuigan Park in Medina.

# Mayor's Message

**I am delighted to present the City of Kwinana's Reconciliation Action Plan which is adapted from Reconciliation Australia's Reflect template - the first level of a Reconciliation Action Plan under their national framework.**

This plan is aimed at developing a future vision for conciliation between the City of Kwinana and our community, as partners.

Our City has developed strong relationships with Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who live and work in and around Kwinana and I have been personally involved in listening to their feedback on our draft plan towards conciliation.

In April 2017, the City held a series of 'Aboriginal Community Planning Meetings' to understand community aspirations for conciliation. Out of these sessions three pillars were identified - relationships, respect and opportunities. This information has informed the development of Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny.

The Aboriginal community has also expressed a need for increased awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures among the wider community, and aspires to develop a strong sense of pride in young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and children.

The City of Kwinana has taken many steps in recent years towards acknowledging the City's Aboriginal people and culture, including building community partnerships, honouring Aboriginal history through public artworks, and through symbolic protocols such as continually flying the Aboriginal Flag.

The City's Reconciliation Advisory Group decided from the outset to be known as a 'Conciliation' Advisory Group rather than 'Reconciliation Advisory Group'. This was in recognition of our desire to move forward, hand in hand with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, connecting us all with a wealth of history, tradition and culture which enriches our society.

So, rather than call this a Reconciliation Action Plan, our Conciliation Advisory Group has decided to use words in the Nyoongar (Noongar) language and named the plan 'Boola Maaraa Baldja Koorliny' which means 'many hands firmly united going forward'.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with our community partners along the path to conciliation.

**Cr Carol Adams,  
Mayor of Kwinana, 2018**



# Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome the City of Kwinana to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program and to formally endorse the City's inaugural Reflect RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, the City of Kwinana joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Reflect RAP provides the City of Kwinana with a roadmap to begin its reconciliation journey. Through implementing a Reflect RAP, the City of Kwinana will lay the foundations for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

We wish the City of Kwinana well as it takes these first critical steps in its reconciliation journey. We encourage the organisation to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on the successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

“Reconciliation is hard work—it's a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.”

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the City of Kwinana on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**

**Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia**

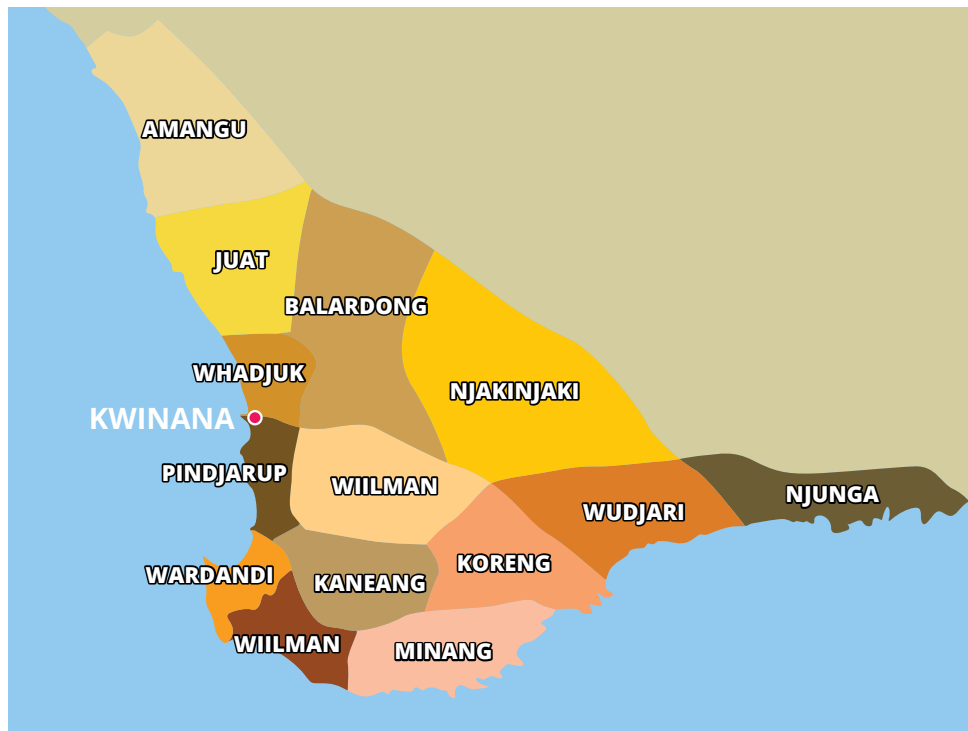


# Introduction

The City of Kwinana (the City) sits within the lands of the Nyoongar (Noongar) people who are the Traditional Custodians of Kwinana and surrounding areas. The City has strong, active Aboriginal communities, which represent 3.6% of the population (ABS Census 2016). Within the Perth Metropolitan Region, Kwinana has the highest proportion of residents that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Nyoongar (Noongar) Country is the land in the south-west corner of Western Australia. There are 14 clan groups of people from Nyoongar (Noongar) descent within Aboriginal Australia.

## Aboriginal Groups of the South West of Western Australia



The City's Conciliation Advisory Group was formed in May 2018. The Group advised the City to use the term 'conciliation' as it is more descriptive of the process and journey the City is embarking upon.

This Plan is adapted from Reconciliation Australia's Reflect template, which is the first level of a Reconciliation Action Plan under their national framework. The City acknowledges that this is the beginning of a journey.

Rather than call this a Reconciliation Action Plan, the Conciliation Advisory Group recommended words in the Nyoongar (Noongar) language be used and named the Plan: 'Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny' which means '*Many hands firmly united going forward*'.

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program run by Reconciliation Australia provides a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement. The framework has three pillars: relationships, respect and opportunities. Each of the four levels of a RAP (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate) outline the minimum elements required for an organisation to reach each level.

# Brief historical overview

Native Housing Scheme implemented, which allowed Aboriginal people to apply for State Housing so long as they maintained certain financial, social and domestic standards.

The Hill (Harry McGuigan Park in Medina) became a significant social meeting place, both for local Aboriginal families and for families travelling through.

80% of the Aboriginal population deemed as not meeting the standards of the Native Housing Scheme and therefore not given housing. Aboriginal people employed by BP at the Kwinana Oil Refinery resided at a camp on Chalk Hill in Medina. Thomas Oval in Medina was also used for camping and washing.

Medina resident and BP employee Alfons Boschman and his wife attempt to migrate back to Holland with their five adopted Aboriginal children. The case made international media and continued for many months, with the government eventually assisting the family to resettle in Medina in December 1969.

Native Welfare Act passed. The Commissioner for Native Affairs still recognised as the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children until the age of 21.

Aboriginal children from Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home in Queens Park (Perth) invited to 'holiday for Christmas' with local Medina families.

Kwinana Council began as the Kwinana Road Board through the passing of the Kwinana Roads Districts Act.

Kwinana acquired 'Shire' status.

Assimilation becomes the Government policy where 'part Aboriginal' people were separated from 'full Aboriginal' people and expected to assimilate into white society.

Aboriginal man Simon Gentle, related to the Nyoongar (Noongar) Jacobs family, was hired as the first employee of the Kwinana Road Board.

Referendum where Australians voted overwhelmingly to amend the Constitution to allow the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal people and include them in the census.

This timeline aims to provide a basic overview of local, state and national events of historical significance relating to Aboriginal people, from the 1950s onwards. The City acknowledges that this timeline is limited and several key events may have been missed. If you would like your local history recorded please contact the [Kwinana Public Library](#). Information for this timeline has been sourced from the City's Local History Collection and from a Noongar Timeline published by [Ruminating.org](#)

The Shire of Kwinana declared the Town of Kwinana.

Native Title discussions occur regarding Kwinana Freeway extension through Wellard and naming the bridge. The bridge is named Walley Bridge after a local Aboriginal family.

The Town of Kwinana declared the City of Kwinana.

Medina Aboriginal Cultural Group given premises on Leasham Way Medina from the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

Kwinana population reaches 20,000 people.

Medina Revitalisation Project complete including revitalisation of The Hill (Harry McGuigan Park in Medina).

1972

1973

1975

1977

1992

2001

2001

2010

2012

2016

2017

Medina Aboriginal Cultural Group officially formed.

Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act passed, making it illegal to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin.

High Court's Mabo decision reversed the notion that Australia was 'terra nullius' or 'desert and unoccupied' when Europeans arrived. This effectively re-introduced Aboriginal sovereignty in Australia.

Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre opens in Medina.

City of Kwinana recognises the need to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan. Kwinana population reaches almost 40,000 people.

## OUR BUSINESS

The City is a rapidly growing residential area, with substantial industrial, rural and rural-residential areas and some commercial areas. Kwinana encompasses a total land area of nearly 120 square kilometres and it is the second fastest growing local government area in Western Australia, with the population predicted to double in the next 20 years.

In the 2016 ABS Census, 3.6% of the City's population identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, totalling 1,961 people. This is almost double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Greater Perth area. The City's workforce numbers are in the vicinity of 260 permanent staff, exclusive of casual staff. Of this number, approximately 3.5% of employees are recorded as being of either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

The City's vision for the future is *"Rich in spirit, alive with opportunities, surrounded by nature – It's all here."* The vision statement succinctly represents the community's aspirations for the future and is derived directly from community visioning priorities. The Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) aligns directly with this vision.

## OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (BOOLA MAARA BALDJA KOORLINY)

The City has developed strong relationships with Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who live and work in and around Kwinana.

Members of the Aboriginal community in Kwinana have expressed a need for increased awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Kwinana.

### **The key community aspirations for reconciliation from Aboriginal Community Planning Meetings held in 2017 were:**

- The need for the City to develop strategies involving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in order to build stronger relationships and rapport with the community; and
- The need to have more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working internally at the City of Kwinana and externally within Kwinana.

The City recognises that this RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) will enable the organisation to spend time developing these relationships while together deciding on the future vision for reconciliation between the organisation and the community.

This mural was developed as a community art project during NAIDOC Week 2018 and is on display at the Kwinana Marketplace. The mural was funded by The Smith Family Communities for Children Project and the project artists were Jarred Franey and Ashley and Kellie Collard.





# Action Plan

Actions are listed under three headings of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities in order of priority.

<b>Relationships</b>			
Action	Deliverable	When	Responsibility
1. Support, resource and maintain a Conciliation Advisory Group	1.1 Support the Conciliation Advisory Group in the implementation of the City's RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny), comprised of Councillors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, representatives of relevant community stakeholder groups and staff from across the organisation.	Dec 2018	Mayor (lead) and Councillors  Director City Engagement
	1.2 Ensure the Conciliation Advisory Group monitors the development and implementation of the RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny).	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
2. Build internal and external relationships	2.1 Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within the Kwinana local area or sphere of influence who the City can connect and work with on our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
	2.2 Develop a list of RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) organisations and other like-minded organisations that we can connect and work with on our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
	2.3 Develop a mechanism for sharing information with the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Kwinana – such as a newsletter, through social media or webpage.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
3. Promote events which foster conciliation	3.1 Hold an event to celebrate the adoption of the RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny).	Feb 2019	CDO Diversity
	3.2 Develop a calendar of events, including but not limited to, NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week. Promote this calendar internally and externally.	Feb 2019	CDO Diversity
	3.3 Hold a Council afternoon tea hosted by the Mayor inviting Aboriginal community members to engage with Councillors and staff.	Sept 2019	Mayor CDO Diversity

4.	Raise awareness of the RAP (internally and externally)	4.1	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all Councillors and staff across the organisation about our RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) commitments.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
		4.2	Publish and promote our RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) to the wider community and welcome feedback on the RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) actions.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
5.	Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	5.1	Encourage City staff to attend a NRW event.	May 2019	City Leadership Team
		5.2	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to City staff.	May 2019	Marketing and Comms Officer
		5.3	Ensure the Conciliation Advisory Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2019	Conciliation Advisory Group

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	When	Responsibility		
6.	Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	6.1	Establish Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols, work with the internal Marketing Team to have them included in all civic and community events and speeches.	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
		6.2	Develop an expanded Acknowledgement of Country for Citizenship Ceremonies which will provide attendees with a greater understanding of the history of the Acknowledgement and its importance to Aboriginal people	Dec 2018	CDO Diversity
7.	Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	7.1	Deliver cultural awareness training to all Councillors and staff within the City of Kwinana. Aim for an immersion program including elements delivered by Traditional Custodians.	Feb 2019	HR Manager
		7.2	Investigate the potential for cultural awareness training to be delivered to local small businesses and community groups.	July 2019	CDO Diversity
8.	Display of flags	8.1	Investigate the display of the Australian flag, Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag at the Council Administration Building and relevant civic and community events.	Dec 2018	Customer Service Officer CDO Events

9. Participate in and celebrate National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week	9.1	Raise awareness and share information amongst City staff on the meaning of NAIDOC Week including information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	June 2019	CDO Diversity
	9.2	Introduce City staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.	July 2019	Marketing and Comms Officer
	9.3	Encourage members of the Conciliation Advisory Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2019	Conciliation Advisory Group

### Opportunity

		When	Responsibility	
10. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities within the City's workforce.	10.1	Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy targets.	Jan 2019	HR Manager
	10.2	Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities.	Jan 2019	HR Development Coordinator
11. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	11.1	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Feb 2019	Manager Contracts
	11.2	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2019	Manager Contracts
12. Early childhood and youth services to promote reconciliation	12.1	Continue to convene the Youth Diversion Network meetings to develop strategies in partnership with early childhood and youth services, and other relevant agencies to support families.	Dec 2018	Manager Youth Development

Governance and Tracking Progress			
Action	Deliverable	When	Responsibility
13. Build support for the RAP	13.1 Define resource needs for the RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) development and implementation.	Dec 2018	Manager Community Engagement
	13.2 Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	Dec 2018	Manager Community Engagement
14. Review and refresh the RAP	14.1 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new Innovate RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Sept 2019	CDO Diversity Conciliation Advisory Group
	14.2 Submit this new draft RAP Innovate (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) to Reconciliation Australia for review.	Oct 2019	CDO Diversity
	14.3 Submit this new draft Innovate RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	Nov 2019	CDO Diversity
15. Report on the progress of our RAP internally and externally	15.1 Conciliation Advisory Group to report activities and outcomes in a written report to Council to be distributed internally to City of Kwinana staff.	Sept 2019	Conciliation Advisory Group Marketing and Comms Officer
	15.2 Conciliation Advisory Group to share activities and outcomes of the RAP (Boola Maara Baldja Koorliny) with the community.	Sept 2019	Conciliation Advisory Group
	15.3 Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.	Sept 2019	Director City Engagement



## Glossary of Terms

### ABORIGINAL FLAG

The Aboriginal Flag was designed by Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal artist, in 1971. The Aboriginal flag has the symbolic meaning of:



**BLACK** represents the Aboriginal people of Australia;

**YELLOW CIRCLE** represents the sun, the giver of life and protector; and

**RED** represents the red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies and Aboriginal peoples' spiritual relation to the land.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

An Acknowledgment of Country is a way that non-Aboriginal people can show respect for Nyoongar (Noongar) heritage and the ongoing relationship of Traditional Custodians with the land. An example of a suitable Acknowledgement of Country to be used in the Kwinana area is "I/we wish to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we are meeting on today, the Nyoongar (Noongar) people, and pay my/our respects to their Elders past and present".

### ELDERS

Elders are our keepers of knowledge in family and community. They are usually Elder people but some families may agree to a younger person taking on this cultural responsibility.

Young artist Shakaylee Wallam with sculptures as part of the Edge Skatepark Community Art Project

## **NYOONGAR (NOONGAR)**

Nyoongar (Noongar) language word is a generic and accepted term which is used to broadly identify Aboriginal people who come from the South West region of Western Australia. It is estimated that there are approximately 30,000 Nyoongar (Noongar) people living in the south west making this group the largest Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Nyoongar (Noongar) language is a spoken language, not a written language; as such, there are many ways to spell the word, depending on the dialect of the clan group. Sometimes spelt Noongah, Nyungar, Nyoongah, Nyugha or Nyungah.

## **TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS**

Aboriginal representatives of the traditional language group that inhabited the area prior to European settlement are recognised as Traditional Custodians by local Aboriginal communities.

## **TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG**



The Torres Strait Islander flag represents the Torres Strait Islander people, who are the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands north of Queensland. The flag was designed by the late Bernard Namok as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islanders. The green panels at the top and bottom of the flag symbolise the land, while the blue panel in the centre represents the waters of the Torres Strait. The thin black stripes between the green and blue panels signify the Torres Strait Islanders themselves. The white five-pointed star at the centre of the flag represents the five major island groups, and the white dhari (dancer's headdress) around it also symbolises the Torres Strait Islands people. White symbolises peace, while the star is a symbol for navigation.

## **WELCOME TO COUNTRY**

A Welcome to Country ceremony gives Traditional Custodians, the Nyoongar (Noongar) peoples, the opportunity to formally welcome people to their land. This ceremony should be undertaken by Elders acknowledged as such by their family and community.

Information in this glossary has been taken from the South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council's document on Noongar Protocols 'Living Culture – Living Land'.



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