

City of Hobart

Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan

Annual Report – June 2023

INTRODUCTION

The City of Hobart's Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan (ACAP) was developed in response to Aboriginal community and staff aspirations heard during a significant engagement process which commenced in 2019 and continued in 2020. The ACAP sets out the City's commitment and approach to working with Aboriginal people and culture. The collaborative and responsive approach taken during the development intends to reflect the type of commitment the City hopes to have with Aboriginal people moving forward – one of respect, consideration, acknowledgement and of walking together. Reconciliation Australia recognises the unique context in Hobart and agreed to endorse the ACAP.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The scope is broad and inclusive and covers all divisions at the City of Hobart:

- Ensured the provision of a 'Welcome to Country' at all major events and important meetings
- Completed a major cultural artwork installation and launch at the front of Hobart Town Hall, with work by Aboriginal artist Caleb Nichols-Mansell
- Created historical change with the Creative Hobart Team in obtaining a major milestone in the confirmed decision to remove the Crowther Statue, implementing change and recognition on a global scale, as the first of its kind
- Created the Respectful Language Guide – completed and implemented for internal staff both as a staff and stakeholder resource and an outward facing public document to be used on City's website
- Following the update of the City's 17-year-old Aboriginal Strategy and demonstration of inclusiveness, we became officially accredited as a Welcoming City by the National Welcoming Cities Organisation. This national profile on inclusiveness was recognised by acknowledgement in publications with wide distribution – 'Stories of Welcome, Strategies and Case Studies for Building a Welcoming City' and 'Putting out the welcome mat, A guide for creating welcoming cities'.
- Increased engagement with members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community who have shown support for City of Hobart actions towards:
 - increased connectivity and relationship-building through invitation for Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremonies
 - reputational enhancement and engagement through the involvement with Aboriginal art commissioning (four pieces for the City's collection)
 - development of four temporary art projects leading up to Crowther Project
 - participation in NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation week each year (staff awareness sessions, Soapbox billboards in Mathers Place, takara/nipalua walk)
 - development of guidelines for Aboriginal Art Commissioning

CHALLENGES

There have been considerable challenges in delivering the Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan over the past two years. Employee changes impacted the work immensely, leaving the current role of Aboriginal Programs Officer vacant since July 2021.

Organisational restructure and change within the City of Hobart has also impacted the length of time taken to deliver some of the Council-wide projects and initiatives that achieve outcomes in the ACAP.

Another universal issue that caused continued and lasting impact over the past few years has been coronavirus. There has been significant impact on financial and human resources which has meant some of the higher cost projects, or those requiring resources from across the organisation have been unable to be delivered as outlined in the commitment.

KEY PROJECTS MOVING FORWARD

- To undertake a review of ACAP work with Aboriginal Consultants to inform the development of an Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan 2024-2027 and ongoing engagement opportunities with Tasmanian Aboriginal community
- Work with the Aboriginal Consultant to develop a document to guide our work with the Aboriginal Community from 2024-2027
- Engage with Aldermen/Councillors and executive management to lead a positive conversation about the new document for 2024-27 and Provide opportunities for City of Hobart staff to celebrate Aboriginal people, heritage & culture and build relationships
- Engage with members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community to lead a positive conversation about the ACAP 2024-27
- Identify ongoing ACAP resources and delivery
- Work with the Aboriginal Consultant to reengage the support committee/consider future engagement with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community
- Support the Aboriginal community to deliver events and programs within the City of Hobart
- Encourage respect and acknowledgement of Aboriginal people and culture across our sphere of influence
- Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.
- Support truth-telling across the City, including the acknowledgement of the darkness of our shared history.
- Build culturally safe spaces through flag flying and visible acknowledgements - display the Aboriginal flag and/or an acknowledgement in the Town Hall and Council Centre foyers
- Publicly acknowledge Aboriginal people in print communications by developing meaningful acknowledgements of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in relevant corporate communications including print, web and email communications.
- Progress campaigns such as 'Racism. It Stops with Me'

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information or feedback please contact City of Hobart via coh@hobartcity.com.au or 6238 2711