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RECONCILIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 7 December 2021 at 6.05pm on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Cr Ashleigh Vandenberg	Councillor
Cr Bob Turner	Councillor
Aunty Julianne Axelford	Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Corporation representative
Stephanie Skinner	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation representative
Jillian West	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation representative*
Karen Jones	Melton Aboriginal Community Member
Jo Layton	Melton Aboriginal Community Member
John Bentley	Melton Community Member
Dayane Mardesich	Coordinator, Community Capacity
Elizabeth Johnston	For vacant position - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officer

* Membership endorsed at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 13 December 2021.

In Attendance:

Nicole Misurelli	Manager People and Culture
Elissa Haley	Communications Coordinator

Quorum: *Quorum will consist of one (1) Councillor, one (1) Council Officer and four (4) Melton Aboriginal Community Members.*

Chairperson: Cr Ashleigh Vandenberg

Minutes: Elizabeth Johnston

1. Welcome and introductions

Cr Vandenberg opened the meeting at 6.05pm. K Jones provided a Welcome to Country. Cr Vandenberg welcomed J West, representing the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

2. Apologies

Sharon Sowter	Chairperson, KIRRIP
Skye Gooch	Melton Aboriginal Community Member
Peter Webster	Melton Aboriginal Community Member

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil

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4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

Cr Vandenberg advised that minutes from the meeting on 21 September were confirmed by the committee via email on 7 October and endorsed at the Council meeting on 25 October 2021.

5. Business Arising

Action: Cultural Safety Commitments to be available at each meeting with the Terms of Reference

Cr Vandenberg read out the Committee's Cultural Safety Commitments and members indicated their awareness of the commitments.

Action: Officers to forward any relevant information on respectful behaviours at Council meetings

Carried over.

Action: A Vickery to receive feedback from members on the proposed alignment of Acknowledgement of Country and present an updated version at the December RAC.

D Mardesich informed members that A Vickery, the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officer has recently left Council and acknowledged her contributions in the role. Council is currently recruiting to fill this position.

D Mardesich advised that no further feedback was received from committee members regarding the Acknowledgement of Country wording, and that the amended wording incorporating the feedback received at the last RAC meeting has been circulated to members for further discussion in tonight's meeting.

Action: A Vickery to check ACHRIS regarding Registered Aboriginal Parties boundaries.

D Mardesich advised that Council confirmed with ACHRIS and formally consulted with the Bunurong Land Council following a suggestion from K Jones at the September meeting, resulting in their attendance at the Reconciliation Advisory Committee.

Action: A Vickery to follow up with S Skinner regarding Wadawurrung training.

S Skinner confirmed that A Vickery contacted her after the September meeting regarding the Wadawurrung training. S Skinner spoke with provider and the training is being organised. N Misurelli advised they could speak about it further in item 6.3, General Business.

6. General Business**6.1 Acknowledgement of Country – proposed wording alignment across Council**

E Haley presented the updated wording for the Acknowledgement of Country, to be included across Council's various communication channels and speeches. Feedback from the September meeting was incorporated, in particular including specific naming of Traditional Owner Registered Aboriginal Parties, use of the term First Nations and removal of the term Kulin Nation. When referring to specific groups in place-based communications, Council officers advised that they would refer to the ACHRIS website.

Committee members discussed how more specific phrasing may be viewed as disrespectful or exclusionary to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. Members discussed the need to acknowledge the extensive history of



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Melton, and recognise groups more broadly. Members also spoke about the need to ensure language is inclusive of different genders.

J West left the meeting at 6.28pm and returned at 6.32pm

Committee members agreed that it is important to have an Acknowledgement of Country that is respectful of the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. Furthermore, members emphasised the need to work together and for communities to educate themselves on local history for effective steps toward reconciliation and to ensure all peoples felt culturally safe, included and respected.

It was decided that all members would be invited to email their proposed wording to Council for further discussion. Members agreed that more notice prior to the meeting with the wording in writing is important, and this was acknowledged by Council officers.

Actions:

Members to email recommended wording for the Acknowledgement of Country to Council.

E Haley and Council officers to review feedback and incorporate it into the Acknowledgement of Country wording for the RAC's consideration and endorsement by Council.

6.2 Reconciliation Action Plan Update

D Mardesich advised that due to staff departures and difficulty engaging consultants Council has been delayed in commencing with the engagement phase for the development of the new Reconciliation Action Plan. Council is in the final stages of engaging Aboriginal consultants, which is now anticipated to begin from early 2022. This will enable Council to ensure the process is comprehensive and inclusive of the different communities in the City of Melton.

The background of the new Reconciliation Action Plan development was presented by A Vickery at the September meeting. D Mardesich will circulate the presentation as J Layton and J West were not in attendance at that meeting.

Action:

Council officers to circulate presentation on the development of the next Reconciliation Action Plan.

6.3 Update on Cultural Awareness training for Councillors and Executive

N Misurelli advised that Council has engaged the organisation NJAC to work with the traditional owner groups on what the training would include. Councillors and the executive team have provided some feedback about the timing for when the training will occur, which is expected to be in February 2022. S Skinner and J West advised that they had been contacted by Paula from NJAC.

6.4 Meeting dates for 2022

Cr Vandenberg advised that meeting dates for 2022 have been tentatively scheduled for:

- Tuesday 8 March 2022
- Tuesday 7 June 2022
- Tuesday 6 September 2022
- Tuesday 6 December 2022

These will be confirmed with calendar invitations from the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officer.

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Action:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officer to send calendar invitations to members to confirm meeting dates.

6.5 Updates from Members

In response to a question from J Layton, S Skinner advised during conversations in 2019 that no funding had been received for the Platypus Festival.

In response to a question from J Bentley, D Mardesich advised that the process for the request on the renaming of the lake at the Melton Botanic Garden is progressing. Officers have confirmed these processes internally and have requested advice on possible names with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung to proceed with consultation.

Cr Turner noted that some employment engagement is happening at Kirrip House on 8 December 2021, and asked members to share this with their networks. Interested people can contact P Webster for more information.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 8 March 2022 commencing at 6.00pm at a location to be advised.

8. Close of Business

Cr Vandenberg thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting at 7.00pm.