

A Committee for First Nations matters

Background

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee (which replaced the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee) contributed to Council's commitment to engaging and supporting diverse communities as outlined in Banyule's Council Plan and *Marrageil Strategy* between July 2024 and July 2031.

In June 2015, Council established its first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee to provide feedback to Council about the key issues and concerns of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in Banyule.

In 2009 Banyule Council adopted the Banyule Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians. This Statement was developed in partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Elders and marked the start of Council's commitment to working alongside the Traditional Custodial Owners of the land on which we live, work, meet and play, to advance the aspirations of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In 2024 Banyule Council adopted the *Marrageil Strategy* which supports enhancing local Aboriginal self-determination, and this committee will guide its implementation.

The Banyule First Nations Advisory Committee meets on the lands of the Traditional Custodians the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.

Purpose

The aim of this Advisory Committee is to provide Council with guidance, advice and information on Inclusion, Access and Equity issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to oversee the development of Council's *Marrageil Strategy* between July 2024 and July 2031.

To help Council understand and address issues and opportunities related to the First nations communities. This includes:

- Social: Support people to feel welcome and part of the community.
- Access: Foster equitable opportunities to use service and participate in activities.
- Equity: Treat everyone fairly and support them to access what they need to succeed.
- Human Rights: Protecting everyone's basic rights and freedoms.

Committee objectives

- Support and oversee the development, implementation and reporting phases of Council's *Marrageil Strategy* between July 2024 and July 2031.
- Provide feedback and advice to Council on its policies, plans, services and projects that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Consider and provide advice on key Government initiatives, programs and reviews that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Assist Council to promote the benefits of diversity and enhance understanding about the barriers to equality facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Provide advice to Council in relation to its communication, engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Key priorities of the committee term

- Name: Determine and establish the new name of the committee.
- Respect: Tackle racism, ageism, ableism, discrimination, and gender and family-based violence.
- Social Connection: Create meaningful and inclusive opportunities for community connections.
- Communication: Improve ways to share information and opportunities.
- Acknowledgement: Highlight and raise awareness of the contributions people that are Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander make to the Banyule community.
- Celebration: Celebrate and highlight Aboriginal culture throughout the municipality

Membership

Essential selection criteria:

1. Ability to assist Council to address the key priorities of the committee.
2. Live, work or study, or have a relevant connection with Banyule
3. Knowledge and understanding of the needs and issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Banyule.
4. An interest and involvement in local and/or broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community projects, advocacy and networks.
5. Direct links to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community populations and/or organisations in Banyule.

Up to 15 members, including:

- Up to 12 community members
- Up to 3 community organisational members

Organisational membership

Organisational members are voluntary and may hold a position on the committee for a term of two years. The committee will consist of:

- o Representatives from community organisations, agencies and service providers that have a focus on provision of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Banyule. These will include (but not limited to):
 - o Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee,
 - o Reconciliation Banyule, and
 - o Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Please note for voting purposes only Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander community members have voting rights.

Each Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander community member present has a vote on each question to be decided, and if the votes are equal, the Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander chairperson presiding has the casting vote. Members may also abstain from voting.

Meeting frequency and duration

Meetings will be held six (6) times per year and for a duration of two (2) hours.

Meetings will be held in a location accessible to public transport and with adequate accessible parking. Heidelberg West, Watsonia, Greensborough or Ivanhoe.

Role of the Co-Chair

This Committee operates under a co-chair arrangement, shared between a First Nations Advisory Committee member and a Banyule City Council Councillor. The First Nations member co-chair is appointed annually in line with the appointment of Councillor Delegates to Advisory Committees, typically confirmed at the Council Meeting following the Mayoral election.

Cultural Protocols

This committee commits to culturally safe and respectful practices that centre the voices of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

- **Speaking Order:** Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander members speak first on each agenda item. Non-First Nations members may contribute after, with First Nations members invited to speak last before the item is closed.
- **Private Discussions:** At the direction of the First Nations Co-Chair, culturally sensitive topics may be discussed privately by First Nations members. Non-Indigenous members may be asked to leave the room (or digital space) during these discussions.
- **Cultural Knowledge:** Cultural knowledge or stories shared by Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander members remain their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and must not be shared or reproduced without their consent.

All members are expected to uphold these protocols to support cultural safety, respect, and self-determination.