

## **Inclusive Banyule - Inclusive Business**

# **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Inclusion 101 Fact Sheet**

**Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.**

## **Inclusive Banyule**

For thousands of years, what is now the municipality of Banyule was occupied by the First Nations' Peoples, including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.

Today, Banyule is home to around 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who are descendants from clans across the country.

Anywhere we conduct our daily lives in Banyule - going to work, to school, doing shopping, playing sport - we are doing so on Wurundjeri land. It is important to acknowledge this very real connection between past and present, and to remain respectful of this incredible heritage.

### **Banyule Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians**

In 2009, Banyule Council adopted the Banyule Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians. The statement articulates Council's commitment to working alongside the Traditional Custodians of this region; to advance the aspirations of our local Aboriginal communities; and to promote, protect and preserve their identity and culture.

### **Barrbunin Beek**

In 2014, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's Gathering Place was launched in Heidelberg West. Barrbunin Beek is home to a number of groups and activities including the Sista Circle Women's group and Ngurnungeata Men's Group.

### **How can businesses be inclusive of Banyule's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face discrimination in a wide range of areas. This is due to Australia's colonial history. Colonialism embedded notions of Indigenous people and culture which were wrong. For example, the principle of 'Terra Nullius', that the land was uninhabited until European arrival resulted in more than 200 years of policies and practices that have been identified as contributing to something called 'systemic racism': where societies systems negatively impact upon the life chances of a particular social group. This continues to this day – and in ways we often don't recognise.

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A [Beyond Blue report](#) found discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be one of the most prevalent forms of discrimination in Australia. The impacts of discrimination on mental health and wellbeing can be extreme. Everyday forms of discrimination and exclusion experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include:

- being avoided
- being treated suspiciously
- racist jokes
- missing out on jobs
- negative stereotypes such as a culture of low expectations.

### **How can your business be more welcoming and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers?**

- Take the self-audit checklist in the Inclusive Business toolkit to see where you and your team are at.
- Plan some improvements: one at a time can help staff to understand their meaning and to help your business with continuous improvement.
- Share this toolkit, including the language guide, with all your staff.
- Make 'Inclusion' a standard item on the agenda at team meetings – identify good practice and any training needs. If you'd like some support, you can speak with Banyule Council's Community & Social Planning team.

### **Language guide**

We know from research that inclusive cultures are high performance cultures – they deliver greater performance and productivity. How we speak to and about each other influences how we treat each other, and so it also builds our workplace culture. Here are some familiar and less familiar ways your business can understand and use inclusive language.

- Aboriginal is the term used to describe the native people and their descendants from mainland Australia, including Tasmania. Aboriginal is a Latin term meaning 'original inhabitants'.
- Torres Strait Islander is the term used to describe the native people and their descendants from the Torres Strait region of Australia, the body of water and its islands between Australia and New Guinea.
- First Nations' People(s) is commonly used to refer to Indigenous people throughout the world, such as Native Americans. 'First Nations' people/Australians' can also be used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people collectively.

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- Koorie/Koori/Gurri are terms used by Aboriginal people from Victoria (and Southern NSW) to differentiate themselves from Aboriginal groups from other parts of Australia.
- Wurundjeri (Willam) People are the Traditional Custodians of the land referred to as Banyule.
- Traditional Custodians – is a term describing the cultural relationship of Aboriginal people to country
- Elders refers to the Aboriginal leaders in community. Elders have obligation and responsibilities for ‘caring for country’. Elders also have the authority to determine appropriate use of their culture outside of the Indigenous community. The term ‘Elder’ may not always mean men and women over fifty or sixty years of age. An Elder may be a person recognised within the clan or group who has the trust, knowledge and understanding of their culture and permission to speak on such matters. Young people may be given permission to talk on behalf of a clan or community group.
- Auntie and Uncle are terms of respect used to address or refer to an Elder – they don’t have to be a blood relative
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are capitalised as they are nouns. Capitalising them is a sign of respect and cultural understanding – as you capitalise the noun Australian.

### **Further changes you might consider:**

- Identify procurement opportunities which use [Aboriginal suppliers](#).
- Commemorate significant dates. You could hold a morning tea with some shared information, a short film watched by staff together, or attend a NAIDOC march.
- There are lots of free cultural awareness webinars online – why not build inclusive practice training into your business plan. You can also invite a member of Banyule Council’s Community & Social Planning Team to come and chat with your team.
- Are conversations at work inclusive? If staff or colleagues are using language which is racist or which excludes some people, call it out!
- Banyule has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place in Heidelberg West. Find out about activities at Barrbunin Beek by liking their [Facebook page](#).
- Are your recruitment practices attracting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island applicants? Why not advertise vacancies in Aboriginal media (the Koori Mail); and explicitly ‘welcome’ applications from First Nations’ People candidates on generic recruitment websites.

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# **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Significant Dates Guide**

### **26 January – Survival Day**

On 26 January 1788, Captain Arthur Phillip took formal possession of the colony of New South Wales and raised the British flag in Sydney Cove. In the early 1880s, this day was known as 'First Landing', 'Anniversary Day' or 'Foundation Day'. In 1946 the Commonwealth and state governments agreed to unify the celebration and call it 'Australia Day'. The day became a public holiday in 1818 (its 30th anniversary) and since 1994 has been celebrated by all states and territories.

However, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel that this day marks the commemoration of a deep loss – loss of their sovereign rights to their land, loss of family, loss of the right to practice their culture. This day is therefore also known as 'Invasion Day', 'Day of Mourning', 'Survival Day' or, since 2006, 'Aboriginal Sovereignty Day'. The name Survival Day emphasises that Aboriginal culture is still strong, and that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' identities are positive and alive, despite all that has happened since colonisation. Survival Day has become one of the biggest national Indigenous cultural events.

### **13 February – National Apology Day**

This event marks the anniversary of the Apology in 2008 to Australia's Indigenous peoples in the House of Representatives. The apology was made by former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd for past laws, policies and practices that have impacted on Australia's First Nations Peoples, particularly members of the Stolen Generations. The motion was supported by the Opposition and passed through both houses of Parliament. Many members of the Stolen Generations were present in the Chamber to hear the Apology and thousands more filled the Great Hall of Parliament House and flowed out onto the lawns to watch it on big screens.

### **19 March – National Close the Gap Day**

In 2006, more than 40 national organisations came together to form Close the Gap – Australia's largest ever campaign to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Every year, Australians are encouraged to hold their own event on National Close the Gap Day to raise awareness about the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Since 2006, the Close the Gap campaign has achieved an enormous amount through community support.

### **21 March – Harmony Day**

Harmony Day is a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home – from the traditional owners of this land to those who have come from many countries around the world. By participating in Harmony Day activities, people can learn and understand how all Australians from diverse backgrounds equally belong to this nation and enrich it.

### **26 May – National Sorry Day**

This is a significant day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and particularly for Stolen Generations survivors. Commemorating 'Sorry Day' was one of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home report, which was tabled in Parliament on 26 May 1997. This report was the result of a National Inquiry into the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families, communities and cultural identity. The first 'Sorry Day' was held in Sydney in 1998 and is now held nationally with memorials and commemorative events that honour the Stolen Generations. In 2014, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's Gathering Place was launched in Heidelberg West. Barrbunin Beek is home to a number of groups and activities, including the Sista Circle Women's group and Ngurnungeata Men's Group.

*Note: dates are correct for 2021, but may change in coming year in line with weekends and public holidays.*

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### **27 May – 3 June – National Reconciliation Week**

This week is an ideal time for everyone to join the reconciliation conversation and reflect on shared histories, contributions and achievements. It is held annually and is a time to celebrate and build on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. Preceded by National Sorry Day on 26 May, National Reconciliation Week is framed by two key events in Australia's history, which provide strong symbols for reconciliation:

- 27 May 1967 – the referendum date when more than 90% of Australians voted to give the government power to make laws for Indigenous people and recognise them in the census.
- 3 June 1992 – the historic Mabo decision (see below).

### **3 June – Mabo Day (part of National Reconciliation Week)**

Mabo Day marks the anniversary of the High Court of Australia's judgement in 1992 in the Mabo case. This is a day of particular significance for Torres Strait Islander Australians. Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo's name is synonymous with native title rights. His story began in May 1982 when he and fellow Murray (Mer) Islanders David Passi, Sam Passi, James Rice and Celuia Salee instituted a claim in the High Court for native title to the Murray (Mer) Islands in the Torres Strait.

The claim was made against the State of Queensland, which responded by seeking to legislate to extinguish retrospectively any native title on the Islands. This was challenged in the High Court on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act. On 3 June 1992 the High Court accepted the claim by Eddie Mabo and the other claimants that their people (the Meriam people) had occupied the Islands of Mer for hundreds of years before the arrival of the British and found that the Meriam people were 'entitled as against the whole world to possession, occupation, use and enjoyment of lands in the Murray Islands.' The decision overturned a legal fiction that Australia was terra nullius (a land belonging to no one) at the time of British colonisation.

### **4-11 July – National NAIDOC Week**

NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) week celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognises the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920s which sought to increase awareness of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians. All Australians are encouraged to participate. The 2021 National NAIDOC theme is 'Heal Country' This theme calls for all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

### **4 August – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) is a celebration of Indigenous children. NAICD was first observed by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) in 1988. Each year SNAICC produces and sends out resources to help celebrations for NAICD.

### **9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous People**

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of the World's Indigenous People was first proclaimed by the General Assembly in December 1994 and is observed on 9 August each year to promote and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population. This event also recognizes the achievements and contributions that indigenous people make to improve world issues such as environmental protection.

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# Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

## RESPECT checklist

Questions and tips	Response Yes/no/partially met / NA/don't know	Evidence/comments Include any evidence to support your response	Recommendations Identify actions or improvements recommended, noting resources that may be required
Our organisation has a policy on Welcome to Country and on Acknowledgement of Country – and understands the difference between the two.			
Staff 'Acknowledge Country' by reading out the Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at formal events and meetings.			
Our service has a sign in the foyer/front office/website acknowledging the Traditional Custodians (of Banyule).			
Our service has local Aboriginal artwork displayed in the foyer/front office/website.			
Our service has Aboriginal posters, pamphlets and relevant service information displayed.			
Our service recognises one of more days of importance to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.			
Our offices display geographic posters/maps which outline the Aboriginal language groups/nations within the particular area.			
Our service can be accessed by people with mobility issues.			
Our office has enough chairs to accommodate a large family.			
We offer services that don't rely on having computer access.			



**Banyule**  
City Council