



Central Goldfields Shire Council

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2024 – December 2025



Pictured: 'garingilang gatjin wii' was opened in August 2024. Meaning "water and fire garden" in Dja Dja Wurrung language, the Garden is a welcoming space for our local community and visitors to come and reflect and learn and share culture.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges and extends appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elder's past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Pictured: Local kindergarten child enjoying nature as part of the "bush kinder" program.



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcome Central Goldfields Shire Council to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Central Goldfields Shire Council joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — *Reflect*, *Innovate*, *Stretch* and *Elevate* — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Central Goldfields Shire Council to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Central Goldfields Shire Council, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for an inclusive community that values and recognises First Nations cultures and heritage and builds historical knowledge of the wrongs of the past and their impact. A community where First Nations people feel culturally safe and supported with equitable access to opportunities and participation in community life.

Our Business

Our Vision

To be an engaged, flourishing, lively and inclusive community.

Our Purpose

Central Goldfields Shire Council is a public statutory body that operates under the legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020. The Act sets out the role of Council as an elected body to provide leadership for the good governance of Central Goldfields. Council's elected members and employees work within a framework of systems and processes, to ensure they comply with the Act and follow good business practice.

Council's stated purpose is 'To seek, capture and develop opportunities to make our Shire a place of choice to live, work, visit and enjoy.' The Council Plan 2021-2025 provides a framework to achieve this purpose through actions relating to four strategic objectives:

- Our Community's Wellbeing
- Our Growing Economy
- Our Spaces and Places
- Leading Change

Council has varying roles in the delivery of the Council Plan and often relies on community partnerships, networks, other key organisations and State and Federal Government:

- **Provider** - Council is a leading provider of a wide range of services to the community
- **Facilitator** - Council facilitates, partners and plans with others to achieve these strategies
- **Statutory Authority** - Council is responsible for legislative requirements
- **Advocate** - Council advocates on behalf of/with the community to achieve these strategies

Our Community's Vision Statement

In 2031, we are an inspiring, thriving and prosperous community of choice, we've taken bold steps towards growing our economy and our community is full of optimism and opportunities. We are kind, connected and inclusive and we nurture creativity, leadership and innovation. We value and invest in our young people and our health and wellbeing is high. We live sustainably, cherish and protect our environment and heritage and we have access to outstanding jobs, education, health, community services, infrastructure, and affordable housing.

(Council Plan 2021-2025)

Central Goldfields Shire Council

Central Goldfields Shire Council currently employs 238 staff and at present does not have staff who have identified to the organisation as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

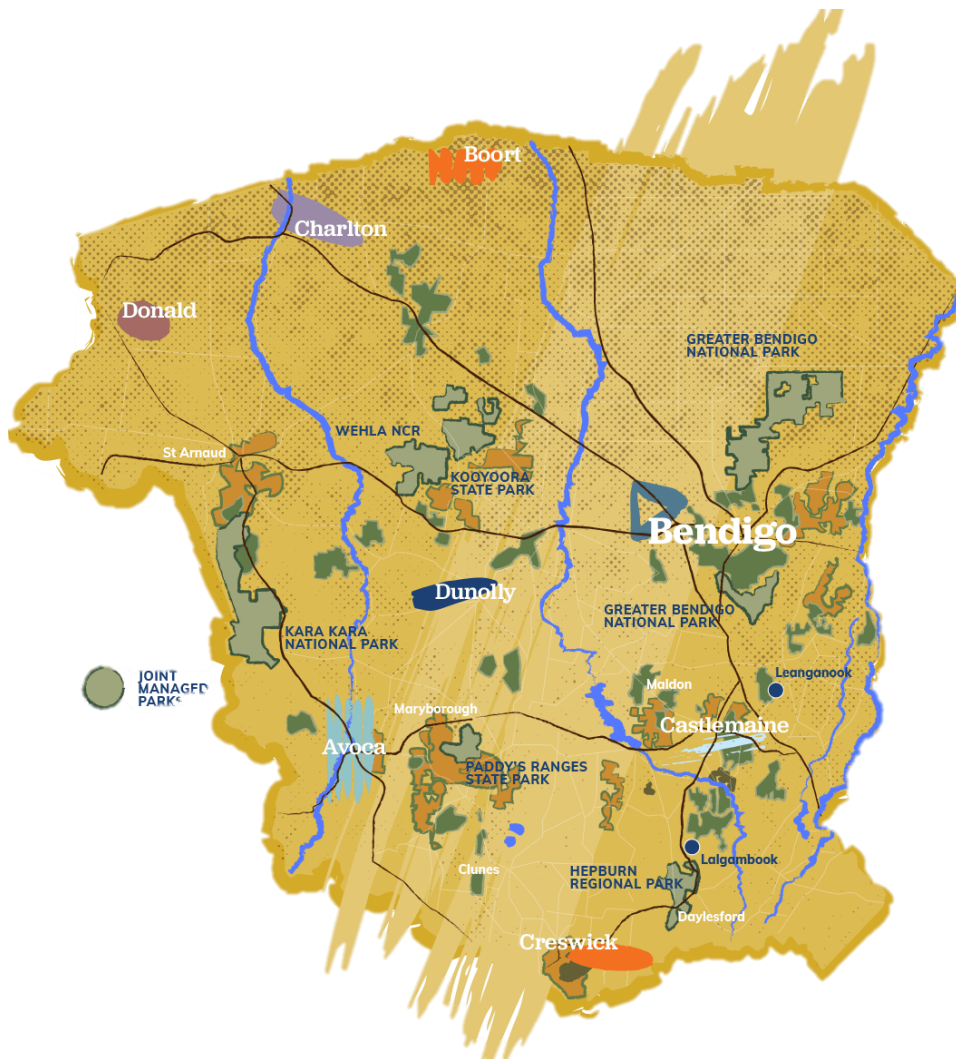
Permanent Full-Time	95
Permanent Part-Time	97
Temporary Full-Time	9
Temporary Part-Time	14
Casual	23
First Nations	0
Councillors	7
Total	238

Djandak

Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) is located on Djandak, the land of The Dja Dja Wurrung clans (Djaara) and we acknowledge their rights as Traditional Owners under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement made with the State of Victoria (2013). Council is working in partnership with Djaara to recognise their rights and aspirations as outlined in the Agreement and the Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan.

The Djaara have lived on their traditional lands and cared for Djandak over many thousands of years.

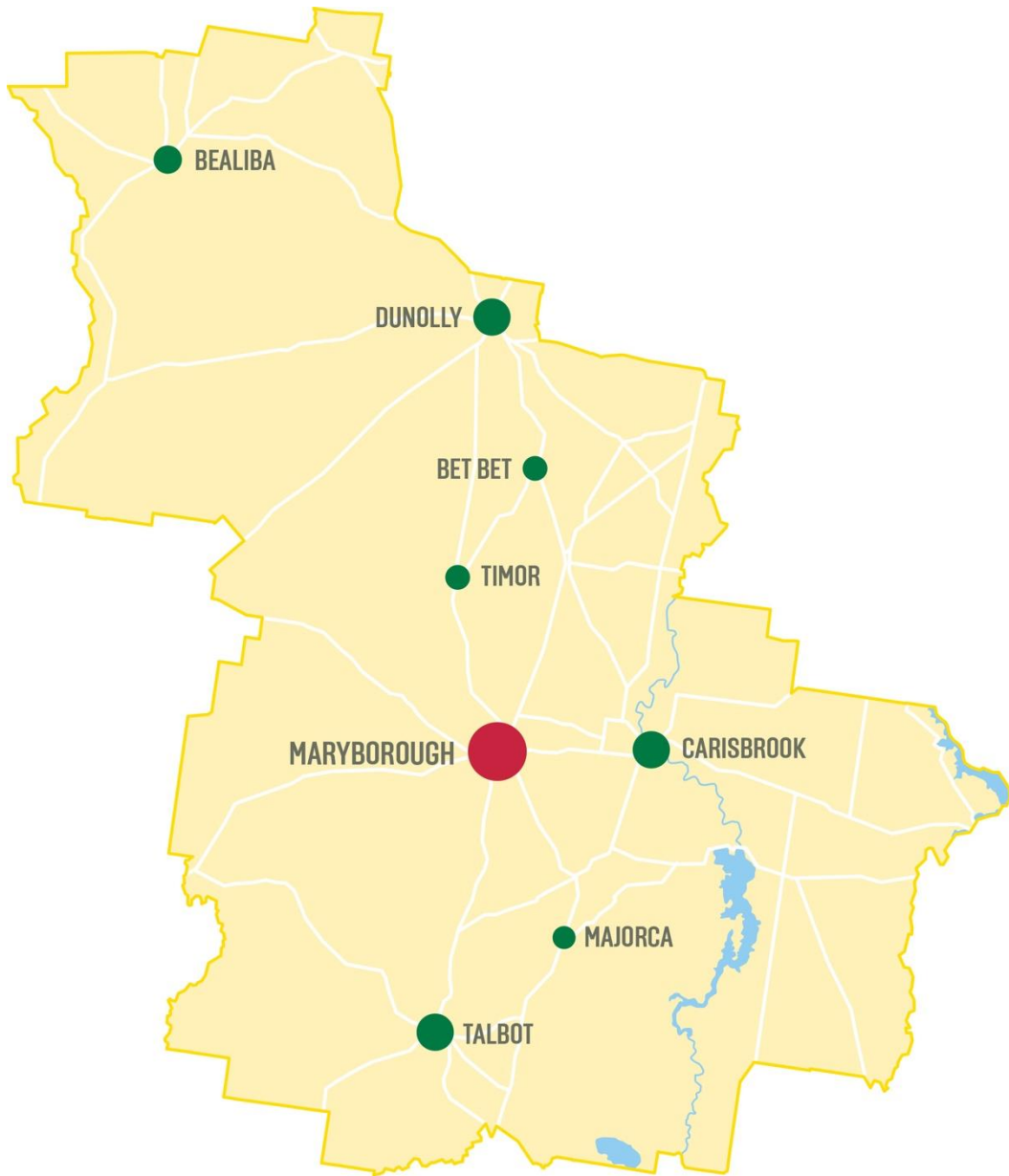
For the Djaara, Djandak is more than just a landscape, it is more than what is visible to the eye; it is a living entity which holds the stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased. Their Martinga kuli (Ancestors) looked after this country and it is for this reason, they are duty bound to look after it for the future generations.



Central Goldfields Shire

Central Goldfields Shire covers an area of 1,532 square kilometres and is home to an estimated population of 13,483 people. Central Goldfields Shire is bounded by Loddon Shire in the north, Pyrenees Shire in the west, Mt Alexander Shire in the east and Hepburn Shire to the south. Maryborough is the shire's major business centre where 61% of the population call home (approximately 8,160). Other smaller townships include Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Majorca, Talbot, Bowenvale-Timor, Daisy Hill.

First Nations people make up approximately 2.25% of the population of the Central Goldfields community, compared to the Victorian population data where First Nations people make up approximately 1.0% of the state population (Census 2021, ABS).



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Why we have developed a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Developing and implementing this Reconciliation Action Plan enables Council to clearly articulate to staff and our community the actions we're taking to advance reconciliation and provides a platform for further conversations and initiatives to take place.

Council Plan 2021-2025 Strategic Priority 6: *Value, celebrate and actively engage First Nations culture and people*. The Priorities' actions are:

- Create culturally safe places and support self-determination.
- Promote and pursue improved engagement with First Nations Peoples.
- Work with Traditional Owners to develop ways of formalising Council's commitment to reconciliation.
- Work with key stakeholders to close the gap in First Nations life outcomes, particularly through program delivery in the areas of maternal and child health and early childhood education.

Council identified the importance of a Reconciliation Action Plan and Cultural Awareness training for staff, as part of its *Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2022* to build more efficient and supportive relationships with First Nations community and stakeholders.

How we will implement our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Implementation of the Plan will be coordinated through establishing a Reconciliation Working Group including key internal roles and First Nations representation to be facilitated by Council's RAP Champion (Manager Community Partnerships). This will be supported by Council's Leadership Group taking accountability for the Reconciliation Action Plan deliverables and leading the cultural change in the organisation. In addition, Council will access and participate in reconciliation networks with other local governments, Djaara and key stakeholders in our community.

Our Reconciliation journey

Council actively participates in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events and flies the Aboriginal flag outside the Council offices in Maryborough. It identified the need for a Reconciliation Action Plan in 2020 and recruited an Aboriginal Reconciliation Officer (a temporary position) through the Working for Victoria Program (an initiative to support local jobs caused by job losses related to the COVID-19 Pandemic). Since then, Council has taken the following actions:

- established working relationships with Traditional Owners and key First Nations community stakeholders through membership of the Central Goldfields Shire Aboriginal Engagement Group
- participates in the Central Victorian Local Government Reconciliation Network
- allocated budget for the development of this Plan
- established a Supply Nation Membership and is joining Kinaway
- works with local First Nations Stakeholders to facilitate community NAIDOC celebrations
- flies the Aboriginal Flag outside our main office in Maryborough
- has a collaborative working relationship with Bendigo and District Aboriginal Coop (BDAC)
- reviewed its procurement policy to include clauses that support engagement with First Nations businesses in the region
- is a member of the Aboriginal Business Capability Building Initiative being led by the City of Greater Bendigo. This initiative seeks to strengthen local, social and economic outcomes by maximising local spend in the region with identified Aboriginal businesses and focusing on creating local jobs, including jobs for Aboriginal people
- Council worked closely with Djandak (the enterprises arm of Djaara) on the development of a Welcome Stranger digital animation for the Visitors Centre that hopes to build awareness, respect and appreciation for the impacts of the gold rush on Djaara and Djandak
- The Central Goldfields Art Gallery's Indigenous Interpretive Garden was designed collaboratively with Dja Dja Wurrung community representatives and artists, aiming to weave important cultural elements and references into the design. The Garden was completed and launched in August 2024

Our Actions



Pictured: A series of rockwells are just some of the culturally significant design elements that feature at garingilang gatjin wii. Elders Aunty Marilynne Nicholls and Uncle Rick Nelson designed these elements and guided the DJANDAK team on all aspects of the garden's design. ***Image credit:*** Bill Conroy.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence 	March 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support First Nations community capacity to participate in Shire activities through community engagement strategies, council planning and service delivery 	March 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations 	June 2025	Manager Community Engagement
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff 	May 2025	Manager Community Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event 	27 May – 3 June, 2025	RAP Working Group Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW 	27 May – 3 June, 2025	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff 	May 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Reconciliation through internal communication networks, including email and Workplace 	May 2025	Manager Community Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to engage with Djaara and other external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes 	March 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we can collaborate with on our reconciliation journey, including Djaara 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination 	March 2025	People and Organisation Development Specialist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs 	October 2025	People and Organisation Development Specialist



Pictured: Smoking ceremony held in September 2023 as part of the Walking Country in Paddys Ranges event hosted by the Central Goldfields Climate Group in partnership with DJAARA. The event was an opportunity to walk Country and learn about cultural landscape management in the context of climate change.



Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation 	March 2025	Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation 	November 2024	Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a cultural learning program for employees, volunteers and councillors in the organisation 	December 2024	Manager People and Culture
6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further our understanding of Djaara, the local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our Council's operational area 	January 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Djaara to establish a consistent approach to observing cultural protocols as part of our core business and activities 	February 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate including cultural protocol guidelines for activities funded and/or supported by Council 	February 2025	Manager Tourism, Events and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a cultural protocols inclusion policy for tourism and events including the annual Energy Breakthrough event 	February 2025	Manager Tourism, Events and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols 	May 2025	CEO

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week 	June 2025	Manager Community Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area 	June 2025	Manager Community Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event 	July 2025	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support First Nations Staff to attend community NAIDOC events as part of our core business 	July 2025	CEO



Pictured: Smoking ceremony for the official opening of *garingilang gatjin wii*. Meaning "water and fire garden" in Dja Dja Wurrung language, the Garden is a welcoming space for our local community and visitors to come and reflect and learn and share culture. **Image credit:** Bill Conroy.



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development	▪ Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities	December 2024	Manager People and Culture
	▪ Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation	June 2025	Manager People and Culture
9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	▪ Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	March 2025	Manager Governance, Property and Risk
	▪ Use Supply Nation membership to engage with businesses	April 2025	Manager Governance, Property and Risk



Pictured: 2024 NAIDOC Week celebration held at the Maryborough & District Horse and Pony Club. A day of celebration, reflection, healing and acceptance for the Central Goldfields community.



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and appropriately resource First Nations representation on the RWG 	November 2024	Manager People and Culture
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation and develop and source funding for an appropriate implementation budget 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally 	November 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments 	December 2024	Manager Community Partnerships
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence 	June annually	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey 	1 August annually	Manager Community Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia 	September 2024	Coordinator Community Development
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP 	October 2025	Coordinator Community Development

Council welcomes any enquiries in relation to the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

Please contact mail@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au or 03 5461 0610.