



OUR ADELAIDE.
BOLD.
ASPIRATIONAL.
INNOVATIVE.

Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–2024

Outcomes Report



CITY OF
ADELAIDE

Acknowledgement of Country

City of Adelaide tampendi, ngadlu Kurna yertangga banbabanbalyarnendi (inbarendi). Kurna meyunna yaitya mattanya Womma Tarndanyako.

Parnako yailtya, parnuko tappa purruna, parnuko yerta ngadlu tampendi. Yellaka Kurna meyunna itto yailtya, tappa purruna, yerta kuma burro martendi, burro warriappendi, burro tangka martulyaiendi. Kumarta yaitya miyurna iyangka yalaka ngadlu tampinhi.

City of Adelaide acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

You can also listen to this acknowledgment at:

[cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/ welcome-and-acknowledgement-of-country](https://cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/welcome-and-acknowledgement-of-country)



Snapshot

The impact of the City of Adelaide Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–2024.

The City of Adelaide's commitment to reconciliation and the implementation of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–2024 (RAP) is crucial in bridging the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader population. This commitment reflects the dedication to recognising and celebrating the cultural heritage, rights, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through the implementation of the RAP the City of Adelaide demonstrates a proactive approach to fostering inclusivity, addressing past injustices, and creating equitable opportunities for all community members.

This outcomes report for the 2021–2024 RAP summarises overall achievement and celebrates some of the key outcomes across the RAP's life in artwork development, cultural celebrations, and increased community engagement.

Built on strong governance foundations, every RAP drives change through three core pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

Key Achievements of the 2021–2024 RAP:

- Kurna Voices – cultural mapping
- NAIDOC Week Annual Celebrations
- Handing back of Kurna Artefacts – Ceremony at Pirltawardli
- Place of Reflection – Memorial to Stolen Generations
- The Late Aunty Shirley Peisley AM – making history
- Adelaide Park Lands Cultural burn – a great success
- The Knowledge Project – An insight into Kurna history, spirituality and language
- Kids on Country
- The Uluru Statement from the Heart – installed in the Adelaide Town Hall



Relationships

Focus: At the core of reconciliation lies the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key achievement

Kaurna Voices – cultural mapping

In partnership with the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, the City of Adelaide has developed Kaurna Voices, a project to map the city and showcase culturally significant Kaurna sites through historical text, archival images, oral histories, and video interviews with Kaurna Elders and community leaders.

The Kaurna Voices website was launched during National Reconciliation Week in 2024.

The site's research incorporates Tiati – truth-telling – to offer genuine Kaurna narratives, including stories of the destruction of Dreaming tracks and important cultural sites along River Torrens/Karrawirra Pari.

The interactive map explores the sacred connections of the Kaurna people to the land now known as Adelaide and highlights significant historical events and experiences from early colonisation.

“Cultural mapping is a healing process. Connecting to culture gives young Kaurna people a voice and a purpose.” Uncle Jeffrey Newchurch



(L-R) Corey Turner, Mitzi Nam, Isaiah Turner, Mearle Sampson, Lewis O'Brien, Yvonne Agius, Rosalind Coleman, Tim Agius, Lynette Crocker, Frank Wanganeen, Jeffrey Newchurch and Phillip Saunders.

NAIDOC Week Annual Celebrations

The City of Adelaide proudly joins the nation in celebrating NAIDOC Week, a time dedicated to honouring the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Lord Mayor hosts an annual awards event, and the City of Adelaide holds NAIDOC in the Mall with traditional performances, a celebrated commissioned artwork, and activities to bring together the community to celebrate the rich heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

NAIDOC Week serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of reconciliation and the ongoing journey towards a more inclusive and united community.

Lord Mayor's NAIDOC Award Winner in 2023
Kevin 'Uncle Dookie' O'Loughlin OAM



NAIDOC in the Mall – Artwork Unveiling



Respect

Focus: Recognising the Traditional Owners of the land, the Kurna people, displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, enhancing community awareness and engagement, and advocating for reconciliation

Key Achievement

Handing back of Kurna Artefacts – Ceremony at Pirltawardli

After nearly two centuries, Kurna artefacts gifted to German missionaries have been returned to Kurna land.

A handover smoking ceremony was held in Adelaide, attended by Aboriginal Elders, Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong, and Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock.

The City of Adelaide Golf Operations Team supported the Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation's request to host the ceremony at Pirltawardli, the original location of the artefacts.

The four cultural heritage items—kathawirri (sword), tantanaku (club or bark peeler), wirnta (spear), and wikatyi (net)—hold deep significance for the Kurna people and are over 180 years old. These artefacts are on display for the public at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

"KYAC and the Kurna Community are thrilled that these precious items have found their way home. Home to where they were part of the lives of the Kurna people that created them and where they were such integral parts of our lives."

Mitzi Nam, Chairperson, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), 2024

Place of Reflection – Memorial to Stolen Generations

The Place of Reflection is a high-profile memorial in Rymill Park/Murlawirrapurka (Park 14), developed in collaboration with Aboriginal artist Yvonne Koolmatrie and Karl Meyer of Exhibition Studios. The memorial promotes healing for members of the Stolen Generations, their families, friends and the wider community. It is a place to meet, a place of support, a place to feel connected and a place to reflect. Developed with significant consultation and engagement, it provides an opportunity to engage the wider community and grow understanding of the past and present experiences of the Stolen Generations and their stories.





Located in the pocket park beside Tandanya in the city's East End, the 'Place of Reflection' serves as a gathering space for members of the Stolen Generations, their families, friends, and the broader community to offer mutual support.

At the heart of this space stands a bronze sculpture, a collaborative creation by renowned Ngarrindjerri weaver Aunty Yvonne Koolmatrie and South Australian designer Karl Meyer. The artwork portrays a life-size mother figure with cradling arms, crossed legs, and a bowed head, symbolising the profound absence left by a missing child.

Every element of this thoughtfully designed and landscaped space underscores the deep connection between the natural world and the cultural lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The 'Place of Reflection' was officially unveiled in September 2023.

The Late Aunty Shirley Peisley AM – making history

For the first time in the City of Adelaide's 182-year history, a portrait of an Aboriginal person is displayed on the walls of the City of Adelaide Council Chamber with pioneering reconciliation advocate Aunty Shirley Peisley AM celebrated as part of the Women in the Chamber initiative.

Aunty Shirley Peisley AM was a Ngarrindjeri/Boandik Elder who dedicated her life to working towards reconciliation. Since the 1960s she actively campaigned for Aboriginal rights, playing an important role in the 1967 referendum.

In the Council Chamber, the portrait of the late Aunty Shirley Peisley, who recently passed away, is prominently displayed, serving as a poignant reminder of her enduring legacy and contributions to our community.

"Aunty Shirley is a fearless role model not just for South Australian women, but women across Australia, who demonstrates the power of faith, integrity, generosity and optimism", said the Lord Mayor.



Opportunities

Focus: Enhancing the employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at the City of Adelaide, extending financial support to community groups and organisations, and partnering with Kurna and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to amplify cultural tourism opportunities in the city.

Key achievement

Adelaide Park Lands Cultural burn – a great success

In November 2019, as the nation grappled with the onset of what would become one of Australia's most severe fire seasons, the City of Adelaide's Horticulture Team, project managers, and members of the Kurna community convened in the city centre with traditional fire practitioner Victor Steffensen. A descendant of the Tagalaka people from Northern Queensland, Victor has dedicated the past 20 years to sharing his knowledge of cultural burning practices.

The Cultural Burn was both historic and celebratory. It marked the first time the Kurna people could publicly practice their cultural burning techniques since many of their traditions were displaced following European colonisation. It also represented the first cultural burn conducted in an Australian capital city.

Over 200 participants, including representatives from other Aboriginal groups and local residents, joined Kurna Elders and the Lord Mayor for a moving Welcoming Ceremony that highlighted the event's significant cultural, ecological, and reconciliation impacts. This ground breaking project, which reintroduced traditional fire management practices to the Adelaide Park Lands for the first time in over 240 years, showcased the City of Adelaide's strong commitment to meaningful reconciliation.

The burn focused on incorporating Kurna traditional knowledge into the management of biodiversity in the Adelaide Park Lands.

"To be able to have fire in the City of Adelaide, what that does for me as an Aboriginal man, is it empowers me. It gives me strength, it lets me know that, hey we have a voice here and we're part of some of that decision making around what happens to our country on the Adelaide Plains." Alan Sumner, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation Director



The Knowledge Project – An insight into Kurna history, spirituality and language

The Knowledge Project stems from a two-year City of Adelaide Community Impact Strategic Partnership awarded to Kuma Kaaru in 2023. The partnership aims to foster a deeper understanding between the Kurna people and the broader community.

The goal is to promote better conversations and mutual respect through shared understanding. By fostering open dialogue in a non-judgemental

environment, The Knowledge Project aims to bridge cultural gaps and strengthen community connections.

To be delivered in two stages, Stage 1 has allowed Kuma Kaaru to develop two videos ocussed on Modern History and Spirituality.



Kids on Country

Kids on Country is an ongoing annual event, initially launched in 2018, and held in Wirrarninthi (Park 23) adjacent to the billabong in collaboration with the Kurna Community.

Designed by Kurna leaders, the program aims to connect young people with their cultural roots, fostering a strong sense of inclusion and identity. Over the years, this initiative has become a lasting commitment, now firmly embedded within the City of Adelaide's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

Kids on Country provides Kurna young people with the opportunity to connect with their culture by walking on their ancestral lands. It offers a community-led learning experience designed to deepen young people's knowledge and understanding of Kurna culture. Additionally, the event creates a day for sharing their rich cultural heritage with Aboriginal children from other language groups as well as non-Aboriginal children, fostering cross-cultural connections and mutual respect.

In 2023, 360 primary school aged children in year 3 to year 5 from primary schools across greater Adelaide and the city with high numbers of Aboriginal students participated in the initiative.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart – installed in the Adelaide Town Hall

The City of Adelaide endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart and is committed to recognising and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on three core principles – respect, relationships, and opportunities. The statement is displayed in the Adelaide Town Hall as a symbol and statement of City of Adelaide's commitment to reconciliation.





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