

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028

Wednesday, 6 May 2026

Reconciliation Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Program Contact:

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Public

Approving Officer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks the Reconciliation Committee’s feedback on the draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 (**Attachment A**). The Action Plan supports the City of Adelaide’s commitment, through the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2027 and Strategic Plan 2024-2028, to achieve an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate of at least 2%.

The proposed Action Plan outlines a practical and measurable approach to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, enhancing cultural safety, and supporting meaningful and sustainable employment outcomes by targeting three key focus areas: Attraction and Recruitment, Retention and Development, and Cultural and Psychological Safety.

Engagement with Panpapanpalya in April 2026 has highlighted:

- The need to clearly define what cultural safety means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at City of Adelaide, and embedding it through ongoing learning, awareness, and meaningful recognition of culture and Country.
- The need for leaders who are both accountable and capable of achieving Aboriginal employment outcomes and equipped to respond appropriately to concerns and ask informed questions.
- The need for strong governance to ensure commitments in the Action Plan are delivered, and the harm of setting and then not delivering on commitments.
- The importance of Aboriginal employees influencing and shaping decisions and outcomes arising from the Action Plan.
- A focus on strengthening recruitment through clear, inclusive communication, improved candidate support, and culturally aware, bias-informed selection processes
- Ensuring cultural leave, flexible work, and support mechanisms are not only available but actively enabled and embedded in practice.
- Supporting retention and growth through access to cultural mentoring and opportunities, internal and external, that strengthen connection and belonging.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE

1. Notes the presentation to Panpapanpalya on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 as contained in Attachment A to Item 6.5 on the agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on 6 May 2026.
2. Notes the work undertaken to develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 and provides the following feedback:
 - 2.1. _____
 - 2.2. _____

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Alignment – Our Corporation</p> <p>The report outlines progress towards the City of Adelaide’s strategic target of achieving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate of 2%.</p>
Policy	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 aligns with commitments in the City of Adelaide’s Stretch RAP 2024-2027.
Consultation	Following consultation with Aboriginal employees and engagement with Panpapanpalya, the CoA is consulting with the Reconciliation Committee on the design of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028.
Resource	The People Program will lead the implementation of the Action Plan, drawing on external resource experience and skills as needed.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The development and implementation of the CoA’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 will support our commitment to achieving Aboriginal employment target of at least 2%. It will further build on existing and emerging initiatives to progress Reconciliation across the CoA and within the broader community.
25/26 Budget Allocation	1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) in the position of Aboriginal Employment and Inclusion Coordinator
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	1.0 FTE Aboriginal Employment and Inclusion Coordinator
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028

1. Action 12 of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch RAP) 2024–2027 is “Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development”.
2. Deliverables 12.1 to 12.8 of this action align with the development and implementation of initiatives to improve employment and development outcomes:
 - 2.1. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to consult on effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy (deliverable 12.1).
 - 2.2. Review and update an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development Strategy (deliverable 12.2).
 - 2.3. Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates (deliverable 12.3).
 - 2.4. Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the workplace (deliverable 12.4).
 - 2.5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be supported to take on management and senior-level positions by providing professional and career development pathways (deliverable 12.5).
 - 2.6. Commit to achieving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target of 2% of all City of Adelaide employees by 2027 (deliverable 12.6).
 - 2.7. Investigate graduate, traineeship and internship programs as an entry pathway into the organisation (deliverable 12.7).
 - 2.8. Conduct a comprehensive review of cultural leave and other workplace policies to ensure that cultural load is minimized, creating an inclusive environment that supports the recruitment, retention and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (deliverable 12.8).
3. The People Program has already commenced advancing several key initiatives aligned with the deliverables including:
 - 3.1. Creation and recruitment of a full-time and permanent Coordinator Aboriginal Employment and Inclusion.
 - 3.2. Development of a revised Aboriginal Cultural Learning Model, in consultation with Aboriginal employees and Traditional Owners.
 - 3.3. Introduction of the Respectful Behaviours Policy and Anti-Racism Operating Guidelines.
 - 3.4. Progress towards increasing the number of targeted roles advertised to create career pathways and expand employment opportunities.
4. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028 will build on these current initiatives and proposes further actions across three key focus areas:
 - 4.1. Focus Area 1 – Attraction and Retention
Positions the CoA as an employer of choice by building trusted community relationships, strengthening targeted pathways (including apprenticeships and traineeships), improving recruitment practices, and committing to culturally informed selection processes.
 - 4.2. Focus Area 2 – Retention and Development
Creates a sustainable, self-determining career environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are supported to develop. This includes establishing an Employee Network, culturally tailored onboarding, mentoring opportunities, leadership development pathways and strengthened support services.
 - 4.3. Focus Area 3 – Cultural and Psychological Safety
Embeds cultural respect across different work environments and organisational and people systems.

This includes visible recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, leadership accountability for anti-racism initiatives, strengthened policy settings, and mandatory cultural learning for all employees.

5. The People Program, in consultation with the Reconciliation Team, facilitated two dedicated feedback sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees on 18 and 19 March, to understand their priorities and to ensure the Action Plan reflects their perspectives and needs. Additional engagement was undertaken with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield and the City of Marion.
6. The Action Plan is further informed by best practice research across federal and state government sectors.
7. In April 2026, Administration sought feedback from Panpapanpalya on a series of questions relating to the draft Action Plan (**Attachment A**):
8. Panpapanpalya provided rich insights and guidance on the recommended actions across the three key focus areas:
 - 8.1. The need to clearly define what cultural safety means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at City of Adelaide, and embedding it through ongoing learning, awareness, and meaningful recognition of culture and Country.
 - 8.2. The need for leaders who are both accountable and capable to achieve Aboriginal employment outcomes, and equipped to respond appropriately to concerns and ask informed questions.
 - 8.3. The need for strong governance to ensure commitments in the Action Plan are delivered, and the harm of setting and then not delivering on commitments.
 - 8.4. The importance of Aboriginal employees influencing and shaping decisions and outcomes arising from the Action Plan.
 - 8.5. A focus on strengthening recruitment through clear, inclusive communication, improved candidate support, and culturally aware, bias-informed selection processes.
 - 8.6. Ensuring cultural leave, flexible work, and support mechanisms are not only available but actively enabled and embedded in practice.
 - 8.7. Supporting retention and growth through access to cultural mentoring and opportunities, both internal and external, that strengthen connection and belonging.
9. The Administration invites further feedback from the Reconciliation Committee to strengthen actions across the three key focus areas in the Action Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan 2026-2028

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