

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK REPORT

Draft Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28

27 February to 22 March 2026

Introduction

The City of Onkaparinga is developing its second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). RAPs are a framework by [Reconciliation Australia](#), guiding how organisations embed reconciliation in their everyday work.

Under this national framework, there are four stages of RAPs which can be undertaken as an organisation progresses through their RAP journey.

Council delivered its first RAP (Reflect) between 2022 and 2024, focusing on learning, listening and building strong foundations.

This next Innovate RAP 2026–28 outlines how council will translate its reconciliation commitments into practical, accountable actions that strengthen relationships, deepen respect and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This Innovate RAP 2026–28 has been informed through targeted engagement with Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated and the Southern Elders and Community Group, together with the RAP Working Group which included Aboriginal staff. It aligns with the goals set in the Community Vision 2034.

Following the Council approval of the draft Innovate RAP in January 2026, broader engagement was undertaken between February and March 2026.

Community engagement purpose

While the RAP focuses on how council works within its roles and responsibilities, community feedback tests and helps to inform if the proposed Actions and Deliverables are relevant, practical and grounded in local experience.

Council sought community input on whether the proposed Actions and Deliverables are meaningful, how they could be strengthened in practice, and how council can communicate progress clearly. Engagement was about how the council delivers reconciliation, not whether reconciliation should occur.

The engagement objectives were to:

- inform the community and stakeholders about council's commitment to reconciliation and the development of the Innovate RAP 2026–28
- seek feedback on proposed Actions and Deliverables
- listen to lived experience and perspectives, particularly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- demonstrate transparency and respect in how we engage with community
- clearly communicate what the community can and cannot influence.

What community could influence

Because the RAP follows a Reconciliation Australia framework, only the highlighted actions and deliverables in the Draft Innovate RAP 2026–28 could be influenced by community feedback.

Therefore, community were encouraged to provide feedback on:

- if the proposed Actions and Deliverables reflect the most important local priorities
- how actions could be delivered in meaningful and practical ways
- opportunities for partnerships, learning and capability building
- how the council shares progress and measures success
- the clarity, tone and accessibility of the RAP.

All feedback will be considered alongside Reconciliation Australia's national framework, with the final draft Innovate 2026-28 presented to the Council for final endorsement.

What community could not influence

Some elements of the draft Innovate RAP 2026–28 are not open to change because of feedback gained through this engagement including:

- council's commitment to reconciliation, which is set through the Community Vision 2034 and the Community Capacity Strategic Plan 2021–24
- the requirement for the RAP to align with Reconciliation Australia's national framework
- the RAP's focus on how the council works as an organisation
- the two-year timeframe of this RAP.

Engagement techniques

The following channels (techniques) were used to drive engagement and participation:

- Director News to all staff and email to elected members
- City of Onkaparinga Reconciliation Action Plan webpage
- Your Say Onkaparinga website and email
- Screen displays (FOC and Library)
- Posters and A4 Summaries shared with Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre, youth and community centres, libraries and staff areas
- Emails to key stakeholders including Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated and Joining Hands and Minds network
- Compass (internal intranet)
- Meetings (Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated, Taikkurendi Children and Family Centre and Hackham West Community Centre)
- Listening post/drop-in sessions on:
 - Wednesdays at Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre
 - 2 March 2026 11am-4pm at Aldinga Library
 - 5 March 2026
 - 2026 1-4pm at Noarlunga Library
 - 19 March 2026, 9:30-1pm at Aberfoyle Hub Library
 - 19 March 2026, 5:30 – 7 pm at Connections between Country, culture and community with Mark Koolmatrie at Aldinga Library
- Feedback opportunity shared by council staff attending Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training on 17 March 2026
- 1,411 emails to Your Say Onkaparinga registrants with 79 registrants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- [Facebook social media post](#) on 27 February 2026

Summary of community engagement outcomes

Who we reached

Engagement was publicly open from 27 February to 22 March 2026.

The Your Say Onkaparinga engagement platform received **476 views** by **281 visitors**. 60 per cent of the visitors to the site came from a direct link, a further 15 per cent finding the project through websites and the rest through campaigns (14 per cent), search engines (6 per cent) and social media (4 per cent).

We sent two emails to Your Say Onkaparinga members:

- 1,411 recipients which received 649 opens (45 per cent) and 120 clicks to Your Say Onkaparinga (8.5 per cent)
- 79 recipients who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander which received 31 opens (39 per cent) and three clicks to Your Say Onkaparinga (4 per cent)

A social media post on 27 February 2026 received 14 reactions and three shares.

The Your Say Onkaparinga engagement platform was used for people to provide feedback via an online form containing five questions and five additional opt in evaluation questions.

During engagement five documents were available for download, there was a total of 340 downloads.

1. Draft Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28 – 125 downloads
2. Draft Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28 Summary – 123 downloads
3. Printable survey – 58 downloads
4. Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect) Final Progress Report – 27 downloads
5. Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect) 2022–24 – seven downloads

Who we heard from

A total of **31 contributions** were received:

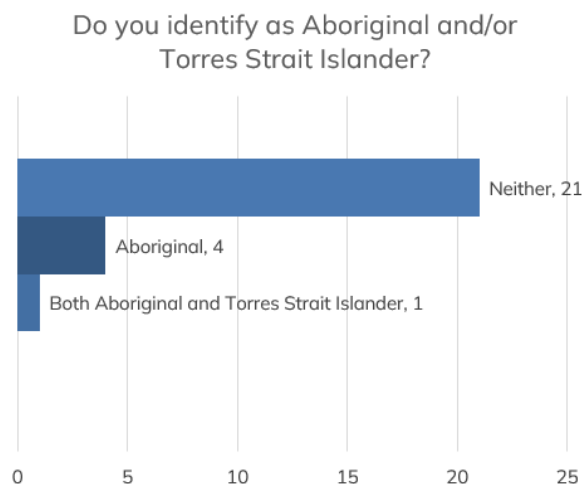
- 26 via Your Say Onkaparinga online survey
- Three emails
- Two paper surveys received – included in online survey entered by staff.

In addition, we had 23 conversations as part of listening post/drop-in sessions.

Demographic information was collected through the online and paper survey only. Participants were invited to provide this information voluntarily to help council understand who participated in the engagement.

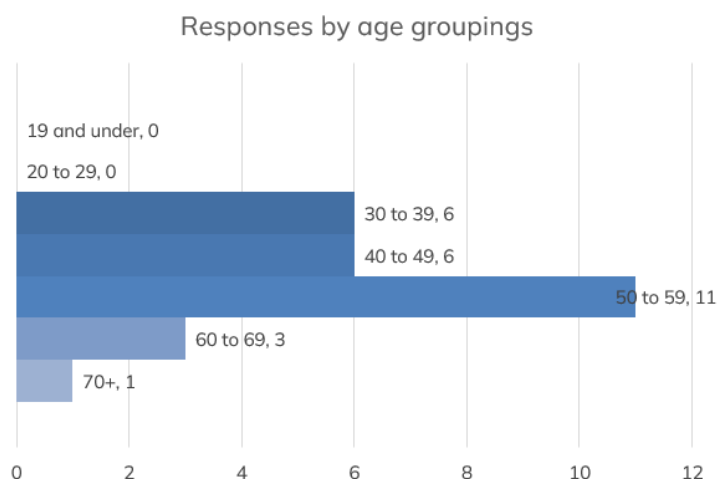
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants

Out of the 28 contributions received online or via paper surveys 17.86 per cent were from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, 75 per cent were from neither Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 7.14 per cent preferred not to say.



Age groups

Participants were asked to indicate their age group.



Engagement questions

1. What do you think should be the highest priority for strengthening reconciliation in our local community?
2. Do the actions and deliverables in the draft Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28 reflect what you think is needed to progress reconciliation in our local community?
3. As the council delivers the plan and progresses its reconciliation work, what would you hope to see, feel or experience in our community?
4. How would you like to be kept up to date on the council's reconciliation work?

What we heard

1. Survey responses: 28

A total of 28 contributions were received to the survey (26 online and two uploaded by staff from paper surveys received). Feedback included

- 15 indicating the draft RAP mostly reflecting what is needed to progress reconciliation
- Seven said somewhat

- Five said not really – this was on the basis that they do not support the program at all, or that reconciliation is not an appropriate focus for local government.
- One was unsure

Most respondents expressed support for or active engagement with the council's reconciliation work.

2. Listening post conversations: 23

3. Direct correspondence received: 3

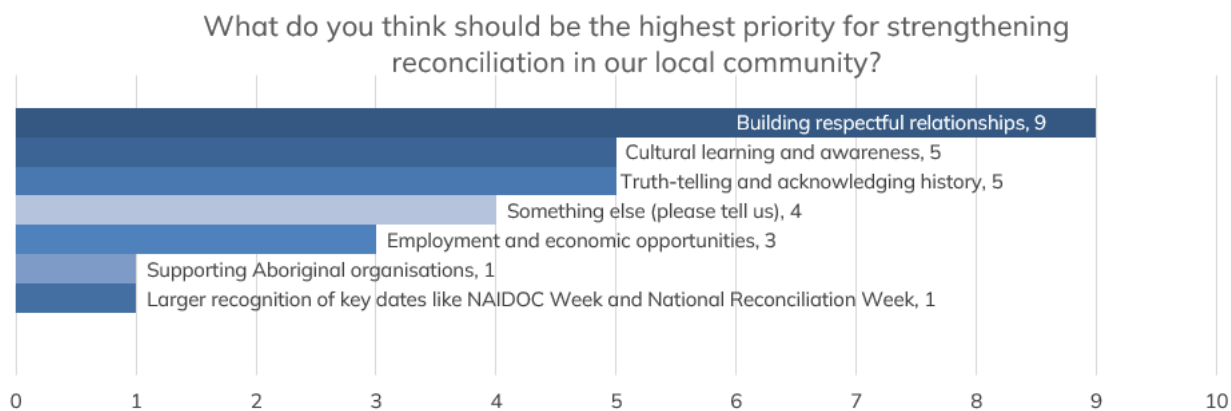
From all the feedback, there are seven primary themes worth noting:

1. Closing the gap between commitment and action

The most significant theme across all channels was the gap between what the RAP commits to and what council does in practice and the tangible benefits for First Nations communities.

Staff in some teams are enthusiastic and active; others don't know who to talk to, what they're permitted to do or whether reconciliation is even their business. There was also a desire for better integration across council services and centres - "not everyone doing their own thing" - and for collaboration to better serve community. Participants saw an opportunity for the council to learn from, support and amplify the reconciliation work already happening across other organisations in the region, rather than working in isolation.

The foundation for any meaningful action was clear - that of building respectful relationships in this work and more meaningful and genuine engagement. A recurring theme was the distinction between consulting with community and being genuinely led by community. People expressed a desire for the council to move toward co-design and self-determination principles, with greater clarity around decision-making processes and who has influence over outcomes.



Seeing tangible action was also strong in the listening post conversations, for example, there is a desire to see council move beyond acknowledgement toward active support for Kaurua cultural practice and connection to Country. Feedback included:

- *"More than policy documents and tick boxes, the true measure of progress is in the lived experience of Traditional Custodians living, working and raising families in the area. That means visible, consistent action by Council."*
- *"I would hope to see a community where racism is not seen, heard or felt by First Nations peoples in their everyday lives. Not normalised. Not tolerated as background noise."*
- *"Not just relationships but what does genuine engagement look like with First Nations folks, including elevating youth voices"*
- *"Stronger relationships between Council and Traditional Owners, meaning better, more meaningful engagement on both sides"*

- *"Who can I talk to? Answer is always the same: crickets."*
- *"We need to do the simple things first and right...having a way for staff to easily engage and get advice and feedback on ideas."*
- *"Going by the constraints of the RAP deliverables yes - but really it is the minimum."*
- *"We can't fix invasion, displacement or the historical trauma but we can find ways to walk together and be respectful."*

2. Cultural learning, cultural safety and reducing racism

This was the most consistently raised theme in the online survey. Respondents want cultural learning to be genuinely transformative, extend to all staff, and be grounded in real experience. This was seen as especially important for front-facing staff across customer service, community centres, libraries and ranger services. There was a clear expectation that all staff should have a shared understanding of what is expected of them when engaging with community.

Participants highlighted the importance of trauma-informed approaches in how council engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly in the context of community services.

Closely linked was a desire for a community - and an organisation - where racism is no longer tolerated as background noise. Feedback included:

- *"I have selected cultural learning and awareness as I think there is a long way to go. Without good understanding, people don't have the capability or even understand why to move forward."*
- *"Staff experience on Country learning. Videos are a bit box ticking."*
- *"It would be good to see bystander training as part of the framework."*
- *"The burden of educating colleagues, advising on cultural matters and navigating unsafe situations often falls — informally and invisibly — on First Nations employees."*
- *"I imagine it would be tough speaking up if you were the only Aboriginal person on the group."*
- *"I would hope to see a community where racism is not seen, heard or felt by First Nations peoples in their everyday lives. Not normalised. Not tolerated as background noise."*
- *"Less casual racism! Greater understanding of First Nations Australians."*
- *"Greater cultural awareness of all staff, safety in speaking up if people hear things that are not ok."*

The future Cultural Awareness and Competency Framework will be clearly communicated as we launch the Innovate RAP 2026-28.

3. Truth-telling and historical acceptance

Truth-telling was raised across all channels as requiring a stronger, more resourced and more explicit commitment. Respondents felt that council had an important role in helping more people learn about First Nations history, culture and stories, including through everyday touchpoints like libraries, story times, community events and initiatives such as Harmony Week.

- *"A dedicated strategy with allocated resources to facilitate truth telling"*
- *"Racial dog-whistling tactics on minorities are becoming part of the political discourse again. Need an action for maintaining truth-telling and acknowledging history as factual."*
- *"Reconciliation is the action and work to be done by the non-Indigenous population. It is not a display of Aboriginal culture for the non-Aboriginal population to observe."*

- *"Truth telling that leads to less racism and more understanding."*
- *"Bringing community together, by inviting all to participate, to tell the stories and respectfully discuss the history of locations within our council area."*

Feedback was also received from six online survey respondents as well as listening post attendees regarding events and activities on 26 January and included:

- *"You're still 'celebrating' invasion day. This needs to stop!"*
- *"Council should not be delivering an Australia Day event. There are other dates to celebrate our country."*
- *"Stop any council-run Australia Day celebrations which conflict with the RAP and Community Vision."*
- *"It is difficult to speak of truth-telling, healing and respect for Kaurua Country in one breath, and in the next, organise events on a date that many First Nations peoples experience as deeply painful."*

4. Visibility of First Nations culture, place and language

Strong interest was expressed in embedding First Nations culture visibly and meaningfully across the city such as in place names, signage, libraries, events and everyday community spaces. Respondents wanted culture to be felt and understood, not just seen. One listening post participant specifically noted that enabling Kaurua place names has been difficult, and that barriers to recognition at a local level need to be addressed.

- *"A more visible First Nations culture — in town signs, embedded into all events"*
- *"I'd love to see our culture celebrated like the Māori culture in NZ."*
- *"I'd like to see more public parks with Indigenous names"*
- *"Find ways to increase the general public's understanding of Indigenous culture and language — i.e. in libraries"*
- *"Acknowledgement and respect of local history, First Nations consultation in how we shape future developments"*
- *"Curiosity and a reframing of understanding of how First Nations knowledges and philosophy can improve our approaches to building human-centred approaches to the social and economic agenda"*

5. Land, Country and custodianship

A significant theme, particularly from listening post conversations at Aldinga library centred on council's responsibility in relation to land use, reserve maintenance and the care of Country.

Community members saw a real opportunity to embed First Nations wisdom into council's environmental and land management practices, including cultural mapping, native biodiversity management and Kaurua land management approaches. There was also enthusiasm for sharing these practices more broadly, for example through bush care groups, community gardening or education about traditional land stewardship.

Feedback included:

- *"More recognition for the ecological and environmental values Indigenous peoples hold"*
- *"First Nations consultation in how we shape future developments"*
- *"A sense of pride and interest in respecting sacred spaces and the value they have in assisting everyone in understanding the land we live on"*

6. Employment, economic participation and business support

Respondents wanted council to go beyond policy commitments to create tangible employment and economic pathways, and to actively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses as both suppliers to council and as independent enterprises in the region. There was interest in council doing more to create tangible employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including traineeships, cadetships and other structured opportunities including pathways from volunteering.

Supporting Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated toward greater self-sufficiency was also raised as a priority. Feedback included:

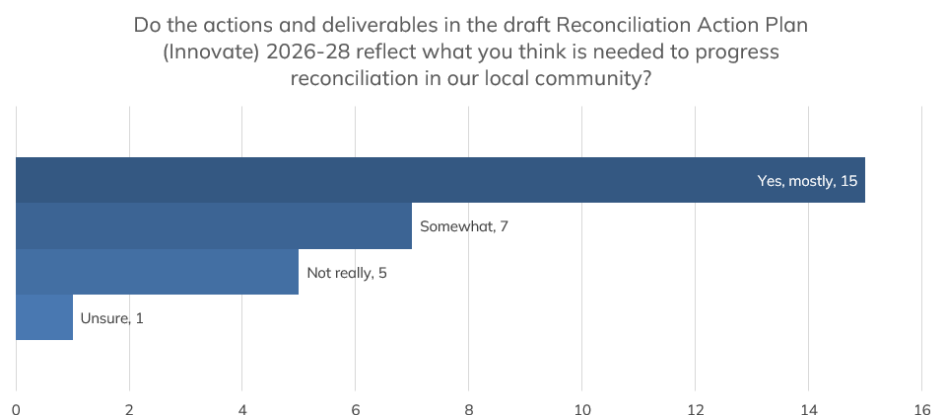
- *"More council employees attending events, maybe a booth set up to showcase career opportunities in the council"*
- *"To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders in existing and potential businesses as both suppliers to council and in their own right through referrals, promotion and support."*
- *"Accessing the broader Aboriginal community so they are more visible and available for any opportunities that council have to offer"*
- *"Raise cultural safety in the organisation, but also support Neporendi to become self-sufficient towards Closing the Gap"*
- *"The RAP is an important step for Council to improve education, connection and employment opportunities"*

7. Communications, visibility and accountability

Respondents expressed frustration at not being able to easily find what council is doing on reconciliation, and wanted clear, regular progress reporting. A dedicated, easy-to-navigate section of council's website was identified that brings together all reconciliation-related initiatives happening locally, both council-run and those led by other organisations in the region. There was a desire for council to play a connective and amplifying role, promoting not just its own programs but the broader reconciliation work happening across the region.

Feedback included

- *"Progress reports about the implementation of the RAP"*
- *"Keep promoting the opportunities"*
- *"Is there a better way to engage City of Onkaparinga staff more directly? Many staff likely view the Your Say page as something aimed at residents."*
- *"I would like to see more Indigenous culture and language incorporated into more public activities — ways to increase respect and value for Indigenous peoples including involvement in truth telling"*



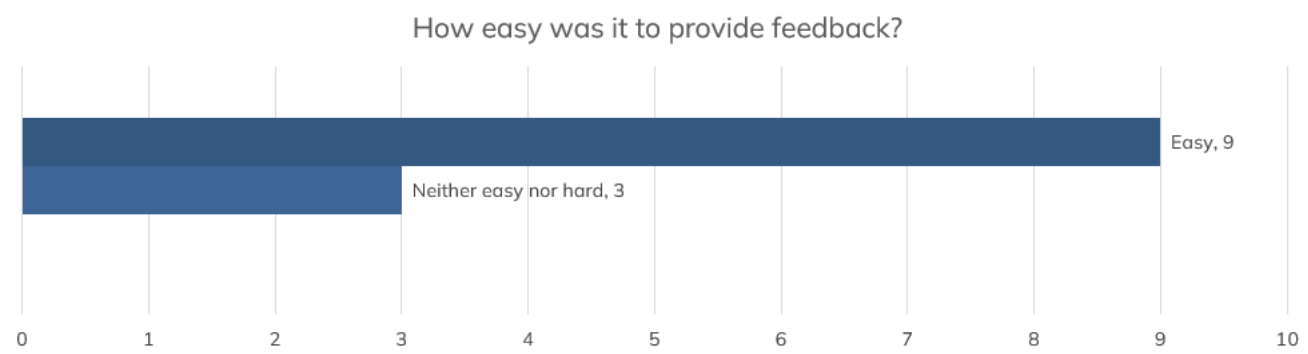
Opposition and questioning of council's role

Five respondents questioned whether reconciliation is an appropriate focus for local government or expressed opposition to the RAP program. Feedback included:

- *"This should not be a council issue. Stick to your lanes of roads and rubbish."*
- *"Please focus council resources on the essential services of local government."*
- *"I am actually against this type of division within the community."*

Evaluation

The engagement met its stated objectives (page 2). The RAP was made publicly available alongside a two-page summary, feedback was sought through multiple accessible channels, and listening posts created in-person opportunities for community members to share their perspectives. Most respondents found the process easy to navigate.



How we strengthen future community engagement participation will be considered through the delivery of the Innovate RAP 2026-28 and beyond.

Sign-off

All feedback reports are to be reviewed by the Engagement Unit
(engagement@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au)

Officer who prepared the document

Name: Amanda Atlee
Position title: RAP Project Officer

Reviewed by Community Engagement Advisor

Name: Nicole Page
Date: 26/03/2026

Name: Paul Wright
Position title: Manager Community Capacity
Date: 16/04/2026

Appendix A: Submissions and correspondence

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Fri, 27 Feb 2026 12:52:23 +1030
To: "Mail" <Mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Reconciliation Action Plan Project

You don't often get email from howard.b.1971@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender's full email address and know the content is safe.

Dear Reconciliation Project Officer,

I am writing to provide feedback on the City of Onkaparinga's Reconciliation Action Plan via the "Your Say" platform.

Please focus council resources on the essential services of local government, such as road maintenance, park upkeep, watering, and the management of recreational areas. I believe that council time, effort, and funding should be prioritized for these core responsibilities rather than being directed toward this initiative.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 24 March 2026 3:10 PM
To: Amanda Atlee <Amanda.Atlee@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Feedback on RAP draft

You don't often get email from chair@onkaparingafoodsecurity.org.au. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender's full email address and know the content is safe.

Hi Amanda

I attended the talk at Aldinga library last week and had good intentions of providing feedback to the YourSay survey but got caught up.

My additional input if not too late:

Opportunities:

Consider adding a dot point or adding to point 9 or 10.

To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders in existing and potential businesses as both suppliers to council and in their own right through referrals, promotion and support.

Warm regards, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Name redacted
Sent: Monday, 23 March 2026 10:29 AM
To: Nicole Page <Nicole.Page@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au>
Subject: RAP feedback

Hi Nicole

Here is my feedback on the RAP, sorry I couldn't put the feedback in through the yoursay, says it is closed.

Sorry I don't have too much positive to say about the RAP.

For 7 years my issue has always been the same, who can I talk to ... answer is always the same crickets, its complicated, we are having discussions about having discussions. I walk away and move on, another missed opportunity to engage.

I read the Rap and see big motherhood statements with no direction on how it will be achieved.

We need to do the simple things first and right, Number 1 - having a way of staff to easily engage and get advice and feedback on ideas is first step.

RAP says we are going to 'creating opportunities for economic, social and cultural inclusion' ... how when we don't even know who to talk to or have permission to talk?

RAP says we are going to 'building our cultural capability to foster a workplace that is inclusive, informed and respectful' how when we don't even know who to talk to or have permission to talk to aboriginal stakeholders?

RAP says we are going to 'further build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations' how when we don't even know who to talk to or have permission to talk to aboriginal stakeholders?

Relationship Deliverables Action 1

'Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement and to explore a shared understanding of cultural safety in the local government context'

- Been talking about this for 7 years and still no one we can talk to.

No point moving past point 1 until we have a quick and easy way of engaging and getting feedback to allow us to make small changes in our everyday work.

Regards

Appendix B: Promotional materials

