

Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28

Draft



Weaving Onkaparinga

by Allan Sumner

“Weaving Onkaparinga” is a visual representation of connection, reconciliation, and community, reflecting the diverse cultures, histories, and aspirations of the City of Onkaparinga. Each element and colour in the artwork holds deep meaning, drawn from Kurna Country and other cultural influences. This document provides a detailed explanation of the cultural significance and symbolic meanings embedded in the design, highlighting connections to Country, people, and innovative partnerships with the Kurna community.

Allan Sumner is a proud descendent of the Ngarrindjeri, Kurna, and Yankunytjatjara peoples of South Australia. A talented musician, visual artist, and graphic designer, Allan is deeply connected to his cultural heritage having spent valuable time with Elders learning Dreaming Stories and ancient art forms, which he now expresses through contemporary artworks that communicate these stories across generations.



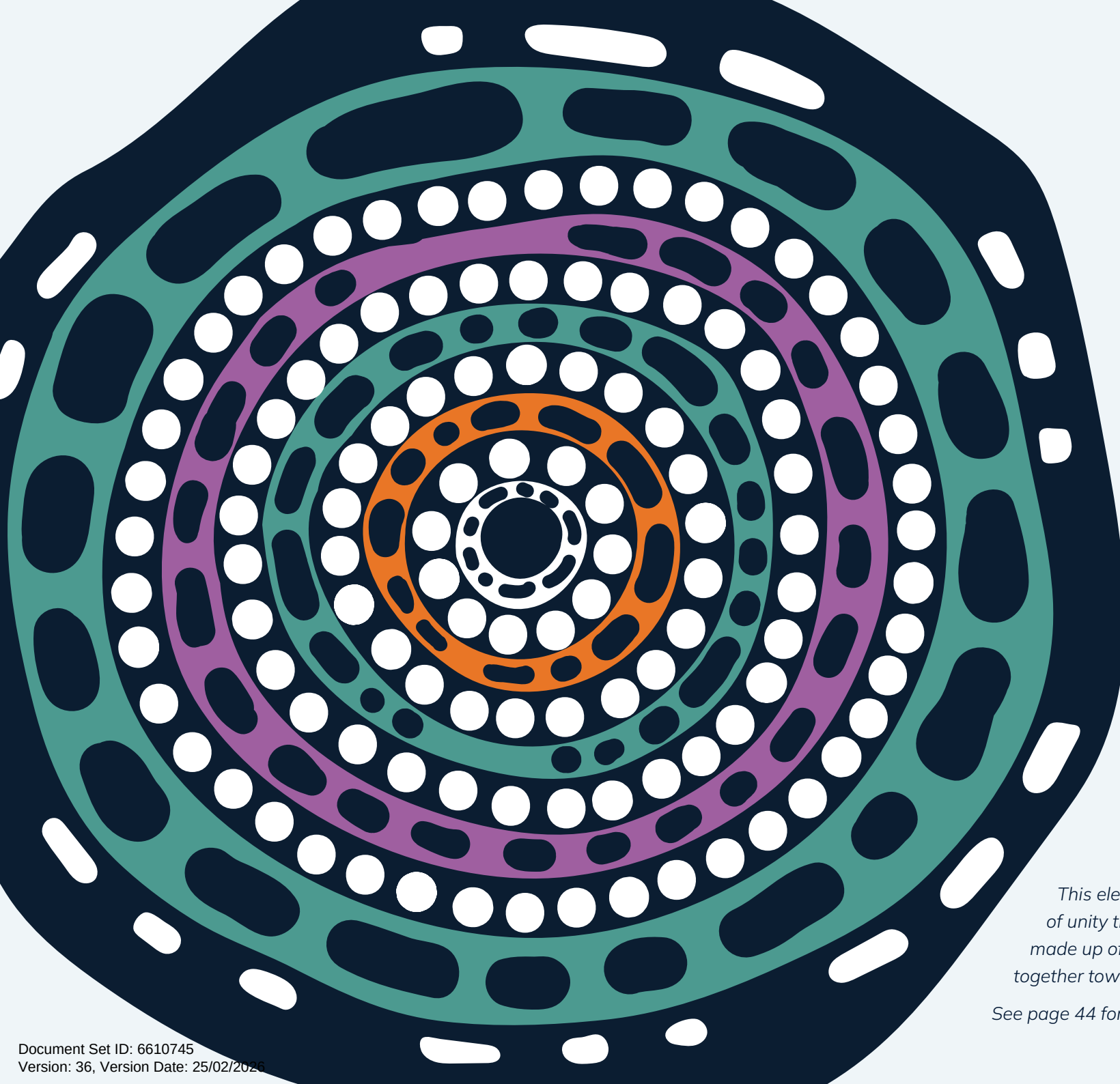
Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kurna Nation and its people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land in the ancient area that has only recently become known as the City of Onkaparinga.

We recognise that this local living culture has developed over tens of thousands of years and that in today's contemporary context, Kurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively engaged in community life and bring their rich cultural heritage to the connected community and sustainable future to which we aspire.

We are mindful of Kurna people's spiritual relationship with Country when we make decisions about our region and that protecting places of importance to Kurna culture has an impact on the wellbeing and prosperity of Kurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise our important opportunity to facilitate positive change in the way the community works together across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, non-Indigenous communities, local businesses, and service agencies, by actively engaging in a shared journey towards reconciliation



This element conveys the concept of unity through diversity — a council made up of many parts working together towards shared goals.

See page 44 for more.

Contents

Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026-28

Acknowledgement of Country 4

1. Introduction 8

2. Mayor’s message 10

3. Reconciliation Australia
Statement from the CEO Of Reconciliation Australia..... 12
About Reconciliation..... 13
Reconciliation Action Plans..... 13

4. Purpose 14

5. Shared RAP journey..... 15

6. Local and state context
Council 16
Community..... 17
First Nations Voice to the Parliament of South Australia..... 18

7. National context
Uluru Statement from the Heart 20
Closing the Gap 21

8. Organisational structures
RAP Working Group 22
Onkaparinga culture, healing, resilience and empowerment..... 23
Activities/ initiatives 23

9. Actions and deliverables 24

10. Timeline..... 41

11. Further information..... 41

Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026-28

Weaving Onkaparinga artwork meanings

Cultural Significance and Meanings Embedded in the Design

Element 1.
Central Woven Circle – City of Onkaparinga Council..... 44

Element 2.
Onkaparinga River – Strength, Connection, and Continuity..... 45

Element 3.
Drosera whittakeri – Whittaker’s Sundew 46

Element 4.
Kurna Man and Woman – Living in Balance with Country 47

Element 5.
Community Gathering Circles – Unity and Shared Purpose 48

Element 6.
Native Flora and Fauna – Healing Country and Renewal 49

Element 7.
Weaving the Story – Connection, Strength, and Shared Purpose..... 50

At the heart of “Weaving Onkaparinga” is the interlacing of all elements — from the central woven circle, pathways, river, and community gatherings, to native flora, fauna, and cultural practices

See page 50 for more.

Colour Significance 51

Summary 51



1. Introduction

This Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2026–2028 (RAP) builds on the foundations of our work over many years alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including more recently through our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2022–2024.

We are proud to be taking this next formal step on the reconciliation journey, to continue facilitating meaningful relationships, respect, opportunities and governance towards a more reconciled, connected and stronger future in the Onkaparinga region. This plan embodies council's commitment to collective action in the process of reconciliation – honoring truth-telling, supporting healing and promoting equity.

The City of Onkaparinga Community Vision 2034 and its values of a connected community and sustainable future provides overarching direction for all of council's strategic plans. The vision is supported by a range of goals that detail important aspects of working collaboratively with our communities towards achieving desired results for the region. In alignment with our reconciliation efforts, one of these goals is to elevate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Real action that advances reconciliation is a central part of this. It's about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous peoples for the benefit of everyone. Through this RAP, we seek to deepen our understanding, improve our cultural mindfulness and strengthen partnerships to make taking action towards reconciliation part of our everyday work across the organisation.

Reconciliation is grounded in the vision of an Australia that understands, respects, and values both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures. This foundation enables relationships that are based on trust and free from racism, to build an equitable Australian society in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same access to opportunities as non-Indigenous people, their rights are upheld and self-determination is supported. Reconciliation also requires historical acceptance; acknowledging the truths of our shared past and committing to never repeat the injustices experienced.

City of Onkaparinga recognises that Australia's history of colonisation has had profound and lasting impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including dispossession, discrimination and intergenerational trauma. These injustices have contributed to systemic disadvantages across health, education, social, employment and economic outcomes.

A RAP provides a formal mechanism for an organisation to acknowledge this history, not just as a matter of record, but as a foundation for meaningful change. By recognising past and present injustices, a RAP helps foster an environment of truth-telling and reflection, which is essential for healing, within Aboriginal communities and across broader contemporary society towards a stronger, more connected future.

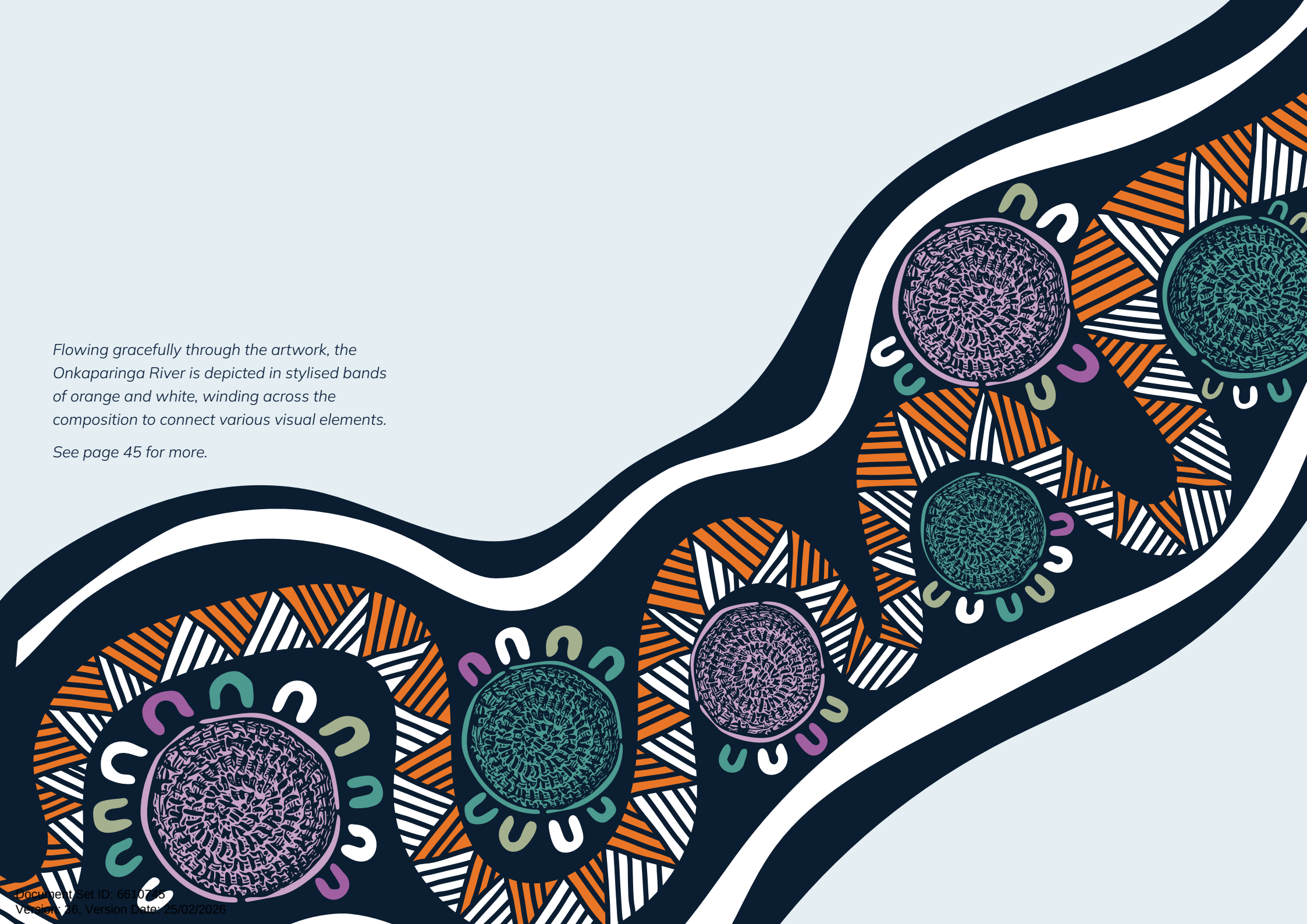
Through this RAP, we commit to actions that support social and cultural justice. This includes:

- building our cultural capability to foster a workplace that is inclusive, informed and respectful
- creating opportunities for economic, social and cultural inclusion
- improving how policies, programs and services are shaped to reflect shared priorities and aspirations
- strengthening accountability.

The plan outlines the steps we will take over the next 2 years to advance local reconciliation through collaboration, education, cultural respect and leadership, so that it is not a one-off initiative but a lasting, organisation-wide commitment that benefits the whole Onkaparinga community.

Flowing gracefully through the artwork, the Onkaparinga River is depicted in stylised bands of orange and white, winding across the composition to connect various visual elements.

See page 45 for more.



2. Mayor's message

As Mayor, I am proud to present our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2026–2028 on behalf of the council.

This is a meaningful step forward in our local contribution to the shared national journey towards truth, healing and unity.

Reconciliation is not just a word; it's a commitment to building respectful relationships, acknowledging past events, celebrating culture, and working together to weave a stronger and more connected future where everyone is seen, heard and valued.

The Community Vision 2034, shaped by thousands of community voices and carrying our shared vision and responsibilities for the future of the region, establishes the foundation for local action to elevate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and support a community that embraces diversity, listens deeply and acts with integrity.

Further to that, this Reconciliation Action Plan details council's role in taking action towards local reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as an important part of moving forward together. It has been developed through conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, Elders and other community members, whose wisdom, guidance and aspirations continue to inspire us.

We recognise that the work of reconciliation is ongoing. It requires courage, honesty and sustained action in bringing the various threads of our social fabric together.

Through this plan, we commit to continuing to listen, strengthening partnerships, supporting cultural expression and co-creating places and opportunities with empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

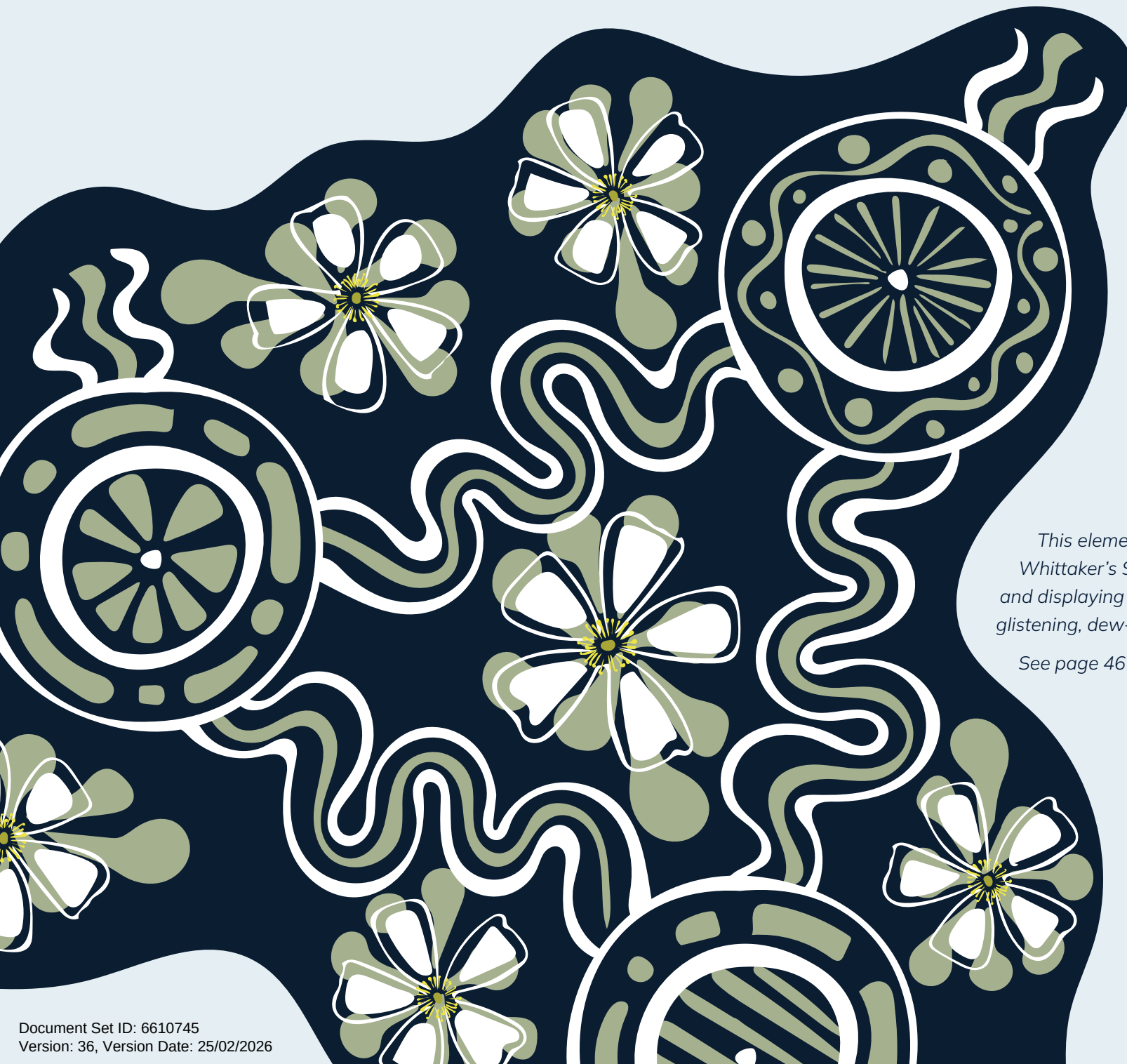
Together, we can build a more inclusive and just community; one with shared values and where reconciliation principles are evident in our mindset and hearts, driving our everyday actions.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important work so far. I look forward to council and its communities continuing to walk towards reconciliation together.



Moira Were AM
Mayor, City of Onkaparinga





This element depicts Drosera whittakeri, or Whittaker's Sundew, emerging from the ground and displaying its characteristic radiance through glistening, dew-like leaves and soft flowers.

See page 46 for more.

3. Reconciliation Australia

Statement from the CEO Of Reconciliation Australia

MAX 500 words



Karen Mundine
CEO, Reconciliation Australia

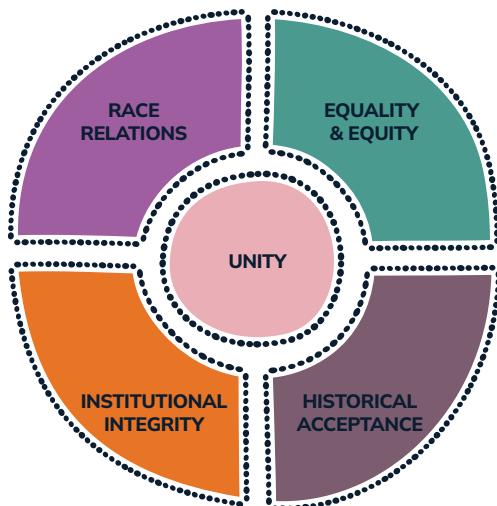
About Reconciliation

At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all.

It is an ongoing commitment to learning and walking together, and to acting for meaningful change.

In a just, equitable and reconciled Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have life chances and choices equal to all others, and cultural background will not be a determinant of quality of life.

Reconciliation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation leading the national reconciliation framework and providing guiding principles to support the work. It provides the following 5 dimensions as the basis for progressing and measuring reconciliation:



Race relations

All Australians understand and value both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures. This builds respectful relationships free from racism and based on trust.

Equality and equity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equal access to life opportunities, and their unique rights are recognised and respected. Self-determination is central.

Historical acceptance

Australians acknowledge the truths of our shared history, accept the impacts of past injustices and commit to ensuring these wrongs are never repeated.

Institutional integrity

Governments, businesses and community organisations actively support reconciliation through leadership, policies and practices.

Unity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories are embraced as a proud part of Australia's shared identity, fostering national unity.

These 5 dimensions are interrelated, with the contemporary definition of reconciliation weaving all of these threads together. For example, greater historical acceptance of the wrongs experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can lead to improved race relations, in turn leading to greater equality and equity.

Reconciliation Action Plans

RAPs are structured, tangible plans of action for organisations to embed real change across their work. They are about whole-of-organisation change, including organisational culture, awareness, acknowledgement, recognition and action.

By adopting a whole-of-organisation approach, reconciliation action can be a catalyst for change, having a real impact in areas such as improving employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, procuring goods and services from First Nations-led businesses, and supporting cultural practices and processes.

There are 4 different types of RAPs under the Reconciliation Australia national framework:

- Reflect (our RAP 2022–2024)
- Innovate (this RAP 2026–2028)
- Stretch
- Elevate.

The Innovate RAP stage outlines actions for achieving an organisation's expanding vision for reconciliation, allowing a deeper understanding of its sphere of influence and the best approaches for achieving its intended reconciliation outcomes.

4. Purpose

This plan represents a step forward in our work that contributes to reconciliation. It is part of our ongoing work to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being recognised, valued, respected and empowered in the local region.

Through this RAP, we will:

- further build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations
- promote reconciliation and positive race relations
- elevate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures and histories
- progress our cultural learning
- take action to achieve better employment and procurement outcomes
- maintain an effective RAP Working Group
- report on challenges, learnings and achievements.



Laticia and Charlotte explore their Ngaityu Muiyu Tantu (My Feelings Bag) backpacks

5. Shared RAP journey

City of Onkaparinga was formed in 1997 by the amalgamation of the former City of Noarlunga, City of Happy Valley and District Council of Willunga. Since that time, council has worked in various ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the region, to achieve positive community outcomes.

This includes our long support and partnering relationship with Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated in the delivery of the Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre and its many community services, programs, activities and events.

Another part of our work in this space was the Kurna Tapa Iri Regional Agreement 2005–2008. This was an aspirational agreement between Kurna Traditional Owner representative groups at the time and the cities of Onkaparinga, Holdfast Bay, Marion and the District Council of Yankalilla. The agreement achieved a number of matters of social inclusion and progress in the recognition of Traditional Owners, protecting Aboriginal heritage, establishing processes for Aboriginal place-naming and the flying of the Aboriginal flag at various permanent locations that remain in place today. Important learnings from the agreement are still referred to today in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local context.

Part of our more recent history was council's establishment of the First Nations People Advisory Group for discussions with Traditional Owners early in project planning and policy development processes. The group operated from 2021–2023 and provided many opportunities for the consideration of Kurna perspectives in the early stages of forming council's position on relevant matters and projects. While the group is no longer operational, council remains committed to finding the most effective and beneficial ways of working with Traditional Owners for similar purposes and other community outcomes.

Based on this foundation of work over a period of nearly 30 years, this Innovate RAP is the second step in our formal Reconciliation Action Plan journey.



Tjilbruke Dreaming Track marker, Port Noarlunga

Through our Reflect RAP 2022–2024, City of Onkaparinga strengthened its position for taking the more progressive steps to come. It included a range of actions that consolidated our work towards better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Importantly, this included the formation of our inaugural RAP Working Group (RWG), comprising self-nominated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members. The group considered a number of matters relating to council's operations and was involved in the development of this RAP. The RWG will remain a feature of our reconciliation structure, providing invaluable guidance for how council can best further its reconciliation efforts and outcomes within the organisation and within the communities we serve.



Reconciliation in the South event 2025

6. Local and state context

Council

City of Onkaparinga is the largest metropolitan local government area in South Australia, serving more than 180,000 residents across an area of 518 square kilometres, with 31 kilometres of coastline.

Located on the southern urban fringe of Greater Adelaide, Onkaparinga is a diverse region of urban centres, low and medium density suburbs, rural areas, townships and coastal communities.

City of Onkaparinga is made up of 6 wards, each with 2 elected members, plus a Mayor.

The council workforce spans 4 organisational divisions, with a total of over 800 staff covering a wide range of professions from urban planners and librarians, through to community rangers and truck drivers. Programs and services are delivered from a variety of facilities, supported by over 500 volunteers. Improving our data collection in relation to the number of council's staff members and volunteers who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and increasing that number as part of our normal recruitment and retention initiatives, is a key part of our RAP journey to be progressed under this plan.

We work closely with individuals, groups and organisations that have a role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs for our region to help ensure our work is informed by community voices, grounded in cultural knowledge and reflects best practice. Importantly, this includes the cultural

guidance of Kurna Traditional Owners and other relationships such as with:

Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated

Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated is a respected Aboriginal association that operates through an Aboriginal Board of Management. It brings together a range of service providers through the Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre, located at Wardli Centre in Christie Downs. Through a formal partnership with City of Onkaparinga, Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated contributes to community development and cultural engagement.

Joining Hands and Minds Taskforce

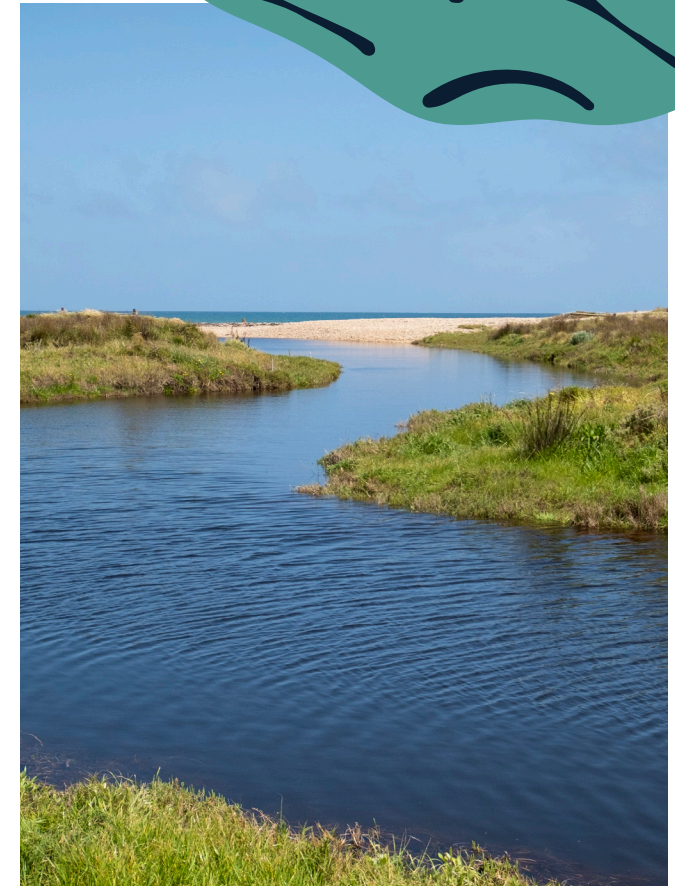
Joining Hands and Minds Taskforce is a strong coalition of organisations and service providers focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in southern Adelaide. The task force plays a key role in fostering collaboration, strengthening networks and driving coordinated action across the region.

South Australian RAP Councils Learning Circle

Council supported the development of the South Australian RAP Councils Learning Circle with members of the learning circle being SA local governments that have a RAP. The purpose of the group is to reflect on practice and share experiences to inform best practice and promote a joined-up approach to the reconciliation work of councils in the state.

This element speaks to the healing of Country through care, respect, and cultural awareness.

See page 49 for more.



Aldinga Washpool

Community

The council area is located within the traditional lands of the Kurna people, who maintain a deep and ongoing spiritual and cultural connection to Country. The region is also home to a diverse and growing population of people descendant from many other Aboriginal Nations, who contribute to the cultural richness and resilience of the community.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the City of Onkaparinga is supported by strong kinship networks, intergenerational knowledge sharing and cultural leadership. Elders play a vital role in guiding younger generations, maintaining cultural practices and advocating for community needs.

Kurna Elders and leaders are central to cultural governance, ceremony and stewardship of Country. Their leadership is complemented by the contributions of Aboriginal people from other Nations, who bring diverse traditions and perspectives while building shared community identity.

Aboriginal-led services providers, businesses and organisations that provide Aboriginal services with Aboriginal staff, provide spaces for cultural expression, healing and community development. These structures foster resilience, pride and a sense of belonging, especially for young people navigating the modern world and its combination of traditional and contemporary elements.

In 2021, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.9 per cent of the City of Onkaparinga population, compared with 1.7 per cent across Greater Adelaide. This was around 3,370 people and had grown by 780 people between 2016 and 2021. In the Onkaparinga region, the highest proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were living in the suburbs of Christie Downs (5.7 per cent), Hackham West (4.9 per cent) and O'Sullivan Beach/Lonsdale (4.4 per cent)¹.

Across the Onkaparinga region, there were 1,689 households in 2021 where at least one person identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The largest proportion of these households were renting (49.4 per cent), followed by those owned with a mortgage (36.6 per cent). The median weekly income of these households was \$1,398, which closely compares with the \$1,410 Onkaparinga median. Personal weekly median income showed greater disparity, however, with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people at \$552 and the Onkaparinga region median at \$710.

In 2021, the Onkaparinga region had a very young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, with a median age of 20 years, around half the median age of the total region population (41 years). This is reflected in the high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who were attending an educational institution (43.7 per cent), compared with the Onkaparinga regional average (27 per cent)¹.

Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, 15.9 per cent reported having completed year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, just higher than the 15.4 per cent Onkaparinga region average¹. Between 2011 and 2017, SACE completion rates for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia increased by 16.1 per cent and the proportion of those students achieving a TAFE SA selection score rose from 67.6 per cent to 71.7 per cent².

In 2021, of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce, 87.2 per cent reported being engaged in work, compared to the 94.4 per cent Onkaparinga average. In 2021, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were well-represented among volunteers in the Onkaparinga region, with 11.7 per cent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged over 15 years having done voluntary work through an organisation or a group, compared to the 15 per cent Onkaparinga region average. Sixty-five per cent had done unpaid domestic work, 32.7 per cent had provided care for children and 15.2 per cent assisted family members or others due to a disability, long-term illness or problems related to old age¹.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021

² SACE Aboriginal Education Strategy End-of-Year Report 2017

First Nations Voice to the Parliament of South Australia

South Australia became the first state in Australia to legislate a First Nations Voice to Parliament, passing the First Nations Voice Bill on 26 March 2023. This initiative is a response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, aiming to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a direct and independent line of communication with the South Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect them.

The Voice is structured in 2 levels:

- Local First Nations Voices – 6 regional bodies across South Australia, each elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in those regions.
- State First Nations Voice – Comprising 2 presiding members from each Local Voice region (12 members in total), who engage directly with the Parliament and various parts of government.

The Voice is advisory in nature, playing a crucial role in amplifying community priorities, informing policy and strengthening cultural representation in decision-making.

City of Onkaparinga is located within the Central Local First Nations Voice region, which covers Metropolitan Adelaide. This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Onkaparinga are represented through this local body, which:

- listens to and advocates for local community priorities
- engages with local government and service providers
- feeds into the State Voice, ensuring local voices are heard at the highest levels.

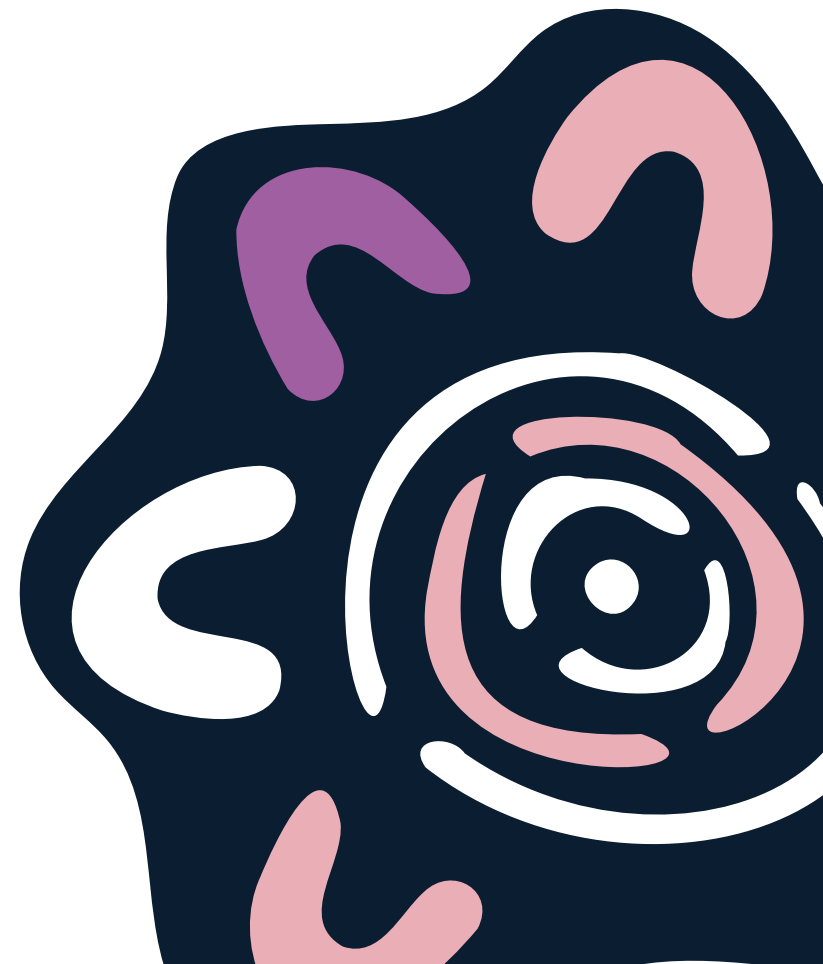
In Onkaparinga, the Voice complements existing community structures such as:

- Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated and the Southern Elders and Community Group, which provide cultural leadership and community services
- reconciliation events like Reconciliation in the South and NAIDOC Week, which celebrate First Nations culture and promote dialogue
- Kurna language and cultural revitalisation efforts, including workshops and exhibitions.

This element symbolises unity, inclusion, and the strength that comes from community working together.

The gathering circles remind us that reconciliation and progress are achieved through shared dialogue and mutual respect.

See page 48 for more.





Onkaparinga Gorge



7. National context

Uluru Statement from the Heart

The Uluru Statement from the Heart (Voice, Truth, Treaty) is a significant document created in 2017 by First Nations people in Australia, calling for constitutional recognition and reform to enhance Indigenous rights. It emerged from a series of regional dialogues and represents a consensus on how to achieve recognition, including the establishment of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission to oversee treaty processes and truth-telling. The statement emphasises the need for substantive change to ensure fair treatment and acknowledgment of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

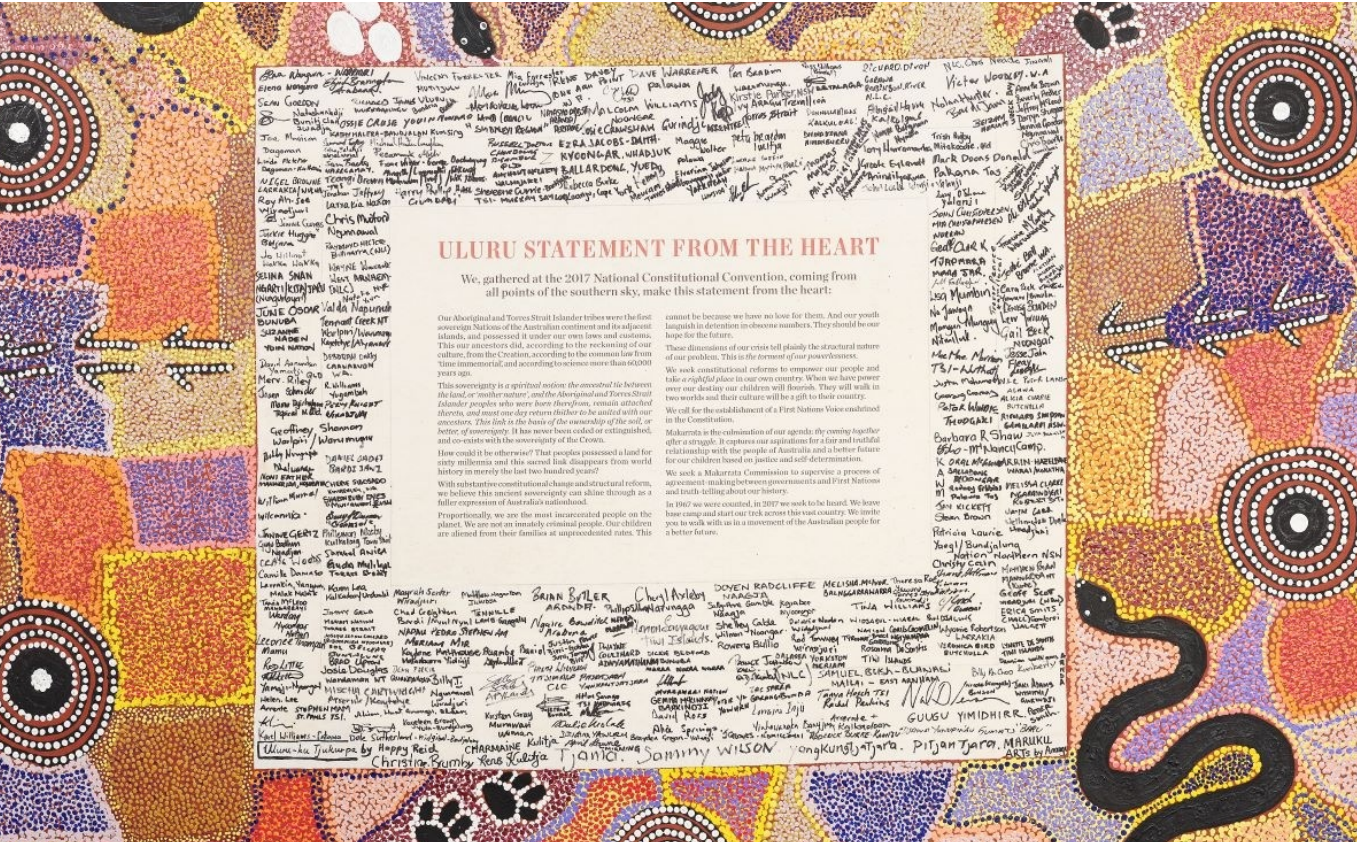
On 16 May 2023, council resolved to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This was during the lead up to the 2023 national referendum, through which Australians were asked if the Australian Constitution should be changed to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Council's resolution acknowledged the statement as a very generous invitation for the Australian people to walk together towards a better future and to support an informed and respectful conversation as Australians prepared to vote in the referendum.

We are committed to walking alongside the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for justice, equity and healing.

While the Uluru Statement calls for national reform through Voice, Treaty and Truth, our

RAP works toward bringing local reconciliation to life through practical actions to foster respect, strengthen relationships and support a more inclusive community that is stronger and more connected.



'The Uluru Statement from the Heart'

Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap is an Australian national policy framework aimed at reducing disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in areas such as health, education, employment and life expectancy.

It was first established in 2008 following the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and has since evolved through partnerships between governments and Indigenous communities.

Closing the Gap aims to improve health, education, jobs, safety and cultural wellbeing, by working with communities, not just for them. It's important because it helps save lives, strengthens culture and builds stronger, more empowered communities.

Closing the Gap has measurable targets to improve outcomes in areas such as:

- early childhood development
- school attendance and literacy
- employment
- health and wellbeing
- housing
- justice and safety
- language and cultural preservation.

It is based on the following 4 priority reforms:

- Shared decision-making between governments and Indigenous organisations.
- Building the Indigenous community-controlled sector.
- Transforming government organisations to improve accountability and cultural safety.
- Improving data collection and access to support better outcomes.

Local governments play an important role in the national effort to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Through their long histories of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on matters of common concern, councils are key partners in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, alongside community-controlled organisations and other entities that are part of the Coalition of Peaks.

The National Agreement emphasises the importance of shared decision-making and accountability among all parties to ensure that the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are properly represented in local government policies and programs.

These values of shared decision-making and accountability and seeking better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across a wide range of life domains, will inform delivery of this RAP. They also inform a range of council's other strategic plans and documents, including our Community Capacity Strategic Plan, Regional Public Health Plan, Inclusive Communities Action Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, Arts and Cultural Development Action Plan, and Advocacy Plan.

The Actions and deliverables table on page 24, shows the alignment between our RAP deliverables and the Closing the Gap targets.



The Kaurna man and woman embody peace, mindfulness, and connection to Country.

See page 47 for more.

8. Organisational structures

RAP Working Group

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be encouraged to be members of the renewed City of Onkaparinga RAP Working Group (RWG). It will also have membership representing parts of the organisation that have specific RAP responsibilities and will expand over time to include community representatives.

The RWG will have a central role in guiding the planning and implementation of council's commitment to reconciliation across the following 5 areas:

1. Leadership and governance

Oversee the development, implementation and review of the RAP, and improve organisational accountability through monitoring progress and ensuring actions are completed on time and with integrity.

2. Cultural guidance

Embed the value of cultural perspectives to ensure that listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices is central in decision-making on reconciliation action and in the development and maintenance of other respectful and inclusive practices across the organisation.

3. Collaboration and engagement

Build relationships through fostering partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders, and encouraging participation through engaging staff and community members in reconciliation activities.

4. Education and awareness

Promote understanding, support cultural learning initiatives and awareness campaigns, and challenge racism and bias to help create a workplace culture that actively addresses discrimination and promotes equity.

5. Strategic alignment

Support and guide the integration of reconciliation goals by aligning RAP actions with our broader organisational strategies and values. This will support sustainability to ensure reconciliation is embedded in long-term as part of core business, not just as a one-off, separate initiative.

Onkaparinga culture, healing, resilience and empowerment

Onkaparinga Culture, Healing, Resilience and Empowerment (OCHRE) will be a group established during the period of this RAP, comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander council staff on the RWG.

It will offer culturally mindful support to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander City of Onkaparinga staff. The group will provide a safe and inclusive space to foster cultural connection, share workplace experiences, and empower members through mutual support, collaboration and advocacy.

OCHRE will meet 4 times a year to focus on:

- cultural connection – sharing heritage, stories and traditions to celebrate and strengthen cultural identity
- resilience and wellbeing – providing a safe space to address challenges, celebrate successes and support each other in building personal and professional resilience
- professional development – discussing training opportunities, career growth and pathways for advancement

- job shadowing and backfilling – supporting staff to gain new skills and experiences by exploring different roles and responsibilities across the organisation
- workplace advocacy – collaborating to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard and valued, contributing to an inclusive and respectful workplace culture.

Through conversations on these matters, OCHRE aims to empower its members, build a strong sense of community within the organisation, and enhance opportunities for growth and success, while contributing to our broader goals of reconciliation and cultural inclusion.

Activities/initiatives

Our work includes encouraging more inclusive and culturally mindful communities through reconciliation and other initiatives that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to actively engage with community life and achieve better life outcomes in areas such as health and wellbeing, self-determination, education and economic participation.

This RAP will inspire a series of activities and initiatives to further reconciliation outcomes. Currently, our work in this area includes:

- supporting the development and maintenance of Aboriginal cultural artwork, such as public artwork to recognise Kaurna women and cultural markers such as the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track cairns (cultural markers).
- delivering integrated programs through our libraries which educate, celebrate and raise awareness, such as our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Literacy Day, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library collection and cultural workshops and programming
- supporting Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated to deliver services and programs through Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre, including:
 - Men's and Women's yarning groups
 - Southern Elders group
 - outreach and support services in partnership with other service providers
 - celebrating and raising awareness about important events such as National Reconciliation Week and National NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week.

9. Actions and deliverables

Relationships

We are committed to respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially those who live here or have a connection to the region, importantly including Kurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the region

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	1.1 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 This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	December 2026	Manager Community Capacity
	1.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 16 and 17	December 2026	Manager Community Capacity
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff via CEO News and our dedicated National Reconciliation Week webpage This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Manager Communications and Engagement
	2.2 RWG members to participate in an external NRW event by attending the Reconciliation South Australia Breakfast and other local National Reconciliation Week events and activities This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	RAP Project Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders (essential for RWG members) to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week by: • The Mayor and Directors Group attending the Reconciliation South Australia annual breakfast • Promoting opportunities via CEO News and strongly encouraging attendance and supporting staff to attend during working hours • Managers supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend National Reconciliation Week events and activities during work hours • Promoting Council's Reconciliation in the South event at the Town Hall meeting prior	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Manager Community Capacity
	• Delivering a CEO video dedicated to National Reconciliation This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Manager Communications and Engagement
	2.4 Organise at least one NRW event each year with guidance from the RAP Working Group where appropriate and in partnership with Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated, Southern Elders and Joining Hands and Minds Network, as well as planning and delivering a range of other programs and activities in libraries and community centres This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development
	2.5 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website and on our dedicated National Reconciliation Week webpage This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	3.1 Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce by implementing a Communication Plan which includes but not be limited to:	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Manager Communications and Engagement
	• CEO news promoting our achievements in the lead up to Reconciliation Week • Sharing positive reconciliation stories and opportunities, including short videos on our webpage • Showcasing the work of the RWG at a Town Hall meeting in the lead up to National Reconciliation Week • Posting Reconciliation Action Plan deliverable updates on our Reconciliation webpage every six months • Promoting our Reconciliation Week in the South event via: – Roadside banners at selected locations throughout our city – Social media – Posters at all centres, libraries, and staff common areas	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	RAP Project Officer
	This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly by: • Displaying the commitment to reconciliation statement on the council website, at customer service desks, libraries and centres, on staff email signatures (optional), and on alternative lanyards available for staff • Maintaining our Reconciliation South Australia membership • Delivering an annual National Reconciliation Week event and activities through our libraries and centres. This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2026, May 2027 & May 2028	Manager Community Capacity
	3.3 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes by: • Working with Joining Hands and Minds Network member organisations to participate in our Reconciliation Week events and activities, and promote their reconciliation work via their webpages • Recognising local businesses and organisations that have a RAP on our website • Ensuring our Community Grants are available for City of Onkaparinga businesses and organisations to deliver and strengthen Reconciliation outcomes • Providing support to local businesses and agencies who are interested in having a Reconciliation Action Plan by: – Connecting them to Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation South Australia – Exploring the establishment a RAP community of practice network in our region This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	December 2026	Manager Community Capacity

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	3.4 Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation via: - Facilitating a community of practice with other councils - RWG members meeting with Reconciliation SA CEO and/or staff once a year to discuss innovative approaches to advance reconciliation This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	Ongoing September 2026 & September 2027	Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	4.1 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs by: - Working with the RWG - Reviewing and considering research summary produced as part of the Reflect RAP - Reviewing the Diversity and Inclusion Policy to ensure demographics are updated - Reviewing grievance procedures to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and community members - Comparing our HR policies with those of other councils that have advanced RAPs (Innovate, Stretch, or Elevate RAPs) and identify key policies and procedures that could be adopted or adapted This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	November 2026	Manager People and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	4.2 Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation by seeking advice and guidance from identified stakeholders, and promoting the policy at staff events such as Town Hall, as well as promoting at community events such as Reconciliation in the South and NAIDOC in the South events This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	May 2027	Manager People and Culture
	4.3 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy by seeking advice and guidance from identified stakeholders and the RWG. This may include reviewing other LGA Policies and Procedures or conducting a cultural safety audit of HR policies and workplace practices This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	July 2027	Manager People and Culture
	4.4 Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism via council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Competency Framework This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	September 2026	Manager People and Culture

9. Actions and deliverables

Respect

We are committed to elevating respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their living cultures and their histories

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	5.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation, with consideration of the staff survey outcomes undertaken in 2023 This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	June 2026	Manager People and Culture
	5.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy by engaging Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, and Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated and Southern Elders and Community Group This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	July 2026	Manager Community Capacity
	5.3 Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff and elected members via our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Competency Framework This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	July 2026	Manager People and Culture
	5.4 Provide opportunities for RWG members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning as identified within our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Competency Framework This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	December 2026	Manager Community Capacity

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Explore opportunities to deepen our understanding and practice of Historical Acceptance within our organisational and community context.	6.1 Conduct a review of approaches to Historical Acceptance adopted by comparable councils and organisations. This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	February 2027	Manager Community Capacity
	6.2 Consult with Traditional Owners, other First Nations people, and relevant stakeholders to scope what Historical Acceptance or Truth-telling initiatives could look like for the City of Onkaparinga. This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	February 2027	Manager Community Capacity
	6.3 Determine appropriate Historical Acceptance or Truth-telling initiatives to consider for implementation during this RAP period and related deliverables to include in the next RAP This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14	July 2027	Manager Community Capacity

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	7.1 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols by: • Sharing short educational videos to increase staff and elected members understanding • Verbally acknowledging Country at Town Hall meetings • Exploring staff from across the organisation contributing to an internal collective acknowledgment video • Strengthening information on our Reconciliation Webpage • Further investigate implementing the Signs of Respect on our council office buildings and council-owned community facilities This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 16	July 2027	Manager Community Capacity
	7.2 Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country by finalising the review of the Kaurna Cultural Protocols and seeking advice and guidance on the draft protocols with identified stakeholders This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 16	December 2026	Manager Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	7.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year including: - National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events, - Other relevant Council ceremonies and events	May 2026, July 2026, May 2027, July 2027 & May 2028	Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development
	Swearing in the new Chamber This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 16	December 2026	Manager Governance
	7.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings including (but not limited to): - Council meetings, Council Committee meetings and Elected Member Workshops - Town Hall meetings - Division and Section Gatherings - Other Team meetings where staff feel it is appropriate and meaningful This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 16	June 2026	Manager People and Culture

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	8.1 RWG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event by attending the Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated Southern NAIDOC March and Family Fun Day with support of their line manager This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 15 and 16	July 2026 & July 2027	RAP Project Officer
	8.2 Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week with support from the RWG This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 15 and 16	June 2026	Manager People and Culture
	8.3 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff by: - Promoting opportunities via CEO News, strongly encouraging participation by staff - Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend NAIDOC Week events and activities during working hours and supporting their attendance through any required backfill arrangements to reduce workload demands - Seeking permission to film Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated's NAIDOC March and Family Fun Day and link to council's YouTube page This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 15 and 16	June 2026 & June 2027	Manager Communications and Engagement Manager Community Capacity Team Leader Arts, Reconciliation and Cultural Development

Opportunities

We are committed to exploring innovative opportunities to make taking action towards reconciliation part of our everyday work across the organisation

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development	9.1 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities by consulting with the RWG This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 7 and 8	July 2027	Manager Community Capacity
	9.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy via the RWG This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 7 and 8	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	9.3 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy as part of the Workforce Plan with clear targets to achieve and hold a stall at events promoting the diversity of jobs available at council and our application process This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 7 and 8	August 2027	Manager People and Culture

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	9.4 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders by: - Continuing to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers access to internally advertised positions - Sharing all job opportunities via: - Joining Hands and Minds Network - Local Job Network Providers - Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated Board of management, and their members - Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre volunteers - Specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment organisations such as Turkindi This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 7 and 8	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	9.5 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace by engaging with the RWG and identified stakeholders where appropriate This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 7 and 8	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	9.6 Create a culturally mindful support network – the Onkaparinga Culture, Healing, Resilience and Empowerment (OCHRE) Network - by consulting with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14 and 16	July 2026	Manager Community Capacity

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	9.7 Encourage participation by First Nations staff, volunteers, students and graduates in the OCHRE Network by: • Ensuring we understand who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander within our organisation • Providing invitations through organisation-wide communications as well as tailored outreach • Ensuring staff have the time and organisational support to participate meaningfully This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 14 and 16	Ongoing	Manager Community Capacity
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	10.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy by: • Incorporating specific strategies within the Procurement Policy and promoting as part of our tendering processes • Updating our 'tender readiness' resources and materials for City of Onkaparinga Aboriginal managed and owned businesses This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	July 2027	Manager Financial Services
	10.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership and implement alternative strategies if Supply Nation is not appropriate to support increased awareness and utilisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	December 2026	Manager Financial Services
	10.3 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff by promoting the South Australian Aboriginal Business Register with a link on the Procurement internal webpage This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	July 2026	Manager Financial Services

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	10.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by conducting a survey for local businesses represented on the South Australian Aboriginal Business Register, and those business engaged within the last 12 months This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	April 2027	Manager Financial Services
	10.5 Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses by updating our 'tender readiness' resources and materials for City of Onkaparinga Aboriginal managed and owned businesses on our website This Deliverable aligns with Closing the Gap Target 8	July 2027	Manager Financial Services

Governance

The City of Onkaparinga is committed to maintaining effective approaches for managing the delivery of our action towards reconciliation

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	11.1 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG by : • Having at least one permanent member of our RWG who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person • Providing a culturally safe and respectful environment and supporting staff to attend within work hours with support from line managers with provisions made to manage workload (see page 22 for more details).	Ongoing	Manager Community Capacity
	11.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG with support and approval of the RWG	July 2026	Manager Community Capacity

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	11.3 Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation by implementing an annual schedule of meetings in staff calendars	July 2026	Manager Community Capacity
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	12.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation by connecting with responsible Managers and Team Leaders and resourcing Actions and Deliverables through the annual budgeting process	May 2025	Manager Community Capacity
	12.2 Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments through: • Launching the Innovate RAP at a Town Hall meeting in 2026 • Providing annual updates to Council • Providing regular updates at Directors Group and Managers Forum	July 2026 & ongoing	Manager Community Capacity
	12.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments by implementing an internal tracking document to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	June 2026	Manager Community Capacity
	12.4 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management by appointing the Chief Executive Officer as the RAP Champion	June 2026	Chief Executive Officer

9. Actions and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	13.1 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 at the beginning of each calendar year	January 2027 & January 2028	RAP Project Officer
	13.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey when submitting our RAP for review	August 2026 & August 2027	RAP Project Officer
	13.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia by liaising with responsible Managers and Team Leaders	September 2026 & September 2027	RAP Project Officer
	13.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders every six months via our Reconciliation webpage and an annual update to Council, which is published on our Reconciliation webpage	July 2026, January 2027, July 2027, & January 2028	Manager Community Capacity
	13.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings, annually via our Reconciliation webpage	July 2026, January 2027, July 2027, & March 2028	Manager Community Capacity
	13.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer by engaging Reconciliation Australia on the requirements	July 2026	RAP Project Officer
	13.7 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP support from responsible Managers and Team Leaders and the RWG	April 2028	Manager Community Capacity
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	14.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP on the successful completion of our Innovate RAP	April 2028	Manager Community Capacity

10. Timeline

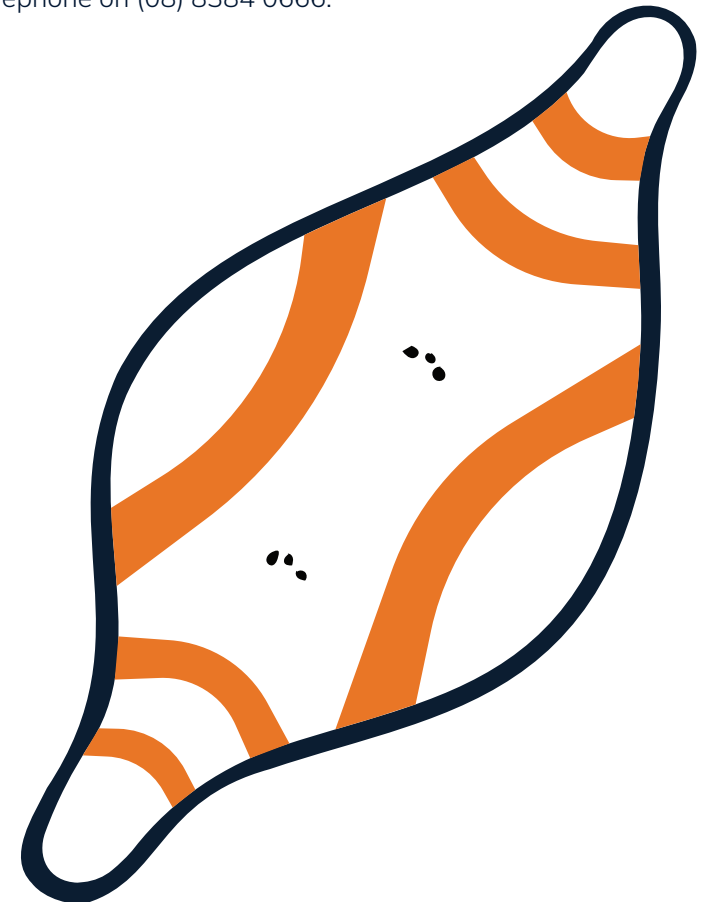
We delivered our Reflect RAP between 2022 and 2024.

We intend to deliver this Innovate RAP between 2026 and 2028, reporting progress throughout the life of the plan, per deliverables 13.4, 13.5 and 13.7.

Reconciliation Australia supports a framework of 4 stages of action towards reconciliation. We intend to continue to build on these strong foundations for future RAPs and continue to grow and increase our reconciliation impact using the RAP Framework.

11. Further information

For further information on the RAP, please contact the RWG via email at mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au or via telephone on (08) 8384 0666.



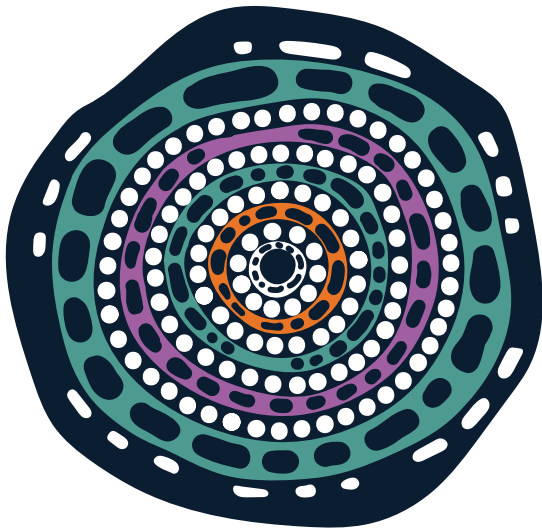


Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28

Weaving Onkaparinga
artwork meanings



Cultural Significance and Meanings Embedded in the Design



Element 1: Central Woven Circle – City of Onkaparinga Council

Visual Description:

Positioned at the centre of the artwork, this element features a stylised circular pattern composed of five woven bands surrounded by fine white dots. Each band contains oval-shaped openings, creating a cog-like motion that conveys rhythm, structure, and interconnection. The circular composition symbolises movement, energy, and unity — a visual representation of how the City of Onkaparinga operates as a cohesive and dynamic organisation.

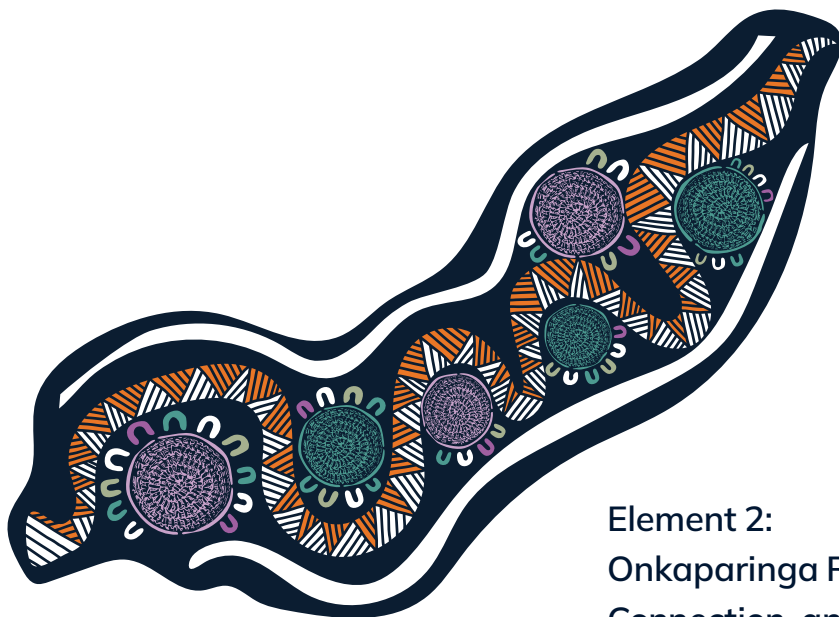
Cultural Significance:

At the heart of “Weaving Onkaparinga”, this central motif represents the City of Onkaparinga Council — the core hub through which community, culture, and Country are connected. The woven design reflects collaboration and the importance of working together across different areas of responsibility. The five bands symbolise the council's key business departments, each distinct yet interdependent, moving in harmony to serve the community. The surrounding white dots evoke the idea of people, connection, and

communication — acknowledging that council's work is guided by and responsive to the needs of its community and Kaurna Country.

Meaning:

This element conveys the concept of unity through diversity — a council made up of many parts working together towards shared goals. The cog-like motion represents innovation, progress, and continuous movement, while the woven structure honours the principles of connection and cooperation. Placed at the centre of the artwork, it highlights the City of Onkaparinga's role in leading and supporting community initiatives, including reconciliation, cultural development, and sustainable growth, all grounded in respect for Kaurna knowledge and Country.



Element 2: Onkaparinga River – Strength, Connection, and Continuity

Visual Description:

Flowing gracefully through the artwork, the Onkaparinga River is depicted in stylised bands of orange and white, winding across the composition to connect various visual elements. Along its banks, the presence of bulrushes reflects the natural vegetation found along the river's edge, while the woven forms within the design reference traditional Kaurna weaving practices used to create baskets and mats from river reeds. The river's flowing movement unites the artwork, symbolising life, continuity, and the strength found in connection.

Cultural Significance:

The Onkaparinga River, known to Kaurna people as Ngangkiparri, has been a vital life source for countless generations. It provided food, water, shelter, and materials for weaving and craft, while also serving as a meeting place and cultural pathway. Within “Weaving Onkaparinga”, the river embodies the resilience of both Country and community.

The woven and flowing patterns acknowledge the interdependence between people and the environment — reflecting the Kaurna understanding that strength is created through unity and shared purpose. The orange and white tones represent the warmth of the land and the enduring vitality of the river's spirit.

Meaning:

This element symbolises connection, resilience, and the life-giving essence of Country. The Onkaparinga River stands as a reminder that communities, like the strands of a woven basket, are strongest when intertwined. It reflects the council's commitment to working in partnership with the Kaurna community, recognising the river as both a physical and cultural lifeline that continues to sustain, inspire, and bring people together. Through its flow, the artwork celebrates renewal, collaboration, and the enduring bond between land, water, and people.

Cultural Significance and Meanings Embedded in the Design

Element 3: Drosera whittakeri – Whittaker’s Sundew

Visual Description:

This element depicts *Drosera whittakeri*, or Whittaker’s Sundew, emerging from the ground and displaying its characteristic radiance through glistening, dew-like leaves and soft flowers. Surrounding the sundew are three intersecting circles that symbolise the coming together of diverse community groups within the City of Onkaparinga. The overlapping spaces between the circles represent collaboration, shared responsibility, and unity in caring for Country.

Cultural Significance:

In “Weaving Onkaparinga”, *Drosera whittakeri* represents the strength, adaptability, and beauty found within the natural environment of Kurna Country. The plant’s grounded nature connects to the Kurna understanding of balance and reciprocity — that all living things are interconnected and that caring for Country ensures the wellbeing of community and future generations.

The three circles acknowledge the relationships between Kurna people, the City of Onkaparinga, and the wider community, who together contribute to the ongoing journey of reconciliation and environmental stewardship.

Meaning:

This element symbolises unity, cooperation, and the shared commitment to caring for the land and each other. The sundew, small yet vibrant, reflects how strength and beauty exist in the finer details of nature, reminding us of the importance of attentiveness and respect for Country. The intersecting circles reinforce the idea of communities working together — blending culture, knowledge, and innovation — to create a stronger, more connected Onkaparinga.



Element 4: Kurna Man and Woman – Living in Balance with Country

Visual Description:

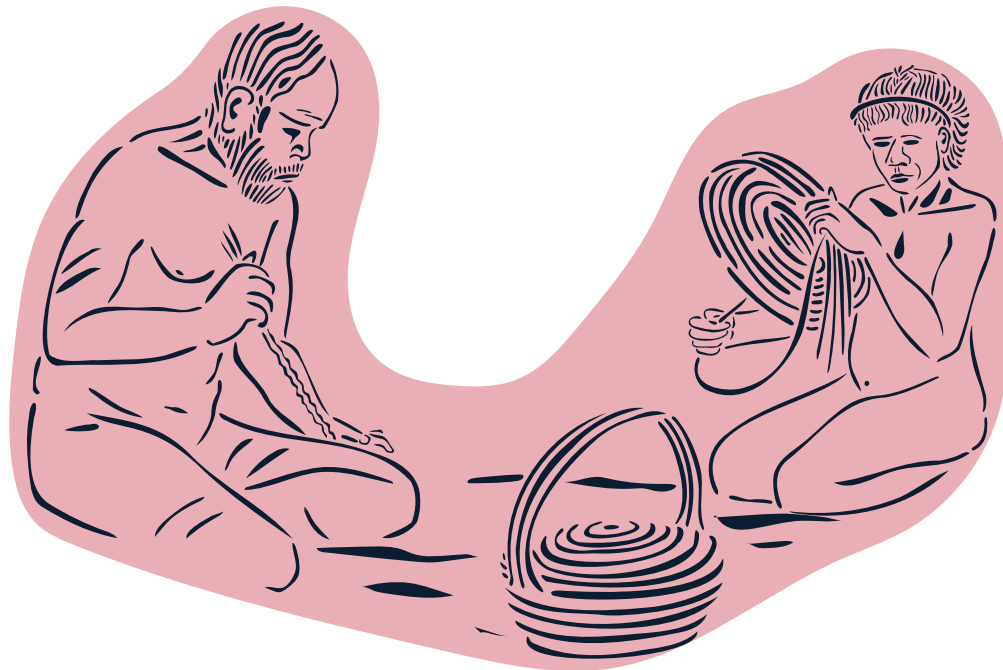
This element shows a Kurna man and woman sitting along the banks of the Onkaparinga River, weaving together in a moment of calm and reflection. Surrounded by reeds and flowing water, they appear at ease — living simply and freely, connected to Country and cultural practice.

Cultural Significance:

The scene honours Kurna people and their deep, ongoing relationship with the land and river. Weaving represents the sharing of cultural knowledge, creativity, and care — a practice grounded in patience and respect for Country. It reflects a time when life flowed in balance with nature, guided by quiet listening and awareness of how the land provides for all needs.

Meaning:

The Kurna man and woman embody peace, mindfulness, and connection to Country. This element reminds us of the strength that comes from living in harmony with nature and community. It celebrates the freedom to express culture and the importance of continuing these practices as a living expression of identity, guiding reconciliation and respect for Kurna Country.



Cultural Significance and Meanings

Embedded in the Design

Element 5: Community Gathering Circles – Unity and Shared Purpose

Visual Description:

Scattered across the artwork are a series of circular forms representing community gathering places. These circles are connected by winding lines that extend outward from the central woven circle and the Onkaparinga River. Each circle symbolises a space where people come together — to share stories, learn, and support one another — forming a network of connection across the City of Onkaparinga.

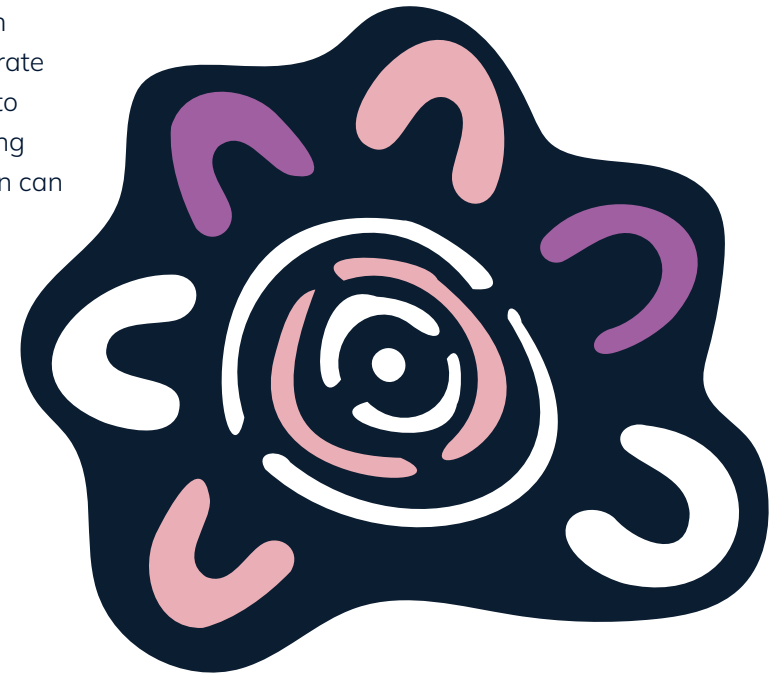
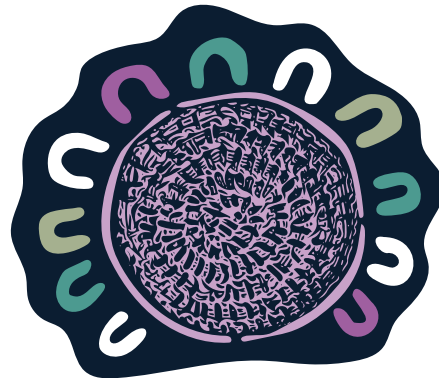
Cultural Significance:

Gathering circles hold deep meaning within Kurna culture as places of meeting, teaching, and exchange. Within “Weaving Onkaparinga”, these circles represent the many community groups, cultural hubs, and initiatives that strengthen connection between council, Kurna people, and the wider community.

The flowing lines linking the circles reflect the movement of knowledge, creativity, and collaboration — showing how each group contributes to the wellbeing and cultural life of the region.

Meaning:

This element symbolises unity, inclusion, and the strength that comes from community working together. The gathering circles remind us that reconciliation and progress are achieved through shared dialogue and mutual respect. They celebrate the City of Onkaparinga’s ongoing commitment to supporting community-led initiatives and fostering spaces where culture, innovation, and connection can flourish.





Element 6: Native Flora and Fauna – Healing Country and Renewal

Visual Description:

This element features native animals such as kangaroos, emus, birds, and fish woven throughout the landscape of the artwork. These forms move across the land, water, and sky, accompanied by native plants and foliage that bring vibrancy and life to the design. Their placement throughout the composition symbolises the return of balance and abundance to Country.



Cultural Significance:

Within “Weaving Onkaparinga”, the presence of native flora and fauna represents a once-thriving landscape and the ongoing restoration of Kaurna Country. These species are indicators of a healthy environment — a sign that the land, sea, and sky are being cared for in the right way. For Kaurna people, animals and plants are not separate from humanity but are part of a shared living system. Their wellbeing reflects the wellbeing of the community and the strength of cultural connection to Country.

Meaning:

This element speaks to the healing of Country through care, respect, and cultural awareness. The return and flourishing of native animals and plants symbolise that the land is not just surviving, but thriving. It reminds us that when we act in harmony with nature — protecting waterways, habitats, and cultural sites — we honour our responsibilities to Country. This element celebrates renewal, balance, and the shared commitment between the City of Onkaparinga and the Kaurna community to sustain the living spirit of the environment for future generations.

Cultural Significance and Meanings Embedded in the Design

Element 7: Weaving the Story – Connection, Strength, and Shared Purpose

Visual Description:

At the heart of “Weaving Onkaparinga” is the interlacing of all elements — from the central woven circle, pathways, river, and community gatherings, to native flora, fauna, and cultural practices. Threads, lines, and patterns flow through the artwork, linking each component and creating a cohesive tapestry that represents the living landscape of the City of Onkaparinga.

Cultural Significance:

This element reflects the Kaurna understanding that life, land, water, and community are interconnected. Each visual element — from people to animals, river to council pathways — contributes to the strength and vibrancy of the whole. By weaving together these threads, the artwork honours the ongoing journey of reconciliation, innovation, and collaboration between the City of Onkaparinga and the Kaurna community.

Meaning:

Weaving the Story symbolises unity, resilience, and shared purpose. It reminds viewers that progress, cultural respect, and environmental care are most powerful when undertaken together. The tapestry celebrates the City’s commitment to community engagement, the thriving of Country, and the preservation and expression of Kaurna culture.

Through this interwoven narrative, the artwork embodies the idea that we are strongest when connected — across people, place, and purpose — creating a living, enduring story of reconciliation, growth, and harmony.



Colour Significance

Each colour in “Weaving Onkaparinga” is carefully chosen to reflect the natural environment, cultural heritage, and collaborative vision of the City of Onkaparinga, while honouring Kurna Country and community connection.

Dark Navy Blue – Tjilbruki / Onkaparinga River (Ngangkiparri) Waters

Represents the flowing waters of the Onkaparinga River, a lifeline for Country and people. Symbolises cultural continuity, deep connection to Kurna Country, and the shared responsibility of looking after land and water. Embodies collaboration between council, community, and Kurna custodians in nurturing and sustaining Country.

Orange – Earth and Ochre of Kurna Land

Reflects the resilient and enduring spirit of the land and the people of the region. Evokes grounding, strength, and the vibrant essence of Onkaparinga’s landscapes. Represents the collaboration with the Kurna community in embedding cultural knowledge and values into innovative initiatives such as the RAP.

Pastel Pink – Healing and Compassion

Symbolises care, empathy, and the gentle threads that bring people together. Honours the ongoing journey of reconciliation, nurturing relationships across communities, and collective effort to innovate and strengthen social cohesion in the City of Onkaparinga.

Teal Blue – Coastal Waters and Open Skies

Evokes the meeting of land, sea, and sky across Onkaparinga. Represents renewal, balance, and forward-thinking innovation that respects both cultural heritage and contemporary community aspirations. Reflects collaboration and shared vision between council and Kurna community for a sustainable and connected future.

Mauve / Purple – Spiritual Connection and Ancestral Guidance

Honours ancestral wisdom, Kurna spiritual guidance, and reflection. Acknowledges the importance of consulting and working closely with Kurna Elders and custodians in all cultural and environmental initiatives, emphasising respectful collaboration and shared learning.

Gumleaf Green – Living Spirit of Country

Represents growth, renewal, and the living energy of Onkaparinga’s landscapes and communities. Celebrates care for land, water, and people, and embodies the partnership between the City of Onkaparinga, local communities, and the Kurna people in fostering culturally strong and environmentally sustainable projects.

Summary

The elements and colours together weave a story of connection between land, water, sky, and people. They symbolise the ongoing journey of reconciliation, where diverse communities, histories, and aspirations come together to form a stronger, more connected City of Onkaparinga.

Allan Sumner ACASTudios

Allan Sumner is a proud descendent of the Ngarrindjeri, Kurna, and Yankunytjatjara peoples of South Australia. A talented musician, visual artist, and graphic designer, Allan is deeply connected to his cultural heritage having spent valuable time with Elders learning Dreaming Stories and ancient art forms, which he now expresses through contemporary artworks that communicate these stories across generations.

