City of Casey

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Community engagement summary report

June 2024

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2 Background

This document provides a summary of stakeholder and community feedback on the **draft Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.**

The survey aimed to assess perceptions, gather suggestions, and understand the community's views on inclusivity and safety.

The City of Casey has been working on the development of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to wholeheartedly embrace the essence of Reconciliation.

To ensure the draft Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024/26 is reflective of Casey's unique people and places, the community was asked for feedback between Monday 18 September and Friday 13 October 2024.

An Innovate RAP runs for two years, and outlines actions for achieving the organisation's vision for reconciliation.

This is an exciting step in our journey of reconciliation as an organisation as it will create space for us all to reflect on where we are and where we need to go, ensuring that the foundational principle of self-determination is embedded in work throughout Council.

Key findings

The responses from the consultation reflected a range of diverse perspectives.

The survey aimed to assess perceptions, gather suggestions, and understand the community's views on inclusivity and safety. Feedback included a range of improvements and suggestions as well as feedback on the perceptions and thoughts of the community.

70% of respondents suggested including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in community activities and creating culturally sensitive services and decision-making processes.

In regard to the draft RAP, 25% of respondents criticised the plan for being too vague and a lack of tangible actions. Elements which were praised by respondents (35%) included in inclusion of cultural awareness training.

45% of respondents expressed that they perceive the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as accepted and safe within Casey however 20% indicated that the communities were perceived as unaccepted on unsafe.

The survey also received written feedback and across the responses some common themes included:

- Celebrate cultural values
- More cultural events and arts
- More education and opportunities to learn more directly from the community starting from a young age
- More mandatory training and consultation on projects that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in May 2024. Feedback from community provided input into the final Action Plan – creating a collaborative plan designed to build understanding, commitment and respect for culture.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026 can be viewed here.

3 Consultation overview

Consultation purpose

The Innovate RAP allows Casey to gain a **deeper understanding of community's sphere of influence**, and establish the **best approach to advance reconciliation**. An Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The consultation was designed to provide the community a chance to have their say on the policy and to share their views and thoughts on related topics.

Consultation process

The tools and techniques selected for this project were informed by the project content, stakeholders and type of feedback sought.

Key tools for communicating the project

- Casey Conversations project webpage for key stakeholders.
- Email notification to key stakeholder groups
- Social media promotion

Key methods for gathering feedback

- Online engagement via Casey Conversations, including opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback.
- contact details for interested stakeholders to ask for further information or provide anonymous feedback
- correspondence via email or phone
- printed information available, as required.

Details	Activity
18 September – 13 October 2024 **451** visitors **614** visits **745** views **40** contributions	**Casey Conversations Website** Project information, online survey and written submission hosted on the engagement platform Casey Conversations.

4 Who we heard from

Survey respondents were people who live and or work in Casey, who ranged from ages 15 to 85 and over. 28% were male respondents, 42% female, 3% non-binary and 27% would prefer not to say.

2% of the respondents indicated they were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Origin.

8% of the respondents are part of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Australia was the main country of birth for the respondents (62%) and the remaining 38% from other countries. 15% of respondents also indicated that English is not their primary language.

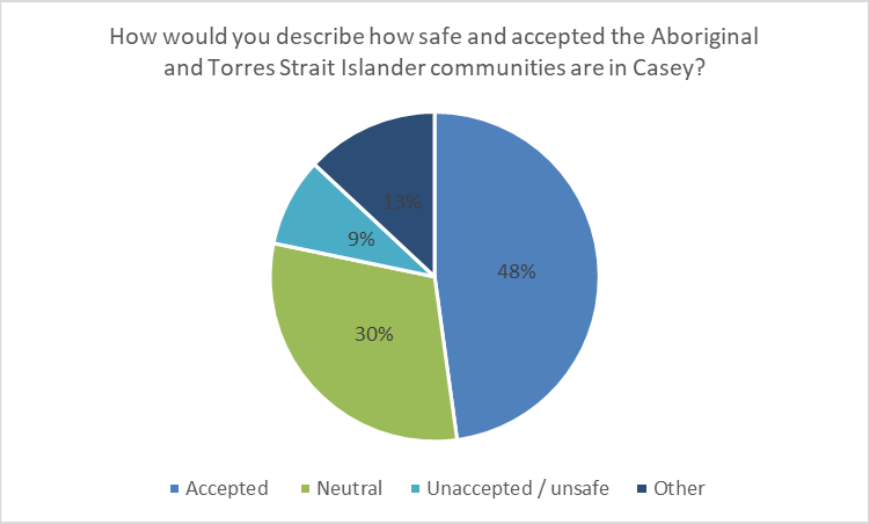
22.5% (9) of the respondents indicated that they have an interest in joining a future Casey Advisory Group to influence and support future decision-making on issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

5 Consultation findings

The following section presents the findings from the consultation questions which helped to create feedback for adjustments to the RAP, future planning of work and activities and also top recommendations for Council to focus on moving forward.

Safety and acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Casey

Participants were asked for their views on how they would describe how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are in Casey.



48% of respondents believe that the community are accepted with 9% feeling the opposite from selecting unaccepted/unsafe. This represents there is still more work to be done in ensuring that more members of the community agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are accepted.

Respondents who selected other indicated that they could not answer due to not being part of the community so they were unsure on how to respond and indicated that it would be better to ask members of the community so they can share their lived experiences and thoughts.

The 30% of neutral responses indicate a gap of understanding or experiences from the respondents.

Celebration and inclusion

Respondents were asked how the City of Casey can better include or celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This was an open ended question with a range of suggestions from the respondents with key themes summarised below.

Topic	Community feedback
More events	I think we can do more events that showcase the culture of our indigenous communities where everyone can get more involved. Lack of events has been a barrier for most people to understanding our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities An Inclusion Festival for all Australians that celebrates first nation people as well as immigrants and white Australians. It will celebrate culture for all Australians. Have Aboriginal cultural events at Bunjil Place.
Consultation inclusion and engagement	Inclusion in Council activities and decision making Ask those communities and listen to their Voice. Educate the community and empower Indigenous people to be involved very early in decision making right across the municipality. Continue to engage with the group with intention, for the betterment of that community.
Education and culture	Education for the community of the value and insights our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can share with us. Allowing us to understand the rich culture that many turn a blind eye to. There is need for education and community engagement about Aboriginal culture and history. Get a Casey wide Aboriginal Study done so as we know far more about the rich Aboriginal heritage. Involve schools and kindergartens with units of work tailored to the local area. More in schools to be taught Provide grant funding to run programs and activities together in local NFP's and partner with business Celebrate the culture on an equal basis with other ethnic communities. Expand cultural celebrations into more areas of Casey. Wilson Botanic Park has no cultural anything. Aboriginal and Torres islanders Language inclusion as a part of early years and school curriculum. This enables inclusion, belonging and better participation of communities. Celebrate cultural values (in a non-threatening to conservatives way) by bringing more story telling into

	our places and activities within Casey (in an enjoyable and non forced way). Inclusion of cultural awareness training and racism training for Council staff,
Inclusivity across Casey	Listen directly to the community. No tag needed, we are all Australians and members of community. Stop pointing out peoples differences. Local support services for local indiginous community to connect them with available services. More visibility - flags, acknowledgement of country or welcome to country at big events, education in kinders, schools, community hubs. Education of their culture is key to understanding and making them feel included. We make assumptions too often. Including more aboriginal names in our landmarks, parks, reserves, streets and significant areas. highlight local stories, past and present and celebrate them
Australia Day	Stop any Australia Day celebrations.

The meaning of Reconciliation and self determination

Respondents were asked what Reconciliation and self determination means to them if they are a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The majority of respondents were not part of this community therefore we only received a small selection of feedback. Key feedback includes:

- Acceptance, respect and understanding of our culture, language and customs.
- Acknowledging the past and working towards a better future together.
- It means to come out of the hardest times and still keeping your head up for the future, people are far from their true peace and inner natures though someday I hope many more of us will be free and united.
- Everyone should be accepted for who they are no matter their race, creed or background.

Improvement of representation for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide examples of how they believe the City of Casey could improve its representation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. There were a range of responses which echoed similar themes and responses which came from the other questions. Some ideas are summarised below:

Topic	Community feedback
City of Casey actions	Change the City of Casey symbol to something that is representative of our First Nations. Design the City of Casey website with indigenous themes and have a section specifically for our indigenous community on the home page Run forums about truth-telling. Support NFP businesses to brand with artwork, use the language, support programs and pay staff to attend cultural safety training Have a committee who can feed info into Casey's projects. Slow down the development so they can rediscover or preserve what culture places they have used in the past or may still use Include members from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in all community consultations, at all events and normal daily work. Greater signage and public education, some public or community sites within Casey have Indigenous history (and sometimes even Indigenous names) but little is known about the history. it would be great to have an Indigenous member of council come out to do a short staff training session with community/public facing centres where appropriate to learn better awareness on being respectful but also to get to know who they are. More education from Council regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Elders' engagement on taskforces created by Casey A Councillor position on the council as part of the decision-making process. Hold an annual event at the Gathering Place opening up to the wider community. Achieve actions in RAP and report against Share what happens at the Gathering Place, Run educational programs, don't ask non-indig people for their opinions on indig people, you don't ask indig people for their opinion on non-indig people. Be firm & informative to negative media responses when promoting this, rather than avoid it completely More images/representation in media

	More information about important indigenous sites around city of casey ie online interactive map, tours and talks. A larger Indigenous team at council to ensure widespread input into decision making Recruitment with specific search for candidates from this community. Make it mandatory to have a representative in our engagement/decision making panel.
Opportunities for connection	Create more opportunities for connection and networking within the community. Have positions on all relevant committees where the community are involved. Have a community day where all cultures are celebrated aboriginal and white Aussies and all other cultures that live here equally. Find employment and include marginalised communities in our everyday life. Create video stories and education pieces that can be shown all over Casey, there are TV's everywhere Opportunities to learn, engage with and discuss ATSI culture and people. That might be bigger events, or a cuppa and chat type thing where people can ask questions they might be worried to ask in case it's disrespectful, but they are genuinely curious. Opportunities to create connection and break down assumptions Involving elders in every learning opportunities in early years and school.
Culture	Support individual's interpretations of their history acknowledging that with so much culture lost we need to rebuild history with what we know and that it might not be 100% historically accurate but each piece supports building more recognition and more shared value for the land Treat them, their culture and beliefs just as you would any other Australians. Have visible items such as flags or art in and on all buildings Craft programs run by groups, I would love to see a cooking event every month. Language program offered to early years and school. Network workshop like crafta and arts for families.
Celebration of diversity	Continue to celebrate diversity across all sectors Showcasing beautiful art work and telling stories Artwork from these communities used in facilities to be a passive reminder to the community.

	Sharing positive community stories
Equal treatment	Treat the communities as equal Australians It creates division with other cultures

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Improvement of the draft Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

Feedback for the RAP has allowed for Council to consider the changes needed to ensure the plan is reflective of community. Key feedback for the RAP included:

- More emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage through more studies and education programmes.
- Employment of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer.
- Clearer action owners and accountable officers
- Staff training to be expanded beyond people leaders
- Set employment target for Manager level and above
- More opportunities for informal chats around this topic
- Clearer reporting methods and measurement of success
- More engaging plan with images and colour
- Less jargon
- Definition of roles

Top recommendations

Based on the responses provided, some key themes and recommendations include:

1) **Cultural inclusion in Community Activities**: A significant portion of respondents emphasised the importance of including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in community events, suggesting a desire for greater cultural inclusion and participation in events across the city.
2) **Increased visibility and awareness**: Over half of the respondents recommended more events highlighting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and beliefs. This points to a need for increased visibility and awareness, potentially through cultural signage, public education programs and Indigenous artwork in community spaces.
3) **Refinement of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**: There was mixed feedback on the draft RAP, with some respondents suggesting the need for clearer actions, responsible parties and measurable outcomes. Refining and clarifying the RAP emerged as a recommendation to address concerns about its effectiveness.
4) **Diversification of Consultation Strategies** – A recommendation from a significant portion of respondents was to diversity consultation strategies. This involves reaching out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander groups and ensuring their voices are actively considered in the decision making process.
5) **Exploration of Alternative Approaches to Australia Day:** Given the varying opinions on Australia Day, there is a suggestion to explore alternative approaches that consider the diverse perspectives within the community.

6 Consultation evaluation

This report presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback gathered during community engagement from 18 September – 13 October 2024. The consultation was promoted to relevant stakeholders across Casey.

Casey Conversations project page summary

The consultation page received 614 visits with 40 contributions from those who visited.

