



Reconciliation Action Plan

2024 – 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Ashburton acknowledges all Native Title holders throughout the Shire. We respect and honour the Traditional Owners, custodians, native land titles, and Elders past and present. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

Thank you to contributors

The Shire appreciates the valuable feedback from the community to help develop this plan of action. This includes residents, schools, local businesses, community groups, clubs and organisations.





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A home with strong foundations.

'Community and opportunity' are the foundation of 'My Pilbara Home'. They enable the Shire and the many residents, volunteers, organisers, leaders, corporate sponsors, and participants to develop activities, initiatives and events in a way that makes the most of our remote location and dynamic population.

The 'My Pilbara Home' Community Development Strategy 2024 – 2027 ('My Pilbara Home') includes six informing strategies:

RAP

Connecting culture to community to advance reconciliation.

CAIP

Connecting all community members with the same opportunities and experiences.

Youth

Connecting young people with opportunities to feel engaged, empowered and supported.

my Pilbara home

Programs & Events

Connecting community members through the delivery of inclusive programs and events.

Club Development Plan

Connecting clubs and groups with opportunities to build capacity.

Arts

Connecting community with Arts.

1. Introduction



1.1 Our business

The Shire of Ashburton serves communities across a vast region in the Pilbara, Western Australia. This region is renowned for its mining, agriculture and fishing, and for its rugged, ancient landscape and historical importance.

The history of the Pilbara dates back as far as 40,000 years. Over 700 historic Aboriginal archaeological sites have been found in the Pilbara, as well as over 10,000 rock engravings. The main centres of population are Tom Price, Onslow, Pannawonica and Paraburdoo. The Shire also encompasses a number of Aboriginal communities, including, Bindi Bindi, Innawonga, Jundaru, Ngurawaana, Wakathuni and Youngaleena.

At the Shire of Ashburton, we provide core Council services and work with mining and other resources companies to create liveable

communities. Our vision is to embrace our unique Pilbara environment and lifestyle, by developing vibrant, active and connected communities. As community members ourselves, we believe that social values are worth fighting for, and that everyone deserves to share in the richness created from where we choose to invest, live and visit. We are dedicated to driving and delivering 'opportunity to community.'

The core business of the Shire of Ashburton revolves around several key areas:

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- 1. Strategic Planning:** The Shire has a 10-year Strategic Community Plan that captures the views of the community and outlines the planning direction for the next decade. This plan is part of the State Government's Integrated Planning and Framework Initiative, which provides a framework for establishing local priorities.
 - 2. Corporate Business Plan:** The Shire has a Corporate Business Plan for 2023-2027 that sets clear goals and provides the necessary direction to deliver the strategic objectives set by the community. This plan translates the Shire's vision of being a welcoming, sustainable, and socially active district into deliverable actions.
 - 3. Community Services:** The Shire provides core Council services and works with mining and other resource companies to create liveable townships.
 - 4. Capital Projects:** The Shire is committed to delivering capital projects to the towns of Onslow, Paraburdoo, Pannawonica, and Tom Price over the next four years. These projects are delivered through community partnerships with Rio Tinto and the Chevron Operated Wheatstone Project.
 - 5. Industry Collaboration:** Industries important to Ashburton include mining, oil, natural gas, fishing, and tourism. The Shire works closely with these industries for the development of the region.
 - 6. Community Development:** The Shire is committed to achieving considerable social and capital investment across the region. It aims to ensure a thriving and sustainable future for both the community and economy.

These areas highlight the Shire's ongoing commitment to providing key services to its community and its role in fostering economic development in the region.

According to the 2021 Census, the Shire has a population of 7,391 people. This population is largely transient and influenced by the employment opportunities in the region. Of that population, 772, or 10.4%, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The Shire employs around 190 people, approximately 5% of these roles are filled by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

1.2 Our RAP

This Reflect RAP marks the start of our formal reconciliation journey. We are developing a Reflect RAP to engage in reconciliation meaningfully, to take proactive steps to advance in reconciliation and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It contains practical steps for the Shire, as a workplace, to take sustainable actions towards achieving reconciliation. It provides the foundations by which we can learn and broaden our knowledge. We will look to use our own experiences to influence and inspire other organisations within the Shire to work towards reconciliation.

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

– Reconciliation Australia, 2024

The Shire is committed to fostering reconciliation by supporting the Karijini Experience, providing cultural sensitivity training to its personnel, and actively engaging and collaborating with Indigenous owners and local Aboriginal organisations. This commitment is further demonstrated through our facilitation of NAIDOC week initiatives, and reconciliation programs in collaboration with the community. We are committed to incorporating cultural experiences into our diverse range of programs and events across the Shire.

In 2022, Council adopted the 'Recognition of Aboriginal Culture and History Policy'. The policy includes guidelines for all elected members and employees responsible for organising events, functions, ceremonies and meetings where an 'Acknowledgement of Country' or 'Welcome to Country' should be included in official proceedings.



Now in 2024, this Reconciliation Action Plan brings the Shire on its next step in support of reconciliation.

Our commitments in this RAP are defined under the framework of Reconciliation Australia, which oversees a staged approach that is uniformly structured, reviewed and accredited. The actions aim to build our conversation and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and deepen our awareness and capabilities to advance reconciliation. We will enable this dialogue through processes that support the Reconciliation Australia RAP framework pillars: **Relationship, Respect, Opportunities**.

The implementation of actions in this RAP will be overseen by a RAP Working Group. The RAP Working Group will:

- Comprise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members from within the Shire and relevant Shire officers and decision makers
- Meet quarterly
- Check progress on actions in this plan
- Advise on matters involving the Shire and the interests of Aboriginal communities in the Shire, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities more broadly
- Build organisational understanding of how our actions influence outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Advise on the development of the Shire's next RAP (Innovate).



2. Reconciliation and you



2.1 How we talked with the community

Community consultation to develop this Reconciliation Action Plan was delivered as part of the engagement for the ‘My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy 2024-27’ and informing strategies between March and April 2024 and included:

- a print and online survey that received 214 responses (103 complete, 111 incomplete)
- talking with community members at one of the four Welcome to Town events (Tom Price, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo)
- 38 one-on-one interviews (online and in-person) with people living or working in the Shire
- two stakeholder workshops (Onslow and Tom Price) involving 21 people.

Information about the development of the My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy and informing strategies, including the opportunity to participate, was delivered to the community through the Shire’s website, Facebook page and via direct engagement with select stakeholders.

A comprehensive summary of consultation can be viewed in the My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy.



2.2 What we learned

Consultation feedback across all four towns highlighted the importance of the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for the Shire. 45.87% of community survey participants rated the RAP as ‘very important’ on a scale of 1 to 5 (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1).

Table 2.1 The importance of the Shire’s development of the RAP, ranked by survey respondents.

Rating	Response percent	Response count
1 (Not important)	5.50%	6
2	6.42%	7
3	22.02%	24
4	20.18%	22
5 (Very important)	45.87%	50

Importance of a RAP to Ashburton community

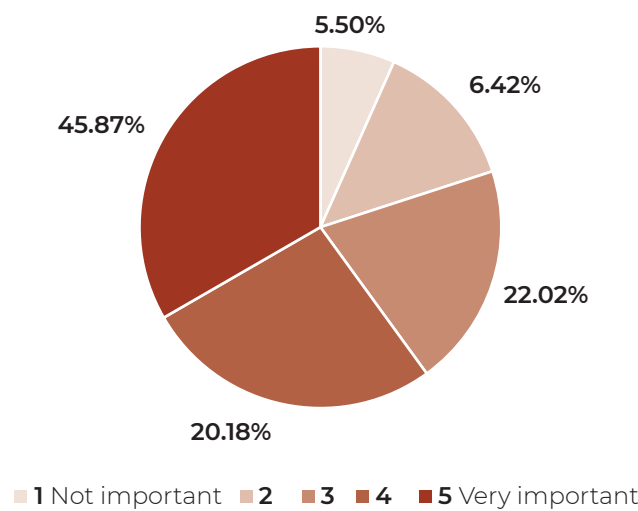


Figure 2.1 The importance of the Shire’s development of the RAP, ranked by survey respondents.

Feedback reflected a desire for equality, respect, and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, alongside acknowledgement of historical injustices and a commitment to reconciliation and positive change. The input has been categorised against the RAP framework pillars of Relationships, Respect, and Opportunities. A summary of key findings from one-on-one meetings and the community survey is provided below.

1. Relationships: including funding, resources

It was acknowledged through consultation that there has been a positive shift in relationship between the Indigenous community and the Shire. Concerns were raised, however, about the allocation of resources and funding towards Indigenous initiatives. It was suggested that dedicated funds for cultural events like NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week could assist in fostering better connections within the Shire and Aboriginal communities. In addition, there was also the need for the Shire to support Aboriginal communities' safety, and the need for allocation of resources such as increased housing options and medical services.

2. Respect: education and understanding

There is a strong emphasis on the need for education and understanding, both among Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. In particular, key areas for improvement include:

- Respect for Indigenous peoples, their beliefs, and history
- Acknowledgement of past wrongs and reconciliation
- Need for cultural awareness training within schools and the broader community.

3. Opportunities; desire for equality and inclusion

Multiple participants expressed a desire for equality and inclusion, emphasising that everyone should be treated equally regardless of race or nationality. This includes initiatives aimed at Closing the Gap, recognising the significance of Indigenous culture, and investing in the broader community.



3. *Actions* and deliverables

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Organisational Responsibility
RELATIONSHIPS			
1	Establish a RAP Working Group	Establish a RAP Working Group to support the implementation of the RAP	Q3 2024 Community Development Team
		Develop a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group	Q3 2024 Community Development Team Governance Team
2	Build and strengthen external relationships and internal understanding	Identify and develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, stakeholders and organisations within the Shire or our sphere of influence (including Aboriginal Corporations)	Q3 2024 Community Development Team
		Identify and develop a list of like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect and collaborate with on our reconciliation journey, including local businesses.	Q4 2024 Community Development Team
3	Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Encourage our staff to attend an NRW event.	Q2 2025 Community Development Team Media and Communications Team
		Ensure our RAP Working group members participate in an event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	Q2 2025 Community Development Team Governance Team
		Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Q2 2025 Organisational Development Team
4	Raise internal awareness of our RAP	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Q3 2024 Organisational Development Team
		Engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP.	Q3 2024 Community Development Team Governance Team Organisational Development Team



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Organisational Responsibility
RESPECT			
5	Investigate cultural learning and development regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights	Identify ways to increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures, histories and achievements across the Shire.	Q1 2025 Community Development Team
		Review cultural awareness training needs within the Shire for staff and elected members.	Q1 2025 Organisational Development Team
		Investigate the delivery of place-specific cultural awareness training.	Q1 2025 Organisational Development Team
6	Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	Q3 2024 & Q3 2025 Organisational Development Team Media and Marketing Team
		Promote community NAIDOC events to staff and encourage them to attend.	Q3 2024 & Q3 2025 Organisational Development Team Media and Marketing Team
		Ensure our RAP Working Group members participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Q3 2024 & Q3 2025 Community Development Team Governance Team
7	Raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Begin mapping of Elders and Traditional Owners within the Shire.	Q4 2024 Community Development Team
		Promote the Shire's 'Recognition of Aboriginal Culture and History Policy' internally and externally, including the purpose and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Q2 2025 Community Development Team Organisational Development Team Governance Team
		Investigate including names in local Aboriginal languages in the Shire's signage renewal policy.	Q2 2025 Media and Communications Team

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Organisational Responsibility	
OPPORTUNITIES				
8	Investigate and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment	Review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at the Shire	Q2 2025	Organisational Development Team
		Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Q2 2025	Organisational Development Team
		Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at the Shire	Q2 2025	Organisational Development Team
		Establish partnerships with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce planning agencies/OR Employment Agencies	Q2 2025	Organisational Development Team
		Develop and maintain a jobs notice board to support employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Q2 2025	Organisational Development Team
9	Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Q3 2025	Procurement Team
		Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Q3 2025	Procurement Team
GOVERNANCE				
10	Build support for the RAP	Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation	Q3 2024	Organisational Development Team Community Development Team
		Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	Q3 2024	Governance Team
		Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Q3 2024 & Q3 2025	Community Development Team Governance Team
11	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP (Innovate level) based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Q3 2025	Community Development Team Governance Team
		Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and then formal endorsement.	Q4 2025	Community Development Team





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opportunity to community

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