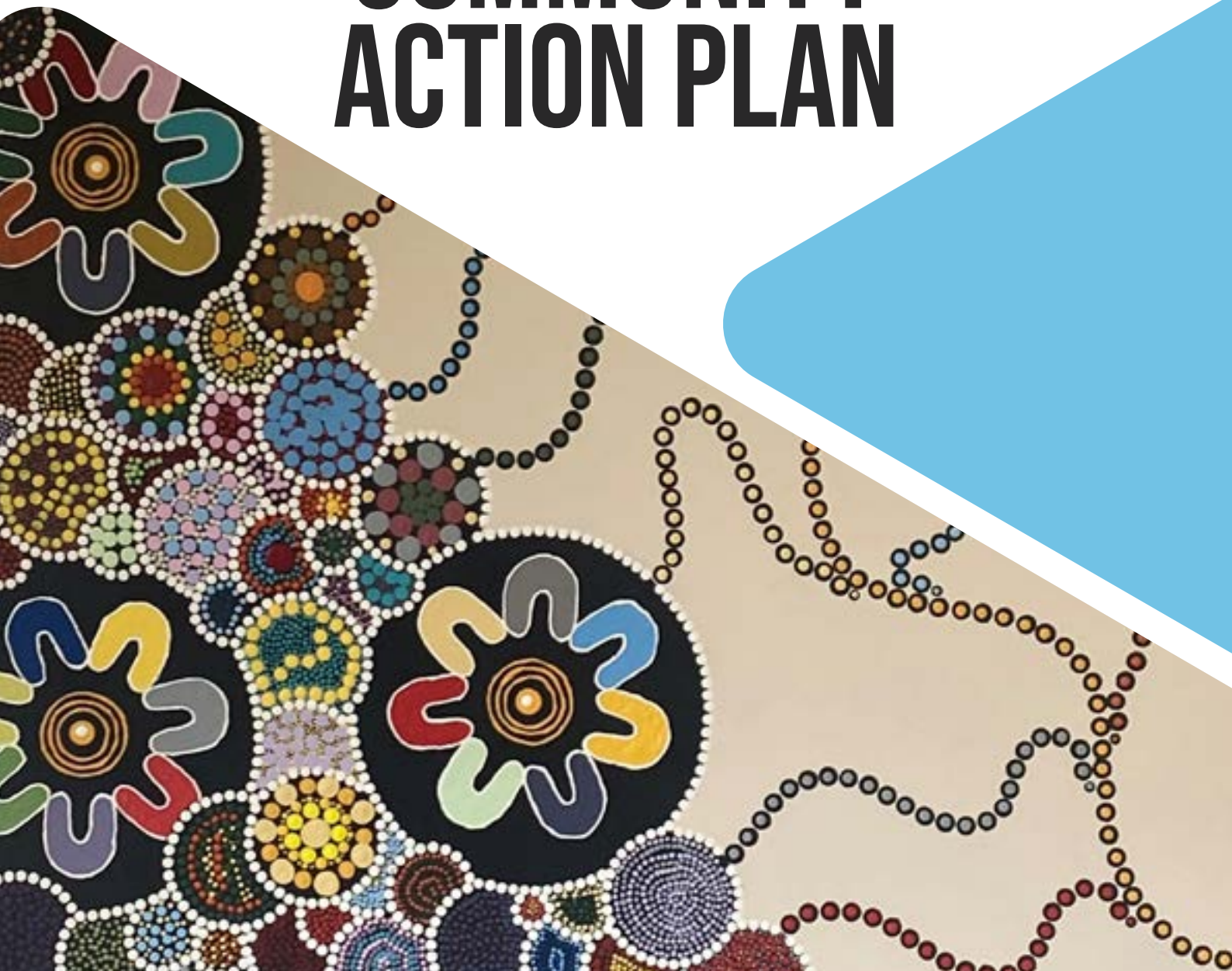




# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN





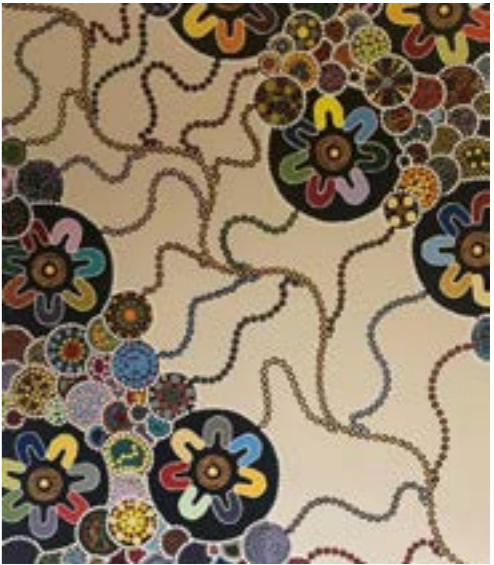
*Journey Through Time*, created by local school students and artist Steven Campbell.

### Acknowledgement of Country

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>	<b><u>02</u></b>
<b>Mayors Message</b>	<b><u>04</u></b>
<b>Message from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee</b>	<b><u>05</u></b>
<b>Our Vision for Reconciliation</b>	<b><u>06</u></b>
<b>City of Cessnock</b>	<b><u>08</u></b>
<b>Community Snapshot</b>	<b><u>10</u></b>
<b>Our Progress So Far</b>	<b><u>11</u></b>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
<b>Community Action Plan</b>	<b><u>15</u></b>
Cultural awareness and understanding	<u>17</u>
Histories, cultures, countries, peoples and languages	<u>20</u>
Employment	<u>23</u>
Business and cultural tourism development	<u>26</u>
Community participation and shared decision making	<u>33</u>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b><u>40</u></b>



**Front cover:** Artwork designed by Michelle Napanangka Earl with participants in a community art project and visitors to Performance Arts Culture Cessnock. Full artwork alongside

## Mayor's message

It is my great pleasure to present Cessnock City Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan.

Council embarked on its first Reconciliation Action Plan, 'Reflect' in 2015. Building on this, we embraced 'Innovate' as our next Reconciliation Action Plan in 2018. Now, with this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan, we have the path set to advance and enrich our previous initiatives.

At the core of this Plan is our ongoing commitment to forging meaningful relationships and partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The focus areas of this plan speak to enhancing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rich histories, connection to country, and vibrant cultures. We aim to further elevate employment opportunities and foster growth in the business sector. This plan also incorporates the significance of cultural tourism, acknowledging it as a vital avenue for fostering understanding and appreciation of our diverse heritage.

I extend my thank you to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people that have shaped this Action Plan and guided this important journey. Together we work to preserve the rich history, traditions, and cultures that have thrived in this region for thousands of years.

**Councillor Daniel Watton**  
**Cessnock City Mayor**



## Message from the 2022-24 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee

**Cessnock Local Government Area lies upon the Traditional Custodian country of the Wonnarua, Darkinjung and Awabakal peoples.**

In 2013, Council formed the Aboriginal Advisory Committee with the view to acknowledgement, respect and include local Aboriginal histories, cultural heritage and Aboriginal peoples in the development of an innovative progressively inclusive plan for Council to implement reconciliation actions.

In 2017 the Committee had a name change to the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee" to include all our Traditional Peoples.

Since the Committee's formation two earlier reconciliation plans have been developed with the support of the Committee. The first was a one year Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan adopted in 2015 and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. The 2018-2020

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was the second Reconciliation Australia endorsed plan. The shift from a Reconciliation Action Plan to a Community Action Plan was resolved by the Committee in 2021 and the preparation of this third plan commenced in 2022.

This Plan has had the most extensive and open community engagement of any of the former Plans. It incorporates meaningful and sound actions to build and to create stronger links between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Committee determinedly has guided staff in the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan. We support the actions within the plan and the paths taken by Council to engage meaningfully with the Community. We look forward to its implementation over the coming years.

# Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for Cessnock City Council to build unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia’s First Peoples and respect their connections to lands, waters, places and cultures. In particular, Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people, and the Darkinjung people. We aim to create a welcoming community where the histories, cultures, knowledges, achievements and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged, respected, considered and celebrated.

We support the national objectives of closing the social, economic and health gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community, and achieving reconciliation in Australia. We will ensure reconciliation is alive in our organisation by increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and current issues, by being accountable and taking responsibility for change. By walking together along our two paths, Council will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other community members to build a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This Action Plan has five focus areas:

## 1. Cultural awareness and understanding

Respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture is fundamental to reconciliation. Council is committed to increasing its understanding of local Aboriginal culture and histories.

## 2. Histories, cultures, countries, peoples and languages

There is a rich local Aboriginal histories and culture. Council aims to provide opportunities for all people to learn and engage with local Aboriginal culture.

## 3. Employment

Council aims to both support and help recruit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and make it a safe place where histories and culture is respected.

## 4. Business and cultural tourism development

Aboriginal histories and culture are an important part of the Cessnock Local Government Area and there is great opportunity for residents and visitors to engage in and learn Aboriginal culture. There is also opportunity to engage with and promote local businesses owned by

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## 5. Community participation and shared decision making

A major part of reconciliation involves working together. Council is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved in decisions that impact on them.



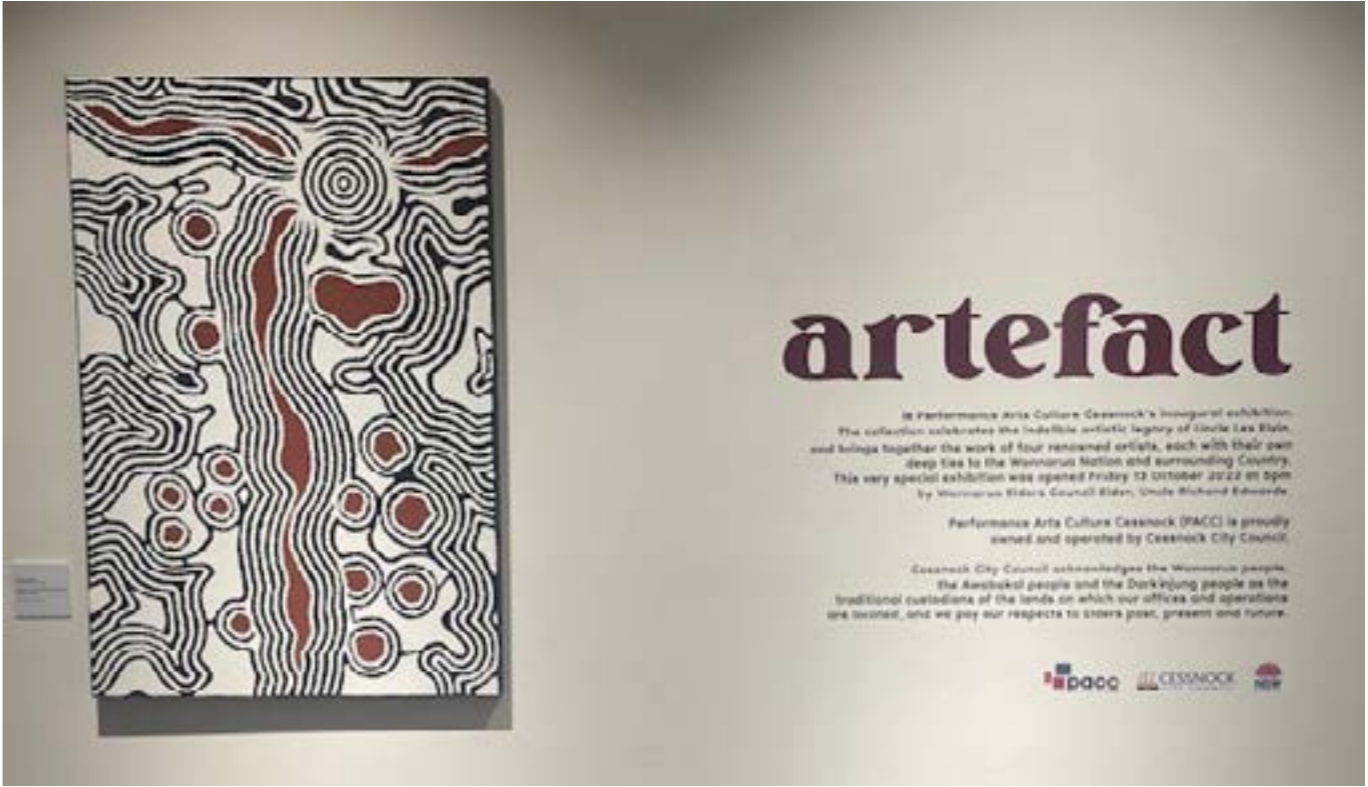
Grinding Groves. Photo credit: Wonnarua Elder Uncle Richard Edwards

# City of Cessnock

The City of Cessnock is predominantly situated on the lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people and within its boundaries are many significant Aboriginal sites. Wonnarua means “land of hills and plains”. The local government area is home to many places with Aboriginal names and histories. Towns, villages and localities in the local government area with Aboriginal names include Kurri Kurri (meaning “the beginning” or “the first”), Wollombi (“meeting place” or “meeting of the waters”), Congewai, Nulkaba and Laguna. The Wollombi Valley is home to many significant sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Mount Yengo, located in Yengo National Park is of particular significance to Aboriginal peoples and is home to many important sites of Aboriginal spiritual and cultural association.



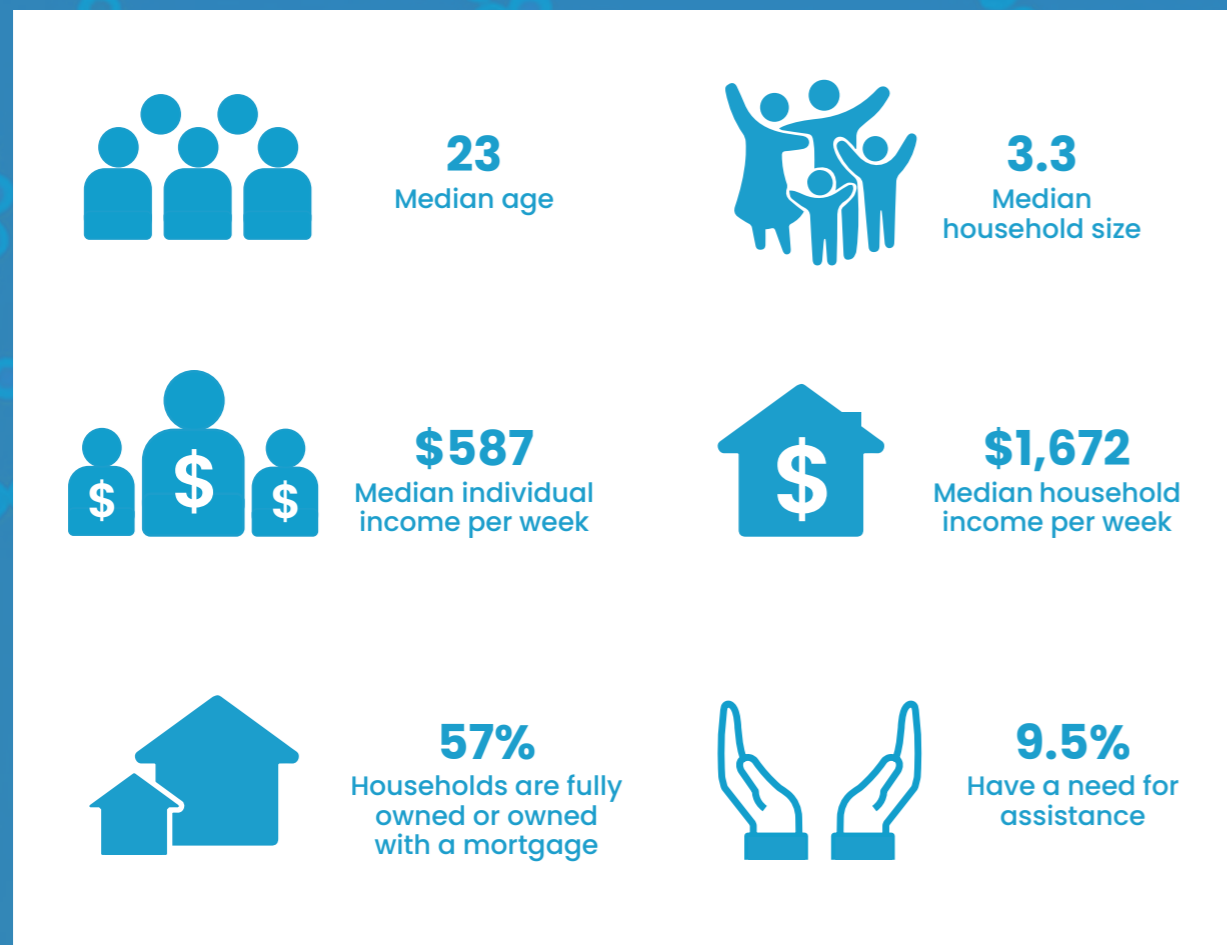
Above: Acknowledgement of Country in Council’s Administration Building foyer



Above: The inaugural exhibition at Performance Arts Culture Cessnock titled ‘artefact’. A retrospective of renowned local Indigenous artist the Late Uncle Les Elvin, and also featured work by Lesley Salem (nee Elvin), Saretta Fielding and Ryan Andrew Lee

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

As at Census 2021 **10.2% or 6,480** people living in the Cessnock Local Government Area identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.



## Between Census 2016 and 2021

Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor or Graduate qualifications increased.

As at 2024 **5.927%** of Cessnock City Council's workforce identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

**References:** Demographic data is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2021 Census of Population and Housing – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile – Cessnock Local Government Area.

## Our Progress So Far

Council developed its first Reconciliation Action Plan called Reflect in 2015. In 2018, Council adopted its next Reconciliation Action Plan called Innovate.

The below is a summary of our reconciliation journey so far:

- The Cessnock City Council Aboriginal Committee was first formed in 2013 and in 2015 it became the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.
- Additional flag poles were installed at Council's Administration Building in 2016 enabling the inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags.
- NAIDOC Week 2018 received a Highly Commended in the Local Government NSW RH Dougherty Awards – Innovation and Special Events. The award recognised the collaboration between Council and community in putting together an engaging program of events.
- Portable pull-up banners acknowledging traditional owners were produced in 2018 and are made available for Council staff to use at events and activities across the Local Government Area.
- In 2018 and 2019 NAIDOC Week street banners were produced and continue to be displayed annually during NAIDOC Week in Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton, Weston and Greta Central Business Districts.
- In addition to NAIDOC Week, Council hosted Reconciliation Week events are now held annually and commenced 2015.
- Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS), a Council owned and operated service received grant funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice under the Targeted Earlier Intervention Program to appoint an Aboriginal Community Youth Worker from 2020 to 2025.
- The annual Performance Arts Culture Cessnock (PACC) program has included performances presented by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander theatre companies and/or featured Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander actors.
- An acknowledgement statement has been incorporated into the Cessnock City Council website banner.

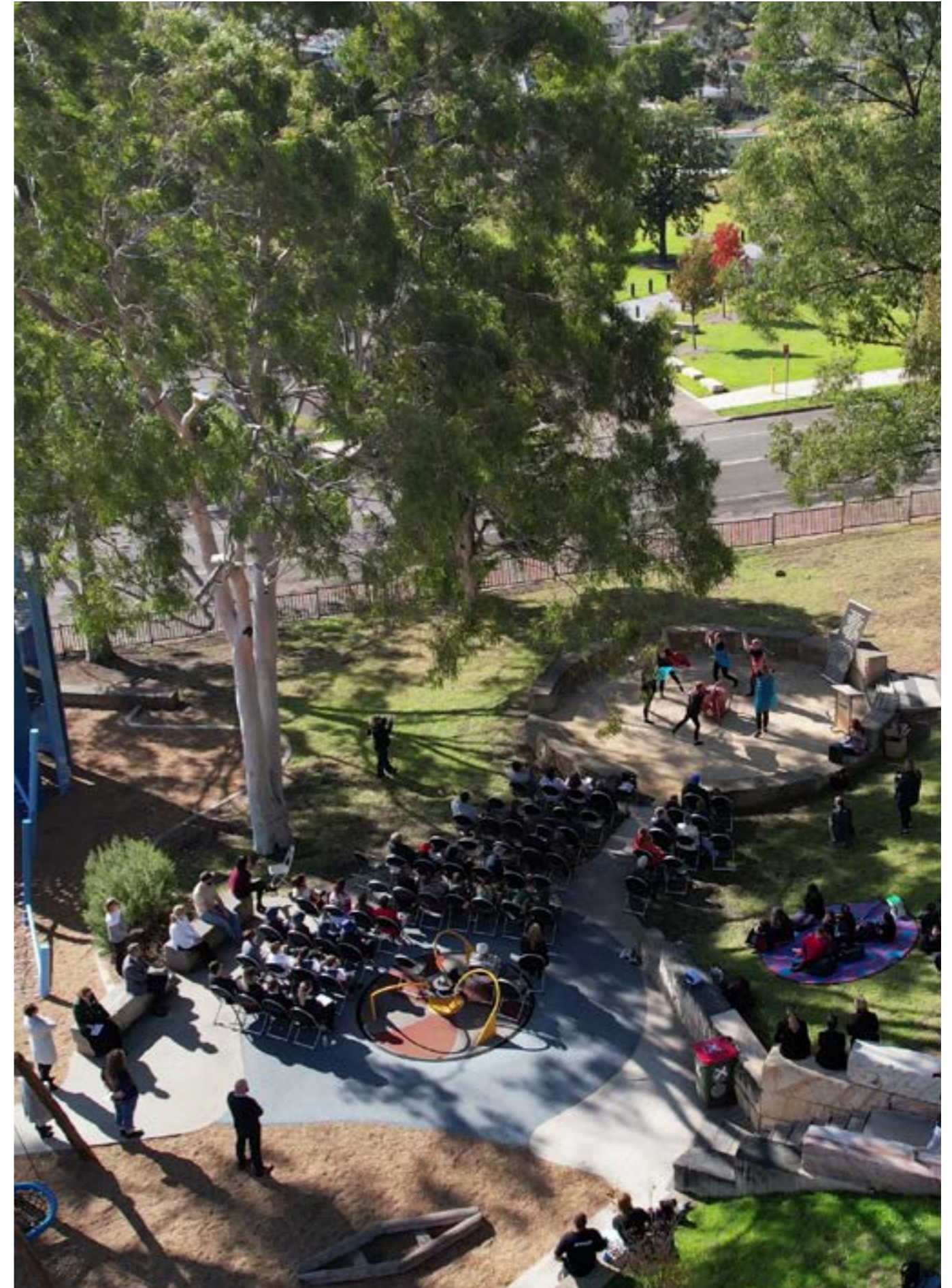


Above: Cessnock City Council's previous Reconciliation Action Plan (cover)

- A plaque acknowledging Wonnarua people as the traditional custodians has been installed in Council's Administration Building and incorporated Wonnarua Language translation.
- Wonnarua Country has been included on gateway signage at Pokolbin and Branxton and an acknowledgement of country statement included on signage at information bays across the Local Government Area.
- Council's Leave Protocol provides employees with access to leave for participation in NAIDOC week activities.
- A review of Council's procurement procedures was undertaken and changes were initiated to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity.
- Two Aboriginal art murals installed on the grounds at Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre by Artist Jess Hopcroft, Dhiyaan Art. Complimenting the artworks is two Welcome to Wonnarua Country signage and have been installed at the entrances of the outdoor seating area.
- The Bridges Hill Park Playground incorporated elements of Wonnarua culture into the design of the playground. The entry signage to the site acknowledges Wonnarua Country and site elements include canoes, a yarning circle, native vegetation, and public artwork that reflects this significance. The inclusion of cultural components and artworks recognise Wonnarua peoples' connection to the area and provide an opportunity to educate, inspire and engage visitors.



Tiddalik. Photo credit: Wonnarua Elder Uncle Richard Edwards

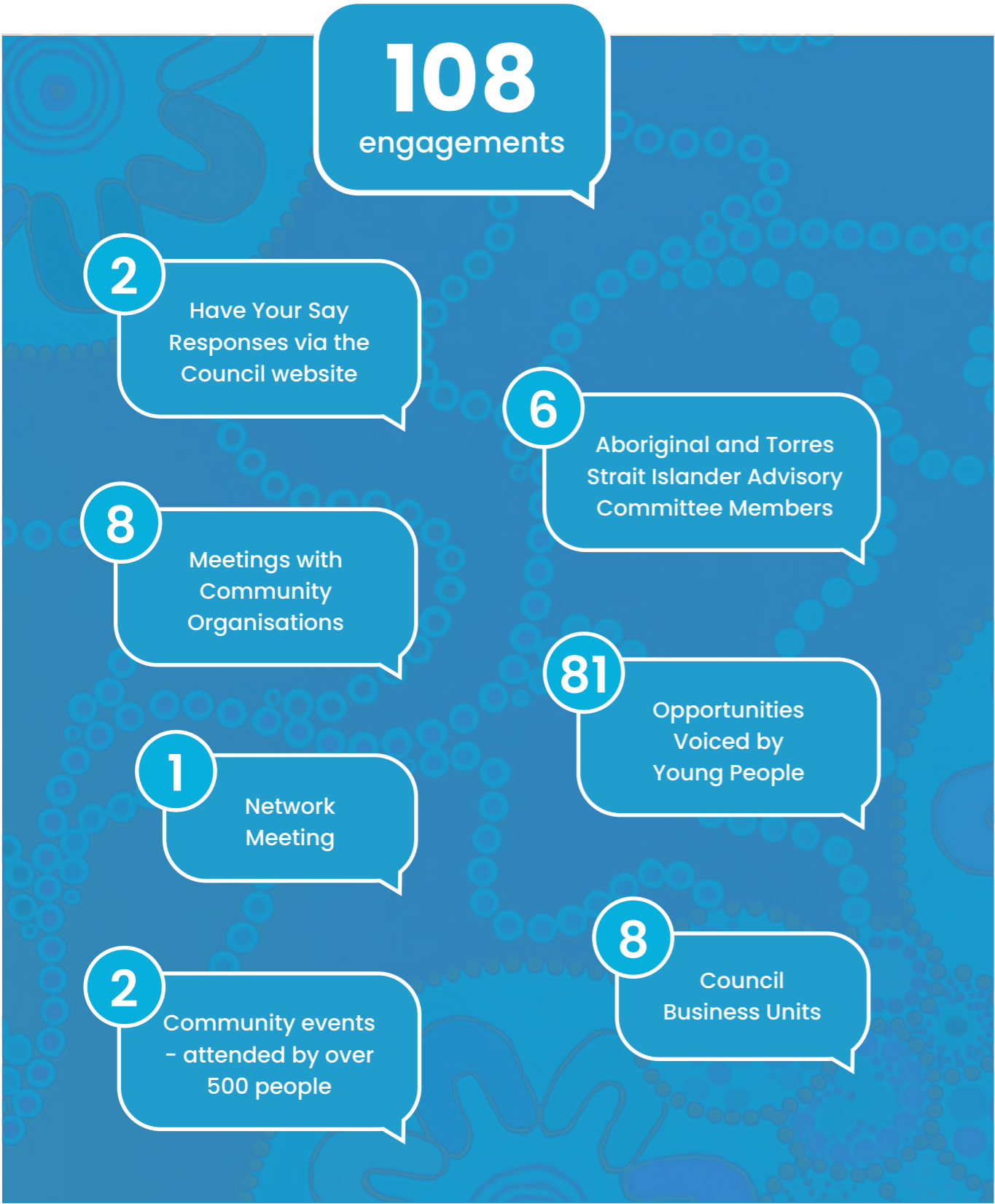


Above: Reconciliation Week, Bridges Hill Park Cessnock 2023

# Community Engagement

A total of **108** engagements occurred in developing the plan, and 29 invitations were sent to local organisations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

The following details the consultation methods used to gather people’s ideas and feedback.



# COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan has five focus areas:

1. Cultural awareness and understanding

2. Histories, cultures, countries, peoples and languages

3. Employment
4. Business and cultural tourism development

5. Community participation and shared decision making



Above: Bridges Hill Park Cessnock. Artist Silky Street Art

# 1. Cultural awareness and understanding

## Objective

Respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture is fundamental to reconciliation. Council is committed to increasing its understanding of local Aboriginal culture and histories.

## Strategy

1.1. Provide cultural awareness training for Councillors and Council staff and promote opportunities to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories and heritage.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT	
1.1.1	Engage Council in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	Cultural awareness training to be included in the induction program for the future, newly elected Council.	Within first year of new Council	General Manager
1.1.2	Undertake cultural awareness training with new staff.	Cultural awareness is included in the onboarding program with all new staff as part of their commencement of employment.	Ongoing	People and Culture

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
1.1.3 Establish local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture information sessions and immersive experience opportunities for staff.	<p>All staff are provided with opportunities to learn about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, through a series of information sessions and immersive experience opportunities.</p> <p>Council staff develop a deeper understanding of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and experiences.</p>	2026-27	People and Culture

Strategy

1.2 Council promotes awareness and understanding of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
1.2.1 Use Council's public resources, including website, libraries and community events to promote awareness to increase understanding and appreciation of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and achievements.	<p>Council website details resources and links to learn more about Aboriginal culture.</p> <p>Library has resources available of local Aboriginal culture and histories.</p> <p>Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre promotes Aboriginal Culture to visitors.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Community and Cultural Development</p> <p>Economic Development</p>

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
1.2.2 Engage staff in understanding and recognising the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	<p>An Acknowledgement of Country or a Welcome to Country continues to be delivered at all Council meetings, civic occasions and Council initiated events.</p> <p>Review of Council's Acknowledgement of Country statement in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Community and Cultural Development</p> <p>Communications and Engagement</p>
1.2.3 Inclusive images are incorporated into Council plans.	Where Aboriginal Art work is included in Council plans, the artist is to be recognised and should be accompanied by the story behind the artwork.	Ongoing	All



Above: Little Yengo Gallery, located at Wollombi Cultural Centre

## 2. Histories, cultures, countries, peoples and languages

### Objective

There is a rich local Aboriginal histories and culture. Council aims to provide opportunities for all people to learn and engage with local Aboriginal culture.

### Strategy

2.1. Work with groups to support increased awareness of local culture and histories.

	ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
2.1.1	Provide opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations with cultural development.	Local organisations who are researching local Aboriginal language are informed of Council’s Community, Sporting and Environment Grant programs as a potential funding opportunity for projects.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development
		Work with local organisations to assist with applying for grants to further facilitate the development of their service provision.		
2.1.2	Investigate the recording of oral histories with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	Investigation to involve consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.	2025–26	Community and Cultural Development
		An approach to developing an oral history is identified as part of the investigation.		

	ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
2.1.3	Provide opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations with sharing their culture and histories with others to increase cultural awareness.	Consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to deliver cultural awareness programs within the community.	2026–27	Community and Cultural Development

### Strategy

2.2 Council celebrates the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

	ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
2.2.1	Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.	Host Reconciliation Week events in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community organisations.	Annually during Reconciliation Week	Community and Cultural Development
		Event includes participation by local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Consult with the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee on diversifying the program of events.		

Strategy

2.2 Council celebrates the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
2.2.2 Celebrate and participate in NAIDOC Week by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.	Develop a community wide NAIDOC Week calendar and includes Council hosted activities.  Council event promotions to include where funds allow advertising of the NAIDOC Week theme.	Annually during NAIDOC Week	Community and Cultural Development
2.2.3 Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in a diverse range of programs, activities and community events.	Programs delivered across a range of Council services which includes Cessnock Library, Kurri Kurri Library, Performance Arts Culture Cessnock and Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service.  Participation in local events and activities with other organisations.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development

3. Employment

Objective

Council aims to both support and help recruit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and make it a safe place where histories and culture is respected.

Strategy

3.1 Ensure Council is a safe and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
3.1.1 Develop information that demonstrates our achievements since Council's Innovate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan, including changes in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment figures, our cultural awareness training and Aboriginal employment initiatives.	Achievements to be included in Diversity, Equity and Belonging Strategy and shared on the Diversity page of Council's website.	2025-26	People and Culture
3.1.2 Continue to collect information on our current rates of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and use to inform future employment opportunities, recruitment and retention.	Employment statistics are collated and assessed to identify progress with our recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.  Feedback from cultural awareness training through staff participation surveys.	Ongoing	People and Culture

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
<b>3.1.3</b> Investigate how to make new, or prospective employees more comfortable about disclosing their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.	Consider including a statement advising the purpose of the question.	2025-26	People and Culture
<b>3.1.4</b> Encourage new and existing employees to identify their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.	Provide all employees with an opportunity to update their current Personal Details in Councils HRIS including data in relation to their diversity.	2025-26	People and Culture
<b>3.1.5</b> Increase the employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as a percentage of our overall workforce.	<p>Ensure identified positions are available in our workforce.</p> <p>Where possible include an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on interview panels for all identified roles.</p> <p>Review and amend Talent Acquisition protocols and procedures to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people applying for current vacancies.</p>	2026-27	People and Culture

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
<b>3.1.6</b> Further investigate and increase pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including training pathways, apprenticeships, traineeships, the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment program, graduate programs and work experience.	<p>Build an external network of career advisors and specialists for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work placement students.</p> <p>Ensure identified positions are available as part of our Apprentice, Trainee and Undergraduate program.</p>	2026-27	People and Culture
<b>3.1.7</b> Build networks and establish formal relationships with external career advisors and specialists to discuss employment opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and applicants.	<p>Advertise job vacancies (including traineeships and apprenticeships) through networks such as Job Services Australia and job fairs, and within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets.</p> <p>Build an external network of career advisors and specialists for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants and include these contact in our weekly current vacancies communication.</p>	2025-26	People and Culture
<b>3.1.8</b> Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are advised they have the opportunity to celebrate in NAIDOC Week events in work time.	Annually and at induction	People and Culture

# 4. Business and cultural tourism development

## Objective

Aboriginal histories and culture are an important part of the Cessnock Local Government Area and there is great opportunity for residents and visitors to engage in and learn Aboriginal culture. There is also opportunity to engage with and promote local businesses owned by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Strategy

4.1 Elevate and champion cultural tourism across the Hunter Valley.

	ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.1.1	Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism to people who live and visit the Cessnock Local Government Area.	Four bookable Aboriginal tourism experiences on <a href="http://www.winecountry.com.au">www.winecountry.com.au</a> .	2026-27	Visitor Information Centre
4.1.2	Investigate the best way to present Cessnock as a place of Aboriginal history and culture.	Completion of investigation that details promotional opportunities and resources.	2025-26	Economic Development
4.1.3	Support awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage and tourism across the region.	Four bookable Aboriginal tourism experiences on <a href="http://www.winecountry.com.au">www.winecountry.com.au</a> .	Ongoing	Visitor Information Centre
4.1.4	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences and products.	Four bookable Aboriginal tourism experiences on <a href="http://www.winecountry.com.au">www.winecountry.com.au</a> .	Ongoing	Economic Development

## Strategy

4.2 Facilitate the development of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses.

	ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.2.1	Offer space at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural tourism businesses under a Licence Agreement that is aimed at developing new cultural products.	Space at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre licenced to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural tourism businesses.	Ongoing	Economic Development



Above: Information Bay signage at Pokolbin with Acknowledgement of Country

Strategy

4.3 Support the development of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Businesses.

ACTION		OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.3.1	Collaborate with key stakeholders to support building capacity and growth of established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Identify a mentor for an established Aboriginal tourism business.	2026-27	Economic Development
4.3.2	Support the establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to become export ready.	At least one export ready business.	Reporting annually	Economic Development
4.3.3	Review current procurement practices to ensure that there are opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply services to Council.	Review of (Procurement Policy) complete in accordance with Council's Governance Framework.	2026-27	Finance and Administration
4.3.4	Promote the 'Doing Business with Council' Guide to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and Council's procurement process.	'Doing Business with Council' guide distributed to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	2026-27	Finance and Administration

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT	
4.3.5	Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are considered first when buying goods and services for NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week events.	A list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers is prepared and sent to staff.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development
4.3.6	Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation.	Aim to increase annually cultural spend during the life of this report.	2025-26	Finance and Administration

Strategy

4.4 Facilitate communication of the cultural heritage of the Hunter Valley.

ACTION		OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.4.1	Facilitate the development of Indigenous business-related stories to increase awareness, education and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Hunter Valley.	Two Advance Greater Cessnock Indigenous Business-related eNewsletter stories.	Annually	Economic Development

Strategy

4.5. Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business success stories and products.

ACTION		OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.5.1	Run a minimum of two Indigenous business profiles in the Advance Greater Cessnock Business eNewsletter.	Two Indigenous business profiles in the Advance Greater Cessnock Business eNewsletter.	Annually	Economic Development
4.5.2	Run one 'Support Local' campaign with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business products and services.	One 'Support Local' campaign with a focus on Indigenous business products and services.	Annually	Economic Development



Above: Les Elvin Kungera Arts Gallery

Strategy

4.6. Promote local history and artists.

ACTION		OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
4.6.1	Investigate with the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee a project to document Aboriginal Stories for significant local sites.	Consult with the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.  Investigation complete.	2027	Community and Cultural Development
4.6.2	Continue to support Aboriginal artworks at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre.	Aboriginal artworks displayed and sold at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre.	Ongoing	Economic Development
4.6.3	Programming at Performance Arts Culture Cessnock (PACC) will be inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander performances and artists.	The annual PACC program will include, where available, performances by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander theatre companies and featuring Aboriginal and or Torres Strait actors.  The exhibition space will be inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.	Annually	Community and Cultural Development



Above: Community Facility Information sign at Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service  
Aberdare with Wonnarua language ‘Kunarr’, meaning a group of people that have a connection, such as a tribe or family

## 5. Community participation and shared decision making

### Objective

Council is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved in decisions that impact on them.

### Strategy

5.1 Council to engage effectively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT	
5.1.1	Develop an effective approach to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples in seeking advice and consultation on strategies and plans.	Engagement protocol developed with involvement from Local Aboriginal Land Councils.	2026	Communications and Engagement
5.1.2	Support Council staff to use inclusive engagement practices that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community members.	Increase staff awareness of the Referral Protocol for Matters to Consult with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development
5.1.3	Prepare a business case for an Aboriginal Liaison Officer.	Business case prepared and funding considered by Council.	2025–26	Community and Cultural Development

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.1.4 Support local organisations in the delivery of their services.	Promote and share opportunities that enhance local service provider capabilities.  Promote the Community and Cultural Development Grant Scheme Funding program.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development

Strategy

5.2 Continue to seek advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on relevant Council matters.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.2.1 Convene the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.	Committee role and operation complies with its Charter.  Committee actions and decisions are communicated to relevant Council departments for action.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development

5.2.2	Engage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the development of strategic documents for community facilities and parks with links to heritage and culture.	Council engages with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members and representatives in the development of strategic documents for community facilities and parks.	Ongoing	Open Space & Community Facilities
-------	---	---	---------	-----------------------------------

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT	
5.2.3	Ensure all relevant Draft Cessnock City Council Delivery Plan actions are presented to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee for comment.	The Draft Cessnock City Council Delivery Plan is presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee for comment during the exhibition period.	2026-27	Integrated Planning and Reporting
5.2.4	Consider the inclusion of Aboriginal art and interpretation in the development of civic, scenic, town and regional parks.	The inclusion of Aboriginal art and interpretation forms part of the early stages of planning when developing plans for parks within our region.	Ongoing	Open Space & Community Facilities
5.2.5	Further investigate opportunities for signage that recognises and commemorates Aboriginal culture and heritage.	Consult the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and local organisations who are researching local Aboriginal language.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development

Strategy

5.3 Engage with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.3.1 Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) and in partnership with others to provide early intervention and other programs with young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Programs are delivered in accordance with the Youth Engagement Strategy.  Investigate and partner with other services the delivery of youth mentoring programs.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development
5.3.2 Seek continuation of funding for the Aboriginal Community Youth Worker (early intervention) position.	Department of Communities and Justice approached to seek continuation of funding for the Aboriginal Community Youth Worker Position.	2025-26	Community and Cultural Development
5.3.3 Engage young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in programs, activities and seek their views and recommendations on how Council can work in collaboration with young people.	Youth Ambassador program has inclusive principles that encourage participation by young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Ongoing	Community and Cultural Development

Strategy

5.4. Council to learn tradition waste management and land stewardship practices.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.4.1 Work closer with Elders and community leaders to learn about traditional waste management and land stewardship practices.	Local Elders and/or community leaders are consulted.  Learnings from traditional waste management and land stewardship practices are considered and, where appropriate, implemented.	Timeline Ongoing	Environment and Sustainability

Strategy

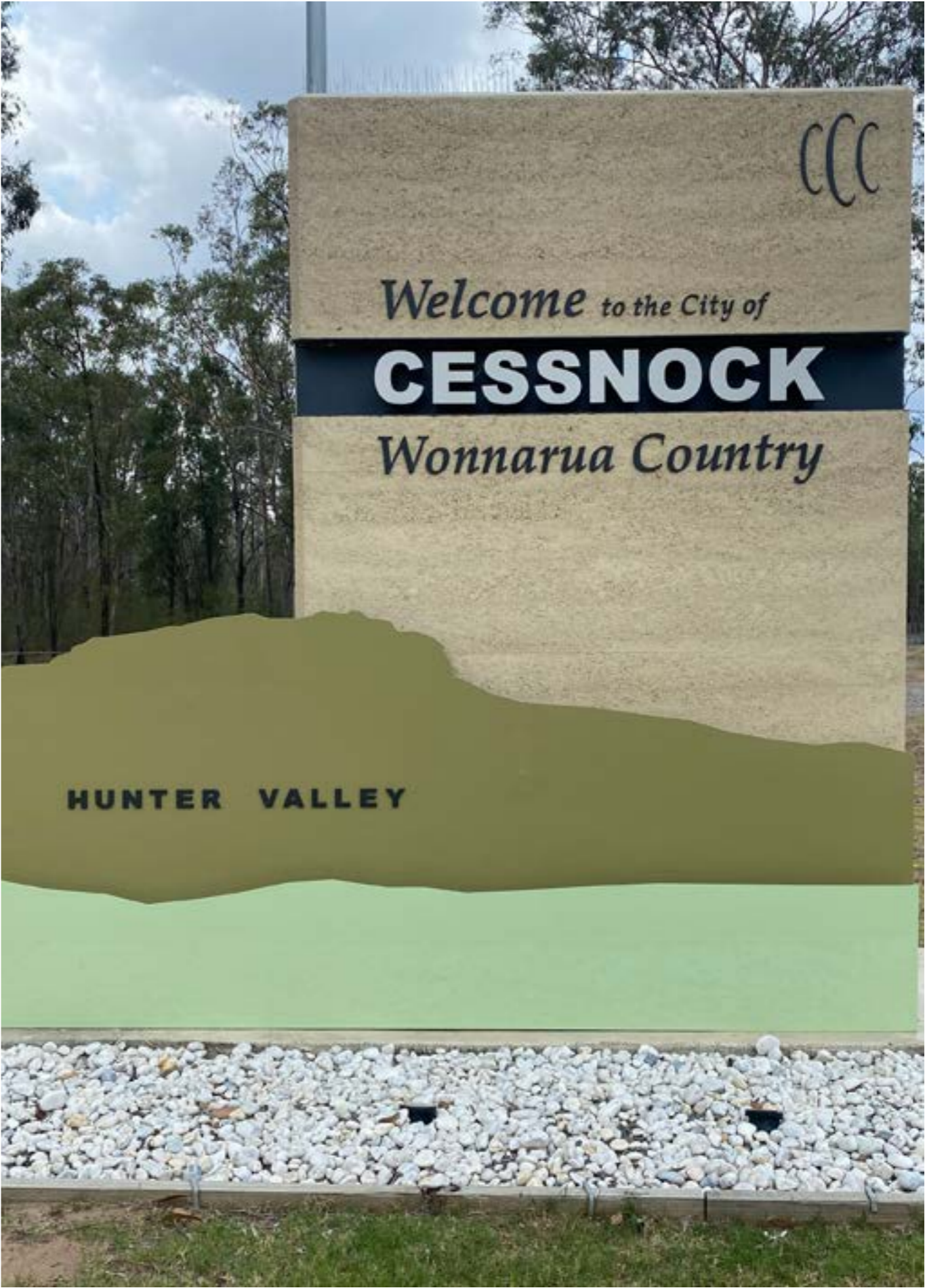
5.5. Investigate the formation of an internal advisory committee for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

ACTION	OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.5.1 Call for expressions of interest from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Council employees to participate in an internal advisory committee.	Number and details of staff interested in participating.  Opportunities investigated and implemented to further strengthen wellbeing programs available to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Council employees.	2025-26	People and Culture

Strategy

5.6. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan is monitored and reported to Council.

ACTION		OUTCOME/MEASURE	TIMELINE	BUSINESS UNIT
5.6.1		Outcomes of the plan are presented to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.		
	Report progress of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan to the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and in Council's Annual report.	Annual report includes details of the outcomes of the plan.		
		The annual report for the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee to outline funding received for First Nations Grants.	Annually	Community and Cultural Development
		Seek feedback from the community on Council's progress towards implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan.		



Above: Gateway sign acknowledging Wonnarua land, Broke Road Pokolbin

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress towards the completion of the Aboriginal Action Plan and its outcomes will be presented to each meeting of the Cessnock City Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. Progress will also be reported to Council quarterly as part of the Operational Plan reporting requirements and documented in Council's Annual report.



Above: Welcome to Wonnarua Country at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre



Above: Mural at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre. Artist Jess Hopcroft, Dhiyaan Art. The artwork is titled 'Connecting', a sense of unity and coming together



CESSNOCK  
CITY COUNCIL

62-78 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325 | PO Box 152 Cessnock NSW 2325  
02 4993 4100 | [council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au) | [www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au)