



Melton City Council
Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy
2018-2021

Acknowledgement of Country

Melton City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Kulin Nation. The City celebrates its rich Indigenous history, the diversity of its people and their important ongoing connections to Country. We acknowledge the past injustices faced by our First Peoples and are committed to play our part in ensuring that these injustices are not repeated. We appreciate that we still have a long journey ahead of us. Melton City Council advocates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination.

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Message from the Mayor

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The reason for an Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy

Updated 2016 employment statistics expected to be released by ABS in October

The Melton City Council Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy was originally identified, by community, as an opportunity to strengthen Council's commitment to Reconciliation, in the Melton City Council Reconciliation Policy, 2015-2017.¹ The Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy aim is to broaden local Aboriginal career opportunities within Council and is consistent with the Federal Government's Council of Australian Governments 2009 Closing the Gap target of halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.²

According to the Prime Minister's 2017 Closing the Gap report the target to halve the gap in employment, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, by 2018, is not on track.³ Unfortunately, also in line with national trends, City of Melton faces the same disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment figures. In 2011, of the 511 Indigenous labour force (aged 15-65 years) 231 people are employed (part or full time).⁴ This figure does not take into account the work of unpaid carers. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures show that over 50 percent of Indigenous people of employable age are not employed in the Local Government Area of Melton. Nationally, in 2014-15, the Indigenous employment rate was 48.4 percent (unemployment percent 51.6), compared with 72.6 percent for non-Indigenous Australians.⁵

Local Government can play a key role in lessening the disparities, which currently exist, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In its role as a service provider there is a tangible connection between Closing the Gap targets and social outcomes. Melton City Council is in a unique position to create real change, at the level it is most needed, for communities.

Melton City Council is committed to reducing the inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and closing the gap, once and for all, so all Australians can enjoy the same quality of life. Employment opportunities are a fundamental requirement to break down barriers to personal and financial freedom, giving families access to a wider range of life choices such as improved health and housing options.

Throughout this publication, the use of the word 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

City of Melton Demographics

City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. In 2011, there were 792 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the municipality. In 2016, this population number has risen to 1,286.⁶ The City of Melton has the eighth highest number of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Melbourne. By 2026, in the City of Melton, the Aboriginal population is expected to grow by 58 percent.⁷

A rapidly growing Aboriginal population presents an opportunity for the municipality to embrace, through employment, our First Peoples rich culture and knowledge. This social enrichment improves organisational culture and provides better service delivery that is responsive to local needs.

Potential barriers to policy success

Measurable social change is dependent on meaningful stakeholder relationships. The following factors may impact on Melton City Council Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy success:

- Council outsources open space and environmental services, lessening direct employment opportunities
- Uptake by Council departments
- Council departmental resource limitations
- Ongoing impacts of inter-generational trauma on Aboriginal communities
- Work opportunities not matching community needs
- Organisational infrastructure unable to meet cultural support requirements
- Jobseeker and/or staff misconceptions
- Staff turnover

For case study examples on potential barriers to policy success see Appendix A.

How the policy was developed

Community and stakeholder engagement process

To address these barriers, Melton City Council has worked with a wide range of stakeholders, reflecting on local commercial and community needs. An interim Indigenous Employment Working group was established in April 2017, meeting every six weeks to discuss the policy and local Indigenous employment. The working group members consist of internal and external parties representative of Council, industry and the Aboriginal community. On this group are City of Melton employers, employment agencies and training providers.

As outlined below, the Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy was developed in collaboration with the following community, internal and external stakeholders:

Internally

- Reconciliation Champions Group
- Collaboration with People and Culture, particularly the People and Culture Manager
- Tailored Department approaches

- Online employment surveys with Managers

Externally

- Indigenous Employment working group
- Reconciliation Advisory Committee
- Community event surveys
- Community forum
- Council website and policy review opportunities at key Civic locations and Aboriginal Organisations
- Discussions with Victoria University and Polytechnic

Further policy context

The Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy is guided by the Victorian Government's Karreeta Yirramboi Employer toolkit and Municipal Association of Victoria, Local Government Aboriginal Employment Framework. To ensure best practise, successful regional approaches were incorporated, in particular City of Whittlesea policy. The Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy aligns to our Council and Wellbeing Plan, 2017-2021, Strategy 1.6.2, Take action to mitigate inequities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Priority Actions and Objectives

Based on these best practice methods, shown in both literature and anecdotal evidence, the following Aboriginal workforce participation priority actions, have been developed:

Action Area 1: Workforce environment and cultural competency

Objective: To foster an ability to promote a culturally inclusive workplace, free of discrimination, where people feel welcomed and valued.

Action Area 2: Attraction, recruitment and selection

Objective: To promote employment practices that are culturally responsive. To improve Council's ability to attract Aboriginal staff.

Action Area 3: Retention and career development

Objective: To promote permanent career opportunities for Aboriginal job seekers.

Action Area 4: Resources, governance and reporting

Objective: To show accountability to the Aboriginal community through sound governance, adequate monitoring and transparent reporting.

Monitoring and measuring outcomes

An initiative based approach, when monitoring and measuring Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Policy success, will be adopted. This will be achieved by developing internal tools for service planning purposes and through identified agency referrals. Monitoring performance indicators, Action Area 4: Resources, governance and reporting, are:

- Record number of Aboriginal student placements that become ongoing employment
- Record number of Aboriginal traineeships that become ongoing employment
- Record number of Aboriginal work ready placements that become ongoing employment
- Record number of scholarships that become ongoing employment
- Reconciliation Advisory Committee and other governance group structures reporting and reciprocal feedback.

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Action Plan

Action Area 1: Workforce environment and cultural competency		Objective: To foster an ability to promote a culturally inclusive workplace, free of discrimination, where people feel welcomed and valued.		
Actions	Lead Unit	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
<p>1.1 Internal staff capacity building</p> <p>Develop and implement communications that create awareness around Council's focus on Aboriginal employment.</p>	People and Culture, Community Capacity	By 2019	Within existing resources	Evidenced communication.
<p>1.2 Building Leadership employment capability</p> <p>Develop and implement communications that promote cultural competency, in particular for Managers, Team Leaders and Coordinators.</p>	People and Culture, Community Capacity	Ongoing	Within existing resources and subject to budget	Evidenced communication.
<p>1.3 Staff induction to raise awareness on City of Melton's commitment to an inclusive and fair workplace.</p>	People and Culture	Ongoing	Within existing resources	<p>Number of Council Reconciliation Action Plans distributed to new employees.</p> <p>Inclusion of Aboriginal content in quarterly staff inductions.</p> <p>Inclusion of Aboriginal cultural site at new staff induction field days.</p>
<p>1.4 Staff participation in culturally significant times of the year</p>	Community Capacity	National Sorry Day (26 May), Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) and NAIDOC Week (1 st week in July)	Within existing resources	Number of Council staff involved in culturally significant times of the year.

Action Area 2: Attraction, recruitment and selection		Objective: To promote employment practices that are culturally responsive. To improve Council's ability to attract Aboriginal staff.		
Actions	Lead Unit	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
2.1 People & Culture staff capacity building	People and Culture and Community Capacity	By 2019	Within existing resources and subject to budget	Improved understanding and skills in culturally appropriate staff employment processes. Evidenced by review of employment processes.
2.2 Review of employment processes	People and Culture and Community Capacity	By 2020	Within existing resources	Explore job advertisements criteria to reflect disadvantaged job seekers. Examples of job advertisements.
2.3 Stakeholder communications	People and Culture, Community Capacity, Economic Development and Community Planning	Ongoing	Within existing resources and subject to budget	Evidenced engagement with key stakeholders to encourage City of Melton employment and promote training opportunities, targeting disadvantaged job seekers. Reconciliation Advisory Committee updated on this progress.
2.4 Maternal and Child Health Scholarships	Families and Children Services	Ongoing	Families and Children Services – Maternal and Child Health Budget	Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health University Scholarship explored through RMIT University, Latrobe University and local catchment hospitals (or to assist a general nurse to study midwifery and Maternal and Child Health, depending on demand) Report written to present possibilities.

Action Area 2 cont. Actions	Lead Unit	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
2.6 Traineeships and on job training opportunities Explore work pathways for Aboriginal candidates, to create ongoing employment opportunities.	People and Culture and Community Capacity	Ongoing	Subject to budget	Evidenced development of partnerships with internal departments and City of Melton employers, training providers and employment agencies; to identify suitable jobs and traineeships that will lead to ongoing employment.
2.7 Social Procurement	Legal Services	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Evidenced Melton City Council Social Procurement Framework outcomes (currently being updated).

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Action Area 3: Retention and career development		Objective: To promote permanent career opportunities for Aboriginal job seekers.		
Actions	Lead Unit	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
3.1 Mentoring program	People and Culture and Community Capacity	Ongoing	Within existing resources and subject to budget	<p>Exploration of a volunteer program to identify Elders who are able to provide face to face mentoring support to Aboriginal employees.</p> <p>Evidenced work with MEGT and/or other job support agencies to provide non-vocational and other required support to Aboriginal employees and job seekers.</p>
3.2 Cultural leave policy	People and Culture	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Enterprise agreement contains provisions for cultural leave.
3.3 Career development Support current and new Aboriginal employees to identify desired career pathways.	Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders Community Capacity	Ongoing	Within existing resources and subject to budget	<p>Evidenced through Performance Evaluation System training component.</p> <p>Promotion of existing leadership programs, to encourage management opportunities.</p> <p>Evidenced exploration of Aboriginal employee networks, local and regional context.</p>

Action Area 4: Resources, governance and reporting		Objective: To show accountability to the Aboriginal community through sound governance, adequate monitoring and transparent reporting.		
Actions	Lead Unit	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
4.1 Governance To monitor progress against actions and enable ongoing relationship development with Aboriginal community.	Community Capacity	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Explore option of making interim Indigenous Employment working group permanent. Reconciliation Advisory Committee updated on policy progress.
4.2 Monitoring and reporting	People and Culture, Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders, Community Capacity and key external stakeholders	Ongoing, commenced by 2020	Within existing resources and subject to budget	Record number of Melton City Council Aboriginal student placements, traineeships, work-ready placements and scholarships that become ongoing employment. Reconciliation Advisory Committee and other governance group structures reporting and reciprocal feedback.

Appendix A: Barriers to policy success case studies

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References

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