

 <p>Mackay REGIONAL COUNCIL</p>	COUNCIL POLICY	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy	
	POLICY NO	066
	DEPARTMENT	Community & Client Services
	PROGRAM	Community Lifestyle
ADOPTED BY COUNCIL	22 January 2020, Recommendation ORD-2020-25	

1.0 Scope

This policy provides a framework for Mackay Regional Council (MRC) Councillors and staff to build relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in order to address issues affecting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This policy will create avenues and develop pathways which connect MRC and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

2.0 Purpose

This policy highlights the importance of ensuring MRC and Mackay communities are responsive to the issues affecting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It also reflects MRC's commitment to acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of this land and valuing input from Indigenous people.

3.0 Reference

- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (CWth)*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- MRC Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022
- *Native Title Act 1993*

4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander refers to the first Australians, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Human Rights Complaint shall mean a complaint about an alleged contravention of section 58-1 by a public entity in relation to an act or decision of the public entity.

Traditional Custodians refer to the Traditional Aboriginal people of this area.

5.0 Background

The 2016 ABS statistics indicated that MRC area has a population of 112,798 people with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community making up 5.515% of the population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 3.6% of Queensland's population.

Human Rights have been considered when preparing this Policy.

6.0 Policy Statement

MRC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, and recognises the culturally diverse nature of the local community.

MRC values its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and is committed to strengthening relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and representative groups.

Where ever possible Council will encourage cultural practices that strengthen and support harmony between Mackay's people and the wider community. Council values the input from people into the decision-making processes at a local level and encourages their active participation.

MRC will continue to engage positively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through such groups as the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and the Mackay Aboriginal Language Group.

MRC recognises the importance of having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Reconciliation Acton Plan that is aligned with community needs and broader developments at a national and state level.

6.1 Acknowledgement

Council will acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land at Statutory Council meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country spoken by the Mayor or his/her representative.

6.2 Policy Principles

MRC is committed to:

- working within the parameters of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* that has been developed to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. The Act provides for the effective recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal heritage.

In keeping with MRC's corporate plan, MRC celebrates the cultural richness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

- the principles of social justice and fair and equitable distribution of its resources to all residents including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are an integral part of our local community.

6.3 Policy Objectives

MRC will:

- consider, wherever appropriate, the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the planning and development of social and physical infrastructure in the community.
- encourage positive relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community by utilising a facilitative approach through, and with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including the development of partnerships with Traditional Custodians groups and community organisations.
- assist in the elimination of barriers to participation in society for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- provide opportunities for community and cultural development by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.
- ensure services are accessible by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- support the development of training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- align its commitment to the national agenda for reconciliation and develop strategies to enhance and increase the process of reconciliation in Mackay region.

6.4 Human Rights Complaint

When an individual feels that they are the subject of MRC's failure to act compatibly with human rights, they can make a complaint directly to MRC as per MRC's Administrative Action Complaints process.

7.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
2	Review of Policy	Minor amendments	Council	26.10.16
3	Review of Policy	Amendments to Policy	Council – Attachment 11.6.9.3	22.01.2020