

CITY OF LAUNCESTON  
**ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2023 - 2024



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Tasmanian Aboriginal People as traditional custodians of this land, we pay respect to Elders past and present, as they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hope for generations to come.

We recognise and value Aboriginal histories, knowledge and lived experiences and commit to being culturally inclusive and respectful in our working relationships with Aboriginal People.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

The City of Launceston commissioned local Tasmanian Aboriginal artist and designer, Caleb Nichols-Mansell to create the artwork and layout of this document. The artist shared the below about this work:

*“The artwork I have created for the City of Launceston’s Aboriginal Partnership Plan Report represents our community and the different organisations, groups and bodies that support our culture and community. It represents our circular knowledge systems and how these can benefit us and the broader community through sharing, learning and understanding.”*

## BACKGROUND

The City of Launceston genuinely values its relationship with local Aboriginal People and community and has been on a journey of understanding and learning in this space. In recent times, the Council has made several positive steps forward on our journey. This includes:

- Aboriginal flag flies permanently over Town Hall;
- Aboriginal flag was joined by the Torres Strait Island flag during NAIDOC Week 2023; flying above both Town Hall and the Queen Victoria Art Gallery at Royal Park;
- Not supporting the celebration of Australia Day activities on January 26;
- Taking steps to urge the Federal Government to release City of Launceston and all other local government authorities across the country from holding citizenship ceremonies on January 26.

## ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIP PLAN

During 2022/2023 the Aboriginal Partnership Plan (the Plan) was developed through meaningful conversations with a range of Aboriginal People in Launceston and surrounds. Throughout this process, a number of themes and focus areas emerged as particularly relevant and important to the development of the Plan. The Plan was officially endorsed by Council in March 2023.

The Plan outlines a focused and agreed approach for the City of Launceston to engage with Aboriginal People in a culturally respectful and responsive manner. We seek to remove hurdles and create dialogue with Aboriginal People on any Council decisions which may impact on the lifestyle or amenity of Aboriginal residents. This includes but is not limited to; proposed significant maintenance work, capital works, plans, services, strategies, and policy changes.

## YEAR IN REFLECTION

Reflecting on the year, there has been significant collaboration and a deepening understanding of the needs and priorities of the Aboriginal community through conversations and continued learning.

The Referendum on 'The Voice' prompted a decision to postpone work to establish an Aboriginal engagement group for the City of Launceston. The view was taken that the cultural load on the Aboriginal community in the campaign leading to the vote, and subsequently the ramifications of the "no" vote, would not allow the space to respectfully engage in this conversation.

Internally and externally, efforts have focused on research and insights to prioritise and initiate the actions outlined in the Aboriginal Partnership Plan. See below some of the key achievements and updates from the 2023/2024 financial year, shown by the three focus areas.

## FOCUS AREA 1: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The City of Launceston will continue to improve its community engagement by building on the past community engagement initiatives, particularly Tomorrow Together to:

1. Develop an effective and ongoing relationship with Aboriginal People, Aboriginal controlled organisations and service providers; and
2. Achieve genuine high-level engagement with Aboriginal People through culturally respectful community engagement practices.

### 2023-2024 UPDATES

- Engagement with Aboriginal Community and organisations to inform the planning and design of recreation, parks and open spaces across the Launceston municipality. This provided opportunity to understand and trial engagement approaches to ensure that the voices and perspectives of the Aboriginal community are heard and reflected in the planning and design process.
- Partnered with Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's (TAC) Holiday Program at Punchbowl Reserve to seek input into the Punchbowl Play Space upgrade.
- Identification of river reed as a limited traditional resource and work with the Water Team to plant in waterways across the greater Launceston area. This will create a sustainable supply of the traditional resource for community to access.
- A series of watercolours depicting the streets of Launceston by Tasmanian Aboriginal Artist, Rod Gardner, used to illustrate the [Homelessness Statement of Commitment \(HSoC\)](#).

## FOCUS AREA 2 - BUILDING INTERNAL CAPACITY

The City of Launceston will harness the enthusiasm of employees to engage with Aboriginal People by developing the skills and providing the resources to ensure that employees can do so consistently and effectively. By upskilling employees the City of Launceston will:

1. Assist in creating a culture that views engagement with Aboriginal People as a core activity; and
2. Increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal Culture.

### 2023-2024 UPDATES

- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training commenced with Councillors, Executive, Senior Leaders and project leads.
- The Acknowledgement of Country on City of Launceston's websites and new/updated strategies, plans and documents has been updated to ensure it remains respectful to the local Aboriginal community.
- Facilitating changes to procurement practices to improve service and engagement with Aboriginal People/suppliers; i.e. Welcome to Country ceremony payments.
- Budget allocation committed to the Plan for the 23/24 FY and 24/25 FY.

## FOCUS AREA 3: THE COMMUNICATION LOOP

The communication loop aligns with Council's Community Engagement Framework and its actions. Through the communication loop, Council will improve its feedback and input methods for communicating with local Aboriginal People and will influence the Council's future strategic direction and actions. To make this possible, the Council will:

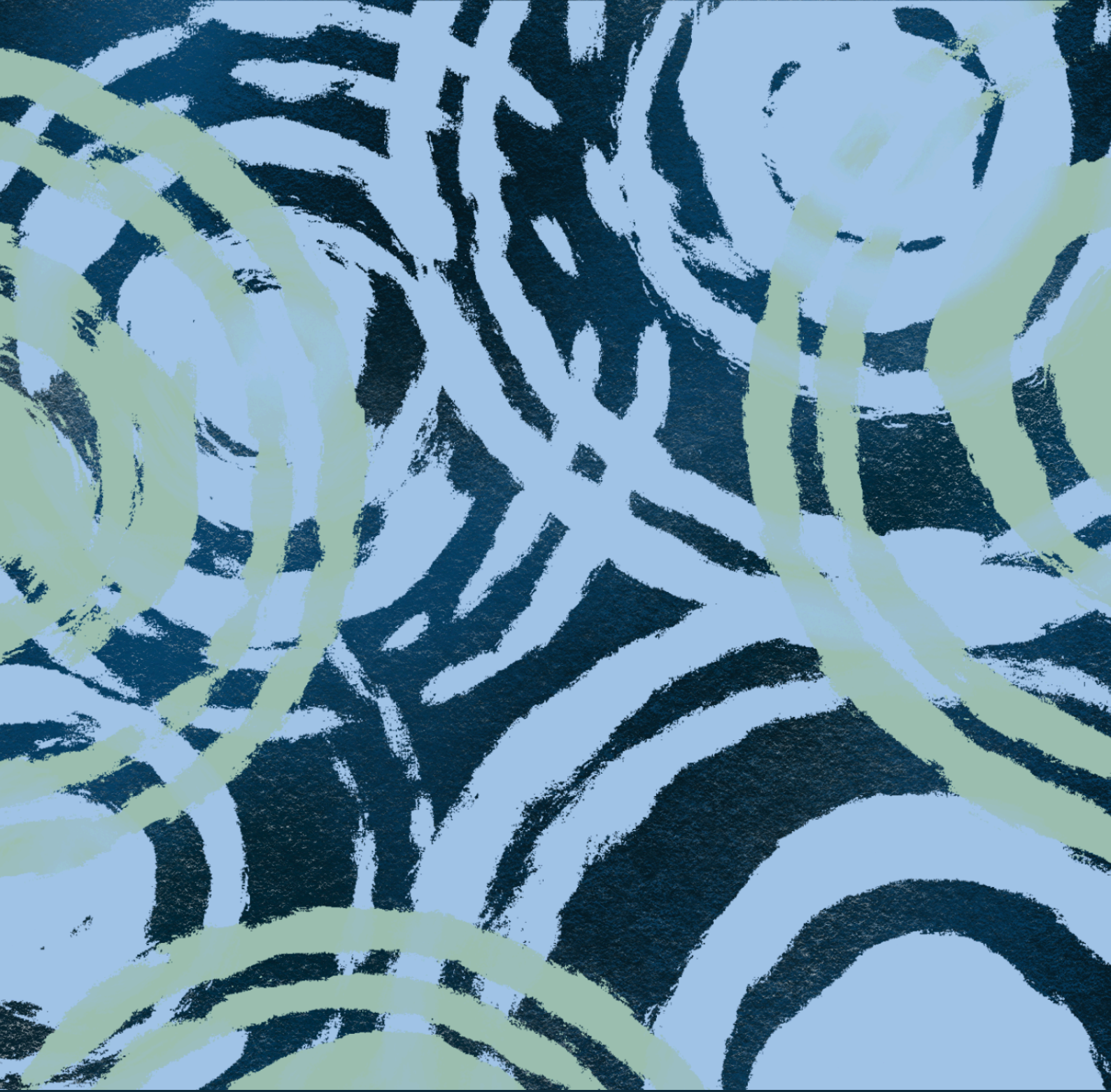
1. Make it clear from the commencement of any engagement process which parts of the matter or issue are negotiable and which parts are non-negotiable;
2. Ensure there is a process by which community input feeds into the decision-making process; and
3. Report back to the community showing how its input has been used or how it will be used moving forward.

## 2023-2024 UPDATES

- Meet and greet barbecue hosted between Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) and Councillors at TAC Launceston
- Reporting back on the first year of implementation (this document)

## WHAT IS NEXT?

- From July 2024 responsibility of the Plan for the organisation will be transferred to the Community Development team.
- Continued rollout of the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training with employees across the organisation.
- Council is in the process of ensuring compliance with the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework. Central to this is embedding the ten Child and Youth Safe Standards and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety across the organisation. This will involve engagement with the Aboriginal community to develop appropriate processes which ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Develop intentional and purposeful relationships with Aboriginal cultural knowledge holders, leadership and community members, including children and young people, with a view to improving Council's decision-making processes.
- Facilitate respectful and timely responses to initiatives and issues which affect local Aboriginal People.
- Undertake initiatives to increase the cultural safety of Council buildings and land through the provision of signage and appropriate placement of local Aboriginal art and cultural artefacts.
- Undertake a process of review of the current Partnership Plan to reflect the current and future needs and aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal People.



City of  
**LAUNCESTON**

For more information, go to:  
[www.launceston.tas.gov.au/aboriginal-partnership-plan](http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/aboriginal-partnership-plan)

