

**Waverley Council
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Access & Equity Policy**

“Sea of Hands” event organised by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation,
Bondi Beach, March 1998.

Adopted December 1999

Acknowledgment: This document was researched and written by Lyn Fraser, Waverley Council's Multicultural Community Worker. (The Statement of Commitment however is not the work of the author). An early draft of this document was written after extensive consultations with staff, managers and directors of Waverley Council. Consultations were then undertaken with Aboriginal community members and representatives of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations. Waverley Council acknowledges receiving valuable feedback from the following: the Sydney Metropolitan Land Council, the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum, the Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer of Randwick Council, individual members of the La Perouse Aboriginal community and individual Aboriginal people residing in the Waverley local government area. The feedback from these individuals and organisations has been greatly appreciated.

Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians

Waverley Council acknowledges that Aboriginal Australians were the first people of this land and were dispossessed by the European occupation more than two centuries ago. The arrival of Europeans brought massive change to the land and to its Indigenous people.

Waverley Council acknowledges and grieves for the loss by the Indigenous people of their land, their children, their health and their lives. However we also celebrate their survival and the survival of their culture.

We support the right of Aboriginal Australians to determine their own future and recognise their right to live according to their own values and customs.

We commit ourselves to respecting Aboriginal sacred sites and special places.

The Council recognises the valuable contribution of Aboriginal Australians and looks forward to a future of mutual respect and harmony.

The Council supports Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians working together for reconciliation.

Signed for and on behalf of Waverley Council

By Councillor Paul Pearce
Mayor

by M. G. McMahon
General Manager.

Date:

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Background

Introduction

This document is about Waverley Council's reconciliation commitment - expressed through action. It aims to provide more accessible and equitable services to the entire Waverley community. It deals with a range of issues including the removal of barriers to equal access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to cultural expression, services, employment opportunities and political influence.

Social Planning Requirements

Waverley Council was already in the process of reviewing access and equity commitments in relation to Aboriginal Australians when the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998 was passed by State Parliament. This regulation requires all councils in NSW to develop social plans by June 1999 and include information about access and equity activities in management plans and annual reports. Aboriginal people are one of seven target groups to be included in the social plans. In consultation with the community, the social plan must include information and data about the needs of Aboriginal people.

Social plans aim to help councils achieve the following:

- Promote fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly those most in need
- Recognise and promote people's rights and improve the accountability of decision makers
- Ensure that people have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life.
- Give people better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives. (NSW Department of Local Government 1998:2)

The Local Indigenous Population

Waverley Council is aware that the land and sea of the Waverley local government area has been, and continues to be, of great significance to Aboriginal people. Rock carvings are tangible reminders of activities prior to white settlement. It is clear that Aboriginal people made use of the plentiful supply of fresh water at Bondi, Tamarama and Bronte and engaged in fishing, collection of seafood and other activities relating to the land and the sea (Meadows 1998). The Aboriginal people who moved about in the area have been generally referred to as the Sydney people or the Eora (Eora means "the people") (refer Meadows 1998).

The arrival of Europeans to the area was traumatic for the Indigenous population, dispossessing them of their land. The arrival resulted in conflict, the spread of disease and competition for resources. As noted in The Waverley Council Area - An Aboriginal Perspective: Within a few years of the arrival of the European First Fleet Settlers, Aboriginal populations within the Sydney region were beginning to be severely affected either directly through aggression, or indirectly through the loss of resources and the introduction of disease (Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants 1995:19). It is with this understanding that Council acknowledges that current day notions of fairness and equity, in relation to the allocation of resources, cannot be a simple equation based on the current number of Indigenous residents in the local area.

It should also be noted that, for many Aboriginal people today, the local area continues to have important significance for a variety of reasons. Examples of this include: the ongoing importance of the land and sea to Indigenous culture, traditional and contemporary cultural activities held at the Bondi Pavilion, community connections, occasional Koori art stalls at Bondi Junction, Survival Day concerts at Waverley Oval - to name a few. There are many reasons why the Waverley local government area is visited by thousands of Indigenous Australians each year. Indeed, on the 26 January 1998 approximately 12,000 people attended the Survival Day concert- a celebration of Indigenous culture (organised by the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association).

According to the 1996 Census data there are only 241 Indigenous Australians living in the Waverley local government area but anecdotal evidence suggests that the actual numbers may be much higher than this and, as noted above, many visitors come to the area, often on a regular basis. Indigenous residents of the Waverley LGA now come from many different Aboriginal lands throughout Australia - resulting in cultural diversity within their community.

Addressing Disadvantage

While much of Australia's wealth is derived from the beauty and resources of the land and sea, generally speaking the original people of the land, Indigenous Australians, continue to suffer great disadvantage in comparison to non-Indigenous Australians. Many studies have demonstrated this disadvantage (see Face the Facts: Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner 1997:24f). In relation to the wider community, Aboriginal people:

- have a much lesser life expectancy
- experience poorer health
- higher levels of unemployment
- lower incomes
- lower educational achievement
- highest levels of imprisonment
- highest rate of deaths in custody.

This disadvantage continues today as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities deal with barriers to equal opportunity and contend with discrimination on a daily basis.

But, despite this disadvantage, Aboriginal Australians have survived. They have survived dispossession, loss of life through white aggression and introduced diseases, assimilation policies which have included the systematic removal of their children and other distressing experiences. It is also important to acknowledge that, despite the barriers and disadvantage, many individual Indigenous Australians have excelled in a wide range of fields, gaining international recognition in sport, the Arts (including the performing arts), media, legal, political and academic arenas (to mention just a few). Waverley Council acknowledges the benefit of having some of these high achievers residing in the local government area.

Nevertheless, in order to move forward in reconciliation, disadvantage faced by Indigenous communities, past injustices and ongoing equity issues must be understood. To achieve equity in outcomes, it is often necessary to address disadvantage.

Council commitment to reconciliation includes not only a developing commitment to social justice but a recognition of survival and acknowledgment of the outstanding achievements of many of its community members. However, words of acknowledgment and commitment can be hollow unless reinforced by action. For this reason an Action Plan is an important section of this document.

In the Waverley LGA the unemployment rate of Indigenous Australians is fairly high at 11.8%, compared with the rate of 7.1% for the total Waverley population (ABS Cat.2020.0). Various studies have shown that Aboriginal people are more likely to access services if other Aboriginal people are employed to provide the service (Department of Fair Trading 1998:4). Accordingly, a key part of the Action Plan involves a commitment to expanding Aboriginal employment opportunities.

Access & Equity Policy

Vision Statement

We are a council demonstrating an active commitment to the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Ensuring services are equitable and accessible in the Waverley area for all residents and ratepayers, and which allows their participation in the services and structures of Council regardless of their religious, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Overall Objectives

The overall objectives of the policy are:

1. To effectively disseminate information on the range of Council services to all Indigenous residents.
2. To raise the profile of Council among Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents and thereby facilitate their participation in the processes of Local Government.
3. To increase awareness and the ability of Council staff to respond to the needs of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.
4. To collect information and other resources to enable departments of Council to better cater for local Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.
5. To increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the broader community and develop strategies to celebrate and promote Aboriginal arts and culture.
6. To stimulate local and regional commitment to reconciliation including the redressing of disadvantage faced by the Indigenous community.
7. To monitor and review the effectiveness of measures aimed at better servicing Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.

Components

The components of the policy are:

- 1. To effectively disseminate information on the range of Council services to all Indigenous residents.**
 - a) Support local and regional activities and events which are of significance to Aboriginal communities eg. National Reconciliation Week and National Aboriginal Day and when appropriate provide information stalls on services provided by Waverley Council.

- 2. To raise the profile of Council among Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents and thereby facilitate their participation in the processes of Local Government.**
 - a) Where possible have Council's Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation promoted in public places, in newspaper advertisements and on the Home-page.
 - b) Investigate feasibility of Council commitment to the Aboriginal Mentoring Program with the aim of increasing representation of Aboriginal people in local government.
 - c) Work with other Councils in the region to improve consultative mechanisms with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to increase their participation in the development, review and implementation of policy and practice.
 - d) Maintain a culturally sensitive pro-active strategy for consulting with community Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and local individuals and groups.
 - e) Through ongoing consultative processes establish existing and emerging priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for social planning purposes and to ensure equitable and culturally sensitive service provision.

- 3. To increase awareness and the ability of Council staff to respond to the needs of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.**
 - a) Develop and implement a cross-cultural awareness program for staff and volunteers.
 - b) Ensure that all staff induction training includes a segment on the Access & Equity Policy.
 - c) Provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to receive workplace experience and training in Council services.
 - d) Circulate suitable information bulletins and newspapers (such as the Koori Mail) within Council, to increase staff awareness of activities and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.

- 4. To collect information and other resources to enable departments of Council to better cater for local Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.**
 - a) Gather statistical information which can assist Council in planning processes.
 - b) Develop networks, connections and consultation strategies which will assist Council in

the provision of accessible and appropriate services.

- c) Gather posters and other materials for display purposes, which will help provide a welcoming environment and promote reconciliation and equity in service provision.
- d) Continue to expand Council library resources relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and reconciliation issues.
- e) Continue to gather resources and develop contacts to resource anti-bias programs and activities in the provision of child care services.

5. Increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the broader community and develop strategies to celebrate and promote Aboriginal arts and culture.

- a) In co-operation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks, continue the promotion of Aboriginal culture and heritage in the broader community and encourage an understanding of the importance of land and sea in Aboriginal societies, as well as respect for Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights.
- b) Recognise the importance of Aboriginal heritage and culture to local history and continue to work toward adequate protection of sites and rock carvings and rehabilitation of indigenous bushlands which have played an important part in Aboriginal heritage.
- c) Continue to promote cultural awareness and appreciation, in line with the library's Collection Management Policy.
- d) Ensure that Council documents, which contain histories of the Waverley Local Government Area, acknowledge Aboriginal activity prior to white settlement and recognise ongoing significance of the area to the Indigenous community.
- e) Support activities and events which are of significance to Aboriginal communities eg. National Reconciliation Week and National Aboriginal Day.
- f) Continue to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in cultural and other activities at the Bondi Pavilion.

6. To stimulate local and regional commitment to reconciliation including the redressing of disadvantage faced by the Indigenous community.

- a) Invite an Aboriginal Elder or community leader to welcome the audience at relevant ceremonies and functions or, if this is not possible, Council will make a formal acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of this land.
- b) Participate in reconciliation activities, such as the Sea of Hands, Sorry Day ceremonies and reconciliation festivals and support significant festivals and events, such as NAIDOC activities and Survival Day Concert.
- c) Aid the resourcing of projects and positions at the regional level, which will be of benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and increase opportunities for self-determination.

- d) Maintain active involvement in the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum and assist with the development of policies and strategies to stimulate commitment to reconciliation at a regional level.
- e) Develop strategies at the regional level which will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.
- f) Develop strategies to increase access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to employment across a range of occupations within local government.
- g) Investigate options for the employment of a full or part-time Worker to provide effective communication between Aboriginal communities and Council or, alternatively, make a contribution to the funding of a position operating at a regional level.

7. To monitor and review the effectiveness of measures aimed at better servicing Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal residents.

- a) A report to be provided to Council on an annual basis, recording progress on the implementation of the policy. The report will monitor and review the effectiveness of measures aimed at better servicing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and where necessary develop ways of improving that effectiveness.

Recent Commitments and Initiatives

Commitment to Reconciliation

The Reconciliation and Multicultural Festival organised by Council provided an opportunity to publicly express commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal Australia, as well as commitment to multiculturalism. The festival was held in the courtyard of the Bondi Pavilion on Sunday 12 October 1997 with the active involvement of Sydney's Aboriginal and ethnic communities.

During Reconciliation Week the Mayor, Councillor Paul Pearce reaffirmed in the Mayors column of *The Eastern Suburbs Messenger*, Waverley Council's commitment to the reconciliation process. After noting the range of activities taking place and resources available on the topic, he concluded that Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia is a fundamental issue for your support and involvement.

Significant Events

To further indicate its commitment to the reconciliation process Waverley Council has supported significant events and activities organised by various indigenous associations and reconciliation groups. For example:

The Sea of Hands was organised by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation at Bondi Beach between 20th and 21st March 1998. The Sea of Hands was originally planted outside Parliament House in Canberra. More than 100,000 multi-coloured hands vividly represent the thousands of Australians opposed to the Federal Government's Native Title legislation. The display aimed to show support for the High Court Wik decision and Native Title.

Sorry Books - Waverley Council agreed to be an official venue for the Australians for Native Title Sorry Books. The Books were open to the public at Council's reception area, the Pavilion and the Library, giving all Australians an opportunity to acknowledge and to express their regret at the genocidal policies of past Federal Governments inflicted upon Aboriginal people.

Survival Concert - held at Waverley Park on 26 January 1998 and 26 January 1999, organised by the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association. Waverley Council acknowledges the significance of using a Waverley venue for the annual Indigenous music festivals.

Lobbying

Waverley Council has been involved in lobbying State and Federal Members of Parliament as well as government agencies on a range of issues. The following is a list of selected correspondence addressed to Members of Parliament between 1997 and 1998:

Date	Member of Parliament or Government Agency	Issue
May 1997	Federal Parliament Prime Minister Hon. John Howard	Stolen Generations - expressing support for restitution, rehabilitation & compensation. Time to apologise.
	Federal Parliament Hon. Kim Beazley Sen. Melham Sen. Harradine Sen. Faulkner	Call to reject elements of the Prime Minister's Native Title Amendment Bill which do not protect native title rights, particularly Right to Negotiate.
30 Dec. 1997	NSW Parliament Attorney General, Hon. Jeff Shaw.	Concern regarding disparity in court sentencing - along racial lines.
2 Feb. 1998	NSW Parliament Minister –Aboriginal Affairs Attorney General, Hon. Jeff Shaw. Minister Corrective Services	Dog attack on Indigenous inmate at Silverwater Metropolitan Remand Centre
24 Jan. 1999	Federal Parliament Hon. J. Howard Prime Minister, Mr. A. Thompson Member for Wentworth	Expressing concern about changes to Abstudy which will be detrimental to the education of Indigenous Australians.

Regional Involvement

Waverley Council has played a critical role in assisting with the establishment of an Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum. The aim of the forum is to develop policies and strategies, at the regional level, which will stimulate local government commitment to the reconciliation process, work toward more accessible and equitable services and structures as well as increase opportunities for participation, by indigenous Australians, in all aspects of council life (refer Appendix 1).

Other Strategies

- Council subscribes to Koori Mail which is held in the library and made available for public consultation.
- In various parts of Council there are displays of Australian Reconciliation posters.
- Council Housing Planning Officer and Strategic Planner are investigating the feasibility of Council providing accommodation assistance for rural Aboriginal people who come to the city to study.
- The Aboriginal flag is permanently on display in the Council Chambers and in outdoor venues on special occasions.
- The Bondi Pavilion is used as a venue for a range of festivals and cultural activities. For example, the November 1998 Pacific Wave festival included the Big Sunday free festival of traditional music performances, dance, art and food.
- Council library maintains research material, journals and ready reference files on topics related to Indigenous Australians.
- The Reference Department of the Waverley Library produced a valuable discussion paper titled "Aboriginal History of the Waverley Area" this paper was prepared as an attempt to present an overview of the different theories regarding the history of the Waverley Area before European occupation.

ACTION PLAN

Library and Community Services

Officer/s Responsible: Director

Implement Council policies taking the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy into account.

Promote awareness of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy and the need to provide services which are culturally sensitive.

Encourage the development of strategies within the department, which promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

When possible, participate in meetings of the Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum.

Encourage staff to take advantage of opportunities for Aboriginal students to receive workplace experience and training in Council services.

Report annually on access and equity activities that have been planned or already undertaken with respect to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Officer/s Responsible: Library Services Manager

Continue to promote and support special days or weeks of importance to the Indigenous community - for example the display of posters or promotional material for Survival Day and during Reconciliation Week.

Ensure that official Council local histories eg. those on Council's web page, acknowledge prior occupation by Indigenous Australians.

Continue to promote cultural awareness and appreciation, in line with the Waverley Library Collection Management Policy.

Continue to expand Council library resources relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and reconciliation issues.

Where needed, provide support for literacy programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Officer/s Responsible: Manager, Child Care Services

Continue to implement anti-bias programs and activities in the provision of child care services.

Officer/s Responsible: Community Workers

Where possible encourage community organisations and networks to initiate strategies which encourage reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and a greater appreciation of Aboriginal cultural awareness.

Officer/s Responsible: Multicultural Community Worker

Assist the Community Liaison Officer to organise and conduct consultations with Indigenous community representatives in relation to Council commitments and Social Plan.

Maintain involvement and support of the regional local government forum.

Resource other Council staff with information and resources to assist with the reconciliation process as well as improvement in access and equity commitments, as required.

Monitor interest in the employment of a regionally based Aboriginal community liaison worker as discussed at the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum and, when required, present a report to Council on the matter.

Monitor the implementation of the Access and Equity Policy and annually report to Council on the findings.

Officer/s Responsible: Social Planner:

Ensure that the Social Plan takes into account Council's commitment to the reconciliation process.

Corporate and Technical Services

Officer/s Responsible: Director

Implement Council's policies taking the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy into account.

Promote awareness of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy and the need to provide services that are culturally sensitive.

Encourage the development of strategies within the department, which promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Report annually on access and equity activities that have been planned or already undertaken with respect to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Officer/s Responsible: Training Co-ordinator

Ensure that all training provided is culturally sensitive.

Organise cross-cultural awareness training for targeted staff and volunteers, depending on position held and responsibilities.

Establish a list of Aboriginal trainers and cultural educators as well as resources that could be useful for staff training and development on Aboriginal awareness.

Organise staff training in the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy.

When appropriate, participate in activities organised by the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum, particularly as they relate to training matters.

Liaise with staff involved in the development of a Waverley Council Aboriginal employment strategy to determine the need for management and staff briefing sessions and Aboriginal cultural awareness training, particularly targeting selection committees.

Officer/s Responsible: Community Liaison Co-ordinator

When possible, participate in the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum to help develop consultation strategies with members of the communities.

Work with the Multicultural Community Worker and other staff involved in establishing consultation process at the local level.

Officer/s Responsible: Employee Services Manager

In line with 1998/99 EEO Management Plan objectives, prepare a discussion paper identifying and overcoming the barrier to employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In the paper, identify grant opportunities that could be pursued by Council.

Increase access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to employment across a range of occupations within Council.

Investigate Aboriginal employment programs in operation in other councils and liaise with the Department of Local Government and the Local Government and Shires Association regarding any funding possibilities.

Ensure employment policy does not contain barriers in relation to selection, recruitment, training and advancement of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. If necessary organise training for staff involved in these processes to enable them to identify and eliminate such barriers.

When appropriate, participate in activities organised by the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum when agenda items focus on employment matters.

Encourage job applications from Aboriginal job seekers by placing job advertisements in the Koori Mail and refer to Council's Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation. Monitor the response to these advertisements.

Encourage and support Aboriginal employees undertaking formal course work.

Provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to receive workplace experience and training in Council services.

Update the 1997 Staff Handbook, taking into account Council reconciliation commitments and 1998 research findings by the Reference Department of Waverley Library.

Officer/s Responsible: Administrative/Information Services Manager

Promote Council's Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation through newspaper advertisements and on our Home-page.

Assist with the promotion of cultural activities such as the Survival Day Concert by displaying relevant posters and brochures.

Circulate within Council suitable information bulletins and newsletters for the purpose of increasing staff awareness of activities and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities. Accordingly, initiate a six month subscription to Koori Mail for circulation within Council Chambers.

Ensure Council documents, which contain histories of the Waverley Local Government Area, acknowledge Aboriginal activity prior to white settlement and recognise the ongoing significance of the area to the Indigenous community.

Ensure Council's Annual Report, Management Plan and Social Plan take into account our commitment to the reconciliation process and highlight specific strategies designed to address social disadvantage.

Planning and Environmental Services

Officer/s Responsible: Director

Implement Council's policies taking the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy into account.

Promote awareness of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy and the need to provide services that are culturally sensitive.

Encourage the development of strategies within the department, which promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Encourage strategies that give recognition to the importance of Aboriginal heritage and culture.

Report annually on access and equity activities that have been planned or already undertaken with respect to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Officer/s Responsible: Strategic Planners and Housing Officers

Council Housing Planning Officer and Strategic Planner to investigate the feasibility of Council providing accommodation assistance for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who come to the city to study.

Public Works and Services

Officer/s Responsible: Director

Implement Council's policies taking the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy into account.

Promote awareness of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy and the need to provide services that are culturally sensitive.

Encourage the development of strategies within the department, which promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Report annually on access and equity activities that have been planned or already undertaken with respect to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Beach, Parks & Recreation

Officer/s Responsible: Director

Implement Council's policies taking the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy into account.

Promote awareness of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Access & Equity Policy and the need to provide services that are culturally sensitive.

Encourage the development of strategies within the department, which promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Continue to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in cultural activities at the Bondi Pavilion.

Continue to provide assistance and support for the Survival Day celebrations, as required.

Recognise the importance of Aboriginal heritage and ensure adequate protection of sites and rock carvings that are the responsibility of the department.

Consult with the Aboriginal community about heritage and cultural issues that are the responsibility of the department.

Report annually on access and equity activities that have been planned or already undertaken with respect to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

General Manager's Office

Investigate the feasibility of Council involvement in the Aboriginal Mentoring Program, with the aim of increasing representation of Aboriginal people in local government.

Community Consultation

Process

Waverley Council considered it necessary to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in a consultation process regarding this document. To this end, draft documents were distributed among a range of individuals and organisations. The following were particularly helpful in providing comments: Sydney Metropolitan Land Council, Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum, individual Aboriginal residents of the Waverley local government area, La Perouse community members and the Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia. Various strategies were used to encourage participation in the process. These included the following:

- Notices were placed in the *Koori Mail* (the national Aboriginal newspaper) inviting members of the local Aboriginal community to take part in the process.
- The Mayor's column *Wentworth Courier* invited community members to obtain a copy of the document and provide comments.
- Letters were sent to a range of organisations and individuals, inviting their comment and encouraging them to "spread the word". Follow-up phone calls were then made.
- Attention was drawn to the draft in various meetings and comments noted (for example, at the Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia).
- When possible, informal discussions were held with individual members of the local community and comments were noted.

Community Feedback

Most people preferred to provide verbal comment on the draft (usually by phone or in meetings). However a written submission was received from the Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia (ESORA).

Overall, the draft was received with enthusiasm and enjoyed a fairly positive reception. People indicated that they were pleased to see that Council understood the importance of showing commitment to reconciliation through action and not just words. In one forum it was suggested that the document could be used as a model for other Councils to follow. This is not to say, however, that the document could not be improved. A number of amendments and additions were suggested, along with general comments, these are discussed below.

General Points

Whilst people were pleased with the policy draft, some wanted assurance that Council would remain committed to implementing the policy. Some wanted to ensure that a particular person be given responsibility for monitoring and reporting on action taken. ESORA suggested that the General Manager should meet quarterly with all Directors to review progress.

Action: Additions have been made to the Action Plan in recognition of the importance of monitoring and reporting. This responsibility has been placed within the role of the Multicultural Community Worker who will keep records on the implementation of the policy with the view to reporting annually on progress. Each Director is required to report annually on access and equity initiatives and this information will be recorded in the Management Plan and the Annual Report.

Statement of Commitment

There was some discussion regarding whether or not the Statement should include support for “a treaty or other instrument of reconciliation”. Some people felt strongly that the clause should be deleted from the Statement as it was now considered too late for a treaty to be developed. However, this view was not unanimously expressed and a minority expressed the opinion that the clause should remain in the Statement.

Action: Given the level of concern expressed about the clause, it was decided that it be deleted from the Statement of Commitment. However, this decision could be reconsidered as part of the year 2000 implementation review if it is thought necessary.

Background

Consultations generally indicated agreement with the importance of acknowledging past injustices committed, as well as the ongoing significance of the local area to Aboriginal people today.

With regard to statistical information, community members agreed with the policy which stated that the actual number of Aboriginal people living in the Waverley LGA is much higher than the Census data indicates. Comments were made during consultations about the reluctance of community members to divulge information to authorities (because of past unjust government policies and practises).

Policy - Objectives

With regard to the Policy section of the document, it was recommended that the words in italic be added.

Component 5, a)

“respect for Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights.”

Action: These words were added.

Component 5, b)

rehabilitate indigenous bushlands which have played an important part in Aboriginal heritage.

Substitute Component 5, c) with the following:

Promote Aboriginal culture and heritage awareness and appreciation through the use of educational programs and advisory services which encourage community participation.

Action: As activities such as these are included in the library's Collection Management Policy, it was decided that 5 c) would remain as follows: “Continue to promote cultural awareness and appreciation, in line with the library's Collection Management Policy”.

Action Plan

There was a desire to strengthen accountability mechanisms. For example, it was suggested that objectives in the Action Plan should be incorporated into Statements of Duties and Workplans of relevant staff. It was also recommended that timeframes should be given for implementing actions.

Action: This issue will be drawn to the attention of the relevant Directors.

Contacts List

Additional names and addresses were provided for the Contacts list.

Action: This additional information was added to the List as requested.

Other Suggestions

Some suggestions focused on the employment of Aboriginal specialists for example: an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, an Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Officer, an Indigenous Bush Regenerator or the use of Aboriginal people as consultants when needed. It was thought that it might be particularly valuable to have such specialists during the Olympic period when it is anticipated that there will be some international interest in Australian Indigenous culture and heritage.

Other people expanded on some of the above ideas. For instance:

- An Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Officer could ensure Council provides adequate protection of sites and rockcarvings and provide community access to advisory services and educational programs, which would empower the community to play a role in protecting the Aboriginal heritage of Waverley.
- An Indigenous Bush Regenerator could rehabilitate Indigenous bushlands, establish a model garden/nursery of plants indigenous to the municipality and also provide advisory services and educational programs. The advisory services and educational programs could develop community understanding of biodiversity and encourage people to play a role in restoring Waverley's natural heritage.

Action: Investigations will be undertaken in regard to the availability of funds in relation to the specialist work discussed above.

Comments were also made about ongoing consultative mechanisms including the possibility of establishing a Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee or consultations with a panel of Indigenous Elders.

Action: In relation to a consultative mechanism, it must be noted that, due to the size of the Aboriginal population in the local area, Waverley Council has instead assisted with the establishment of a regional consultative forum. The objectives of this forum are outlined in the Appendix of the Policy document. This forum is proving to be a valuable avenue for consultation between Councils and Aboriginal people.

Attachments

References

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (1997) Aboriginal Australia - Aboriginal People of New South Wales.

Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants Pty. Ltd. (1995) The Waverley Council Area: An Aboriginal Perspective - A Report to Waverley Council (researched by Huys, Johnston, Wickman).

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Contacts

Arts

Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Ward B, Military Dr., Rozelle Hospital, Warf St. Rozelle 2039, Phone 9818 8012, Fax 9310 2643

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board – Australia Council, 181 Lawson Street, Redfern 2016, Phone 9950 9171, Toll Free 1800 226912, Fax 9319 1442.

Bangarra Dance Theatre, Pier 4/5 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay NSW 2000.

Community Arts Association, Casula Powerhouse, 1 Casula Rd, Casula, 2170 Phone: 9821 2210, Fax 9821 3460.

National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), 3 Cumberland Street, The Rocks 2000, Phone 9252 0199, Fax 9251 9161.

Children's Services

Aboriginal Children's Services, 18 George St. Redfern 2016, Phone 9699 9835, Fax 9699 3553.

Gujaga, 1 Elaroo Av. La Perouse 2036, Phone 9661 6097, Fax 9694 1239.

Education & Support

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) Inc., La Perouse Primary School, Yarra Bay Road, Phillip Bay 2036, Phone 9311 7032, Fax 9311 3805.

Aboriginal Education Council (NSW) Inc., 132 St. Johns Road, Glebe 2037, Phone 9660 5696.

Aboriginal Education Program, 47 Botany Street (Cnr. High) Randwick, Phone: 9385 3805, Fax: 9398 4363.

Eora Centre, (Sydney Institute of Technology/ TAFE) 333 Abercrombie St. Chippendale, 2008 Phone 9217 4878 Fax 9217 4072.

Homework Centre, Yarra Bay House, Elaroo Ave. La Perouse 2036, Phone 9311 2999, Fax 9311 3440.

La Perouse School – Aboriginal Education Assistant, Yarra Bay Road, Phillip Bay 2036, Phone 9311 7032, Fax 93113805.

Matraville High School – Aboriginal Education Assistant, Anzac Pde, Chifley 2036, Phone 9661 8000, Fax 9661 4254.

Sydney Institute of Technology – Aboriginal Development Division, Level 2, Building H, Sydney Institute of Technology, Mary Anne Street, Ultimo 2007, Phone 9217 4639, Fax 9217 4046.

Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, 13 Mansfield St. Glebe 2037, Phone 9660 3444, Fax 9660 1924.

Employment & Training

Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation, Yarra Bay House, La Perouse NSW 2036 Phone 9311 2999 Fax 9311 3440.

Naamoro - Koori Employment Service, 106 Lawson Street, Redfern NSW 2016, Phone 9318 2159, Fax 9318 2073.

Health

Aboriginal Home Care, 120 Lawson St. Redfern 2016, Phone 9319 2247, Fax 9319 7605.

Aboriginal Medical Service, 36 Turner Street, Redfern 2016, Phone 9319 5823, Fax 9319 3345.

Arrunga – Community Health Centre, La Perouse Public School, Yarra Road, La Perouse 2036, Phone 9311 3256, Fax 9311 3393.

Department of Health – Aboriginal Health Branch Policy Division, Level 9, 73 Miller Street, North Sydney 2060, Phone 9391 9502, Fax 9391 9480.

NSW Aboriginal Health Resource Co-op Ltd, 102 George Street, Redfern 2016, Phone 9698 1099,

Fax 9690 1559.

Prince of Wales Hospital – Aboriginal Hospital Liaison, High Street, Randwick 2031, Phone 9382 2355, Pager No.: 132 222 ask for 235913, Fax 9382 2349.

South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service – Aboriginal Health Co-ordinator, Royal South Sydney Community Health Complex, Joynton Ave. Zetland 2017, Phone 9382 8357, Fax 9382 8088.

Housing & Tenants Services

Aboriginal Hostels Ltd., Level 5, IPI House, 128-143 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills 2010, Phone 9310 2777, Fax 9310 3044.

Aboriginal Tenants Advice Service, Phone 9690 0020.

Eastern Zone House – Aboriginal Corporation, Cnr Yarra Road & Elaroo Ave, La Perouse 2036. Phone 9311 3454 Fax 96661 9086

NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, P O BOX W5, Westfield, Parramatta NSW 2150 Ph. 9849 9437, Fax 9635 3400.

Land Councils

La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, Yarra Bay House, La Perouse NSW 2036 Phone 9311 4282, Fax 9661 7423.

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, P.O. BOX 1103 Strawberry Hills 2012, Phone 93196955 Fax 93196461.

Legal

Sydney Regional Aboriginal Corporation Legal Service, P.O. BOX 2257, Strawberry Hills 2012, Phone 9318 2122, Fax 9319 2630.

Redfern Legal Centre, 73 Pitt Street, Redfern NSW 2016, Phone 9698 7277, Fax 9310 3586.

Local Government & Related

Department of Local Government, Senior Policy Officer, Aboriginal Affairs, Policy & Research Branch, 66-72 Rickard Rd. Bankstown NSW 2200, Phone 9793 0832 fax. 9793 0899.

Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum, contacts: Tanya Koeneman (Randwick Council) Phone 9314 4777 Fax 9314 4780 or Lyn Fraser (Waverley Council) Phone 9389 9344.

Council Workers - Aboriginal liaison or general reconciliation issues:

Randwick Council, Tanya Koeneman, Phone 90314 4777

Leichhardt Council, Len Jenkins, Phone

South Sydney Council, Darryl Wright

Waverley Council, Lyn Fraser, Phone 9389 9344

Hornsby Council, Patrick Wong, Phone 9847 6550

Marrickville Council, Hayden Malcktelow Phone 9335 2140

Media

Koori Mail, P.O. BOX 117, Lismore, NSW, 2480, Phone 6622 2666.

Koori Radio, 135 Cleveland Street, Chippendale 2008, Phone 9310 4968, Fax 9310 4970

Reconciliation

ANTAR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) P.O. BOX 154, Balmain

NSW 2041, Phone 9810 3922, Fax 9810 3033.

ESORA (Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia) PO BOX 522, Edgecliff, NSW 2027, Phone 99902213 Fax/Phone 93282060

Other

Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre, University of NSW, Phone: 9385 3762, Fax: 9383 1062.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Sydney Region, Level 5, 10 Quay St. Haymarket 2000, Phone 9211 3555, Fax 9212 6828.

National Aboriginal History & Heritage Council (NAHHC), PO BOX 765, Sydney South, NSW 1235, 92123210.

NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Level 5, 83 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 200 Phone 9290 8700 Fax 9262 2690, Fax 9212 2468.

NSW Department of Public Works and Services, Merrima Aboriginal Design Unit, Level 19, McKell Bldg. 2 -24 Rawson Pl. Sydney 200 Phone 9372 8459 Fax 9372 8487.

Redfern Aboriginal Corporation, P.O. BOX 7 94, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012, Phone 9318 1496, fax 9310 4380.

Redfern Aboriginal Corporation Construction Pty. Ltd, 75 Eveleigh St. Redfern NSW 2016, Phone 9310 4377 or 9699 3219, Fax No. 9699 5643.

Sydney Aboriginal Discoveries, P. O. BOX Q507, QVB Post Office, Sydney NSW 1230, Phone 9571 8283.

South Sydney Aboriginal Resource Centre, 88 Redfern Street, Redfern 2016, Phone 9319 4428.

Street Beat Bus –Wed./Thurs 10pm- 3am Friday/Sat. 10pm-4am. Bus phone 041720 9687

Any recommended amendments or additions to the Contact list should be made by contacting the Multicultural Community Worker, Department of Library and Community Services, Waverley Council. Phone. 9389 9344.

Appendix 1.

Regional Forum Information

Appendix 2.

Local Government and Shires Association Policy Statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Local Government recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a right to self-determination and community empowerment.

- Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of this land making formal acknowledgment
- Recognises the importance of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week and National Reconciliation Week and National Aboriginal Day
- Develops a Statement of Commitment to improve the equitable provision of Local Government services to Aboriginal communities
- Acknowledges that it has a role to play in the improvement of both the environment of villages and existing infrastructure in villages
- Can improve employment levels by developing a Local Aboriginal Employment Plan encompassing a balanced range of casual, temporary and permanent employment with the financial support of other spheres of government
- Recognises the employment of Aboriginal Liaison staff provides effective communication between Aboriginal communities and councils
- Recognises the role of regional and local Aboriginal authorities in planning and providing for local communities and acknowledges the need for an integration of resources
- Encourages greater participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Local Government political life, seeking to facilitate election campaign initiatives within the community
- Recognises the establishment of Aboriginal Consultative Committees is important in providing a mechanism for direct consultation and participation with Aboriginal communities
- Recognises the importance of Aboriginal heritage and culture to local history recording appropriate information in public documents
- Recognises that councils have a role in conserving local heritage and will develop an Aboriginal Heritage Policy
- Provides opportunities for council staff to participate in Aboriginal cross-cultural awareness programs.

Local Government will initiate meaningful reconciliation processes that include a commitment to future action and a recognition of past injustices which includes the recommendations of the 'bringing them home' report through development of local agreements.

There should be no legislative subversion of the High Court decision by the Federal Government on the Wik matter, but rather there should be genuine attempts by all parties to facilitation. The Local Government Association supports Australians for Native Title and its reconciliation campaign.