

Aboriginal Engagement Framework – Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Wednesday, 3 December 2025
Reconciliation Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

Program Contact:

Sarah Gilmour, Associate
Director, Park Lands, Policy &
Sustainability

Approving Officer:

Ilia Houridis, Director City
Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the findings, recommendations and the implementation approach for integrating the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) into the City of Adelaide's (CoA) Aboriginal engagement processes (**Attachment A**).

The approach has been developed by the CoA, with the support of Yamagigu Consulting (Yamagigu). It recognises the need for a culturally grounded, consistent, and accountable approach to engaging with Aboriginal communities, particularly Kurna Traditional Custodians.

The Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2027 (Stretch RAP) includes specific actions to develop guiding principles for engaging with Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations.

During the initial scoping phase, FPIC was identified as a key principle for inclusion. FPIC reflects the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their rights, lands, cultures, and communities.

Consultation began with Administration in May 2025 to assess organisational readiness, capacity, and capability to implement FPIC-aligned engagement. This was followed by targeted engagement with Kurna Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal community members, ensuring community voices, cultural authority, and lived experience informed the report findings and recommendations.

The report documents current engagement mechanisms, identifies opportunities to strengthen relationships, particularly with KYAC and the Reconciliation Committee, and proposes a protocol-based consent model to ensure rights-based, transparent, and culturally respectful decision-making.

The report proposes a pragmatic, scalable model that balances trust-building with operational clarity, supported by clear triggers, governance, and a 12-month phased implementation plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 9 December 2025 for consideration

THAT THE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the Reconciliation Committee supports the integration of Free, Prior and Informed Consent into City of Adelaide processes as contained in **Attachment A** to Item 6.1 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on Wednesday, 3 December 2025.
2. Receives the report on Integrating Free, Prior and Informed Consent into City of Adelaide processes as contained in **Attachment A** to Item 6.1 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on Wednesday, 3 December 2025.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community An inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging.
Policy	<p>Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027</p> <p>1.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement</p> <p>1.2 Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders</p> <p>3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly</p> <p>3.3 Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes</p> <p>5.3 Co-design with KYAC the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Engagement Protocol detailing preferred methods for collaborating with City of Adelaide</p> <p>8.1 Increase employee understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</p>
Consultation	<p>19 May 2025 - KYAC consultation (postponed)</p> <p>20 May 2025 – CoA Consultation 1 – Arts and Culture, Governance, Media and communications, Project Management Office and infrastructure</p> <p>21 May 2025 - CoA Consultation 2 & 3 – Community Engagement, Strategy and Insights, Infrastructure, Media Relations and Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability</p> <p>26 May 2025 – Reconciliation Committee member representatives (Two)</p> <p>21 July 2025 – KYAC Pipeline Meeting</p>
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Allocation	This project was funded through the 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings, recommendations and implementation approach for integrating the principles of FPIC into the City of Adelaide's (CoA) Aboriginal engagement processes.

Background

2. FPIC is a process and outcome for undertaking early consultation and engagement to facilitate understanding and receive consent from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for proposed actions affecting their lands and communities.
3. The approach has been developed by the CoA, with the support of Yamagigu. It recognises the need for a culturally grounded, consistent, and accountable approach for engaging with Aboriginal communities, particularly Kaurna Traditional Custodians.
4. Yamagigu was engaged through a competitive selection process based on their expertise in FPIC and their demonstrated experience working with Aboriginal communities. Yamagigu's scope of work included:
 - 4.1. Mapping existing organisational processes to identify where FPIC principles could be meaningfully embedded.
 - 4.2. Developing a detailed report (**Attachment A**) outlining practical recommendations for implementing a framework to guide culturally appropriate and consistent engagement with Aboriginal communities across CoA's operations.

Strategic Alignment

5. The Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2027 (Stretch RAP) includes specific actions to develop guiding principles for engaging with Kaurna, Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations, as follows:
 - 5.1. Action: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations.
 - 5.1.1. Meet with local Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles of engagement.
 - 5.1.2. Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal stakeholders.
 - 5.2. Action: Create engagement protocols that enable the representation and partnership of the Kaurna People.
 - 5.2.1. Work with KYAC on a Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Engagement Protocol detailing preferred methods for collaborating with City of Adelaide.
6. Through the commitments outlined in the Stretch RAP, the CoA is committed to developing a comprehensive Aboriginal Engagement Strategy. The Strategy aims to formally incorporate FPIC principles and prioritise meaningful, respectful engagement with Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal communities.

Consultation

7. Consultation was held with key stakeholders to inform the work and ensure it reflects diverse perspectives and priorities. This included:
 - 7.1. Three engagement sessions with key teams across CoA including the Project Management Office, Infrastructure, Community Engagement, and Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability during May 2025.
 - 7.2. Input from Aboriginal Members of the CoA Reconciliation Committee on 26 May 2025.
 - 7.3. A dedicated session with the KYAC on 21 July 2025 to ensure cultural authority and alignment with Traditional Custodian priorities.
8. The consultations directly contributed to Stretch RAP actions, ensuring that the process is grounded in diverse perspectives and aligned with both community expectations and CoA's reconciliation objectives.
9. High-level consultation findings highlighted the importance of:
 - 9.1. Embedding cultural authority and Traditional Custodian priorities.
 - 9.2. Ensuring initiatives are properly resourced.
 - 9.3. Supporting Traditional Custodian capacity to engage.

- 9.4. Aligning actions with cultural protocols.
- 9.5. Incorporating Aboriginal community engagement principles to deliver inclusive, transparent, and culturally respectful processes.

Report Findings and Recommendations

- 10. The report documents current engagement mechanisms, identifies opportunities to strengthen relationships—particularly with KYAC and the Reconciliation Committee—and proposes a protocol-based consent model to ensure rights-based, transparent, and culturally respectful decision-making.
- 11. The findings highlight that while CoA has a strong foundation in Aboriginal engagement, processes vary and rely heavily on the involvement of the Reconciliation Team.
- 12. Recommendations focus on formalising partnerships, embedding clear engagement pathways, adopting a phased implementation process, considering resourcing for KYAC, building organisational capability, and aligning practice with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) frameworks.
- 13. The report proposes a pragmatic, scalable model that balances trust-building with operational clarity, supported by clear triggers, governance, and a 12-month phased implementation plan.
- 14. The report's eight recommendations are:
 - 14.1. **Recommendation 1:** Continue to prioritise and invest in the building and strengthening of the relationship with KYAC, ensuring expertise is appropriately valued and ways of working together are established formally.
 - 14.2. **Recommendation 2:** Embed three core pathways within the Aboriginal engagement framework, clearly defining the function of each:
 - 14.2.1. General Aboriginal Community Engagement.
 - 14.2.2. City of Adelaide Reconciliation Committee.
 - 14.2.3. KYAC.
 - 14.3. **Recommendation 3:** Embed a tiered Aboriginal engagement framework incorporating the three identified pathways, underpinned by shared principles, including those articulated through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
 - 14.4. **Recommendation 4:** Consider the opportunity of aligning the engagement framework to the IAP2 Engagement Spectrum, with appropriate permissions, and in any event, align engagement practice with the CoA general community engagement framework.
 - 14.5. **Recommendation 5:** Work closely with KYAC to test and agree on the proposed FPIC policy approach and framework, including the appetite for the protocol-based consent model.
 - 14.6. **Recommendation 6:** Work with KYAC to identify opportunities to secure additional resources to support participation in engagements, including the potential for a joint resourcing model with other governments.
 - 14.7. **Recommendation 7:** Acknowledging the evidence of good engagement practice, support the broader CoA workforce to further build capabilities through a strong authorising environment, clear guidance, and alignment with existing workflows wherever possible.
 - 14.8. **Recommendation 8:** To support successful integration of FPIC principles for both KYAC and CoA, consider the adoption of a staged approach to design and implementation.

Next steps

- 15. It is recommended that the framework and approach to FPIC be tested through a phased implementation process, which includes:
 - 15.1. Ongoing engagement and information sharing to build relationships and confidence.
 - 15.2. Pilot test case to selected project(s) or functional areas (e.g. infrastructure).
 - 15.3. Formalisation of the approach with KYAC as the enabling mechanism for consent.
- 16. This phased implementation approach allows the CoA to iterate on the model while building organisational capability and trust.

17. The initial stages focus on embedding FPIC principles into relevant CoA policies and procedures including establishing foundational governance structures, building employee capacity through training, and piloting processes.
18. Alongside this work, the CoA aims to engage with KYAC to co-develop objectives, principles, and guidelines for meaningful and culturally respectful engagement with Aboriginal communities.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Final report - Integrating Free, Prior and Informed Consent into City of Adelaide processes, Example Strategy Template

- END OF REPORT -