



Pathways to Connection

Walking Together Strategy



Version: 1 – Date: May 2026

Foreword from the Mayor

Reconciliation is about relationships — how we listen, how we learn, and how we work together as a community.

Pathways to Connection reflects Break O'Day Council's commitment to strengthening those relationships in a meaningful and practical way. This Strategy focuses on how we operate as an organisation — building understanding, improving how we engage, and ensuring our decisions are informed by respect and inclusion.

Through our work with Reconciliation Tasmania, we have taken the time to listen, reflect and better understand the experiences, history and perspectives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. This has been an important step in recognising where we can improve and where we can make a genuine difference within our role.

This is not about having all the answers. It is about being willing to learn, to reflect, and to continue building respectful relationships over time.

As a Council, we are committed to walking this path thoughtfully and respectfully — guided by Aboriginal voices and grounded in our local community.

Mayor Mick Tucker

What is this Plan about?

This Plan is an organisational plan focused on how Break O'Day Council operates, makes decisions and builds internal capability. It is not a community reconciliation plan and does not speak on behalf of Aboriginal communities.

The actions reflect Council's commitment to listening, learning and building respectful relationships, while recognising that reconciliation is led by Aboriginal people and communities themselves.

While informed by guidance and learning through Reconciliation Tasmania, this Strategy reflects a locally developed approach tailored to the Break O'Day context.

Introduction: Our Reconciliation Journey

Break O'Day Council worked with Reconciliation Tasmania to explore the development of an organisational reconciliation framework. Through this process, Council participated in facilitated workshops and learning activities designed to build understanding, support reflection, and strengthen internal capability.

Reconciliation Tasmania facilitator Marina Campbell guided Council's Working Group through a structured series of workshops, supported by self-directed learning tasks completed during work time. This approach ensured the Strategy is grounded in education, reflection and practical application within Council's local context.

Workshops

The workshops explored the historical and ongoing impacts of invasion and colonisation in Tasmania, the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its core elements, as well as contemporary priorities identified by Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, including Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty and Closing the Gap.

This learning was then considered in relation to Break O'Day's local context, including Council's activities, responsibilities, and areas where it has practical influence.

This process also highlighted that reconciliation is not a single outcome, but an ongoing journey requiring respectful relationships, cultural understanding, and the willingness to listen, including when conversations require openness and care. As part of this development, Council also sought staff input through an organisational survey focused on Council's relationships with the Aboriginal community, which reinforced a clear theme: staff support reconciliation, but many want greater confidence, guidance and cultural awareness training to engage appropriately and genuinely in their roles.

The actions in this Strategy are therefore not standalone tasks — they are the practical steps Council will take to strengthen internal understanding, improve how we engage and consult, and ensure our decisions and processes reflect respect, inclusion and better outcomes over time.

What we learnt

- Acknowledgement of Country holds deep cultural, historical and spiritual significance. It is a practice that recognises and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which an event or activity takes place.
- The term “Country” is not merely a reference to land as a physical space but is central to their spirituality, culture, and identity. Acknowledging Country emphasises the deep, ongoing connection between the land, environment and the Indigenous peoples.
- Through our engagement in developing this document, we have learnt that storytelling is a vital bridge for understanding, respect, and genuine connection. Storytelling is more than a means of sharing history—it is a living practice that carries culture, values, and identity across generations. By listening to and valuing these stories, we have gained a deeper insight into Country, heritage, and community perspectives. It has reminded us that meaningful engagement happens when we create space for voices to be heard, and when we approach dialogue with openness, patience, and humility. Storytelling has helped strengthen relationships, build trust, and guide our actions toward reconciliation and culturally respectful decision-making.

How were the actions developed:

Through facilitated workshops with Reconciliation Tasmania and staff consultation, Council focused on identifying actions within its organisational control and influence.

The Working Group recognised that meaningful reconciliation must be grounded in understanding, respectful processes and genuine relationships.

As a result, the actions in this Strategy prioritise learning, governance and employment — areas where Council can make practical, sustained contributions, while respecting the autonomy and voices of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.



Local Aboriginal flints and Maireener shell necklace – Courtesy of the St Helens History

Main Themes

1. RESPECT

Through its learning journey with Reconciliation Tasmania, Council recognised that respect is foundational to all reconciliation efforts. Workshops highlighted that while there is strong goodwill across Council, levels of understanding and confidence vary, particularly in relation to Tasmanian Aboriginal history, cultural safety, and appropriate engagement.

Staff feedback reinforced a desire for practical, locally relevant cultural learning that supports respectful interactions and informed decision-making, while avoiding tokenistic approaches. Council also recognised the importance of working in ways that respect Aboriginal self-determination, including engaging only where invited and guided by Aboriginal community members themselves.

For these reasons, Council has prioritised building internal understanding, strengthening processes, and embedding respect into how it operates before expanding outward-facing commitments.

ACTION 1.1:

Increase understanding, value, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning in Break O'Day.

Deliverables:

1.1.1 In partnership with local Tasmanian Aboriginal people in our region, work together to increase Elected Members' and Council staff's cultural awareness through training.

1.1.2 Collaborate with local Aboriginal community partners to identify how Council can respectfully access and benefit from local cultural knowledge.

1.1.3 Work with Aboriginal community partners and the Aboriginal Heritage Council of Tasmania to strengthen internal processes that ensure understanding and compliance with cultural heritage protection laws.

1.1.4 Conduct a cultural learning needs review across Council staff and elected members.

1.1.5 Collaborate with the local Aboriginal community, if they choose to, to explore and support the use and formal recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal place names within the municipality, providing assistance as needed.

Responsibility:

Community Services Manager

ACTION 1.2:

Demonstrate respect by observing local cultural protocols.

Deliverables:

1.2.1 Build understanding of the local Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, waters and skies of Break O'Day.

1.2.2 Develop a framework document for Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, informed by Working Group research and consultation with local Aboriginal community members.

1.2.3 Develop resources to build staff understanding of cultural safety and culturally respectful engagement.

Responsibility:

Community Services Manager

2. OPPORTUNITIES

Council identified employment as one of the most practical and meaningful ways it can contribute to reconciliation within its organisational role. Workshop discussions reinforced that improving outcomes should be done through collaboration with existing organisations and community-led initiatives, rather than creating parallel or prescriptive programs.

This action reflects Council's intent to support pathways that are locally relevant, respectful, and sustainable, while recognising that Aboriginal organisations and communities are best placed to define what meaningful opportunity looks like.

ACTION 2.1:

Improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in Break O'Day.

Deliverables:

2.1.1 Work with BODEC to support Aboriginal employment, training and career development within Council and local businesses.

2.1.2 Work with local Aboriginal organisations to identify and address employment enablers and barriers.

Responsibility:

Human Resources

Governance

Throughout the Strategy development process, Councillors and staff consistently highlighted the importance of Aboriginal perspectives being considered early in Council processes, rather than retrospectively. Strong governance was identified as essential to ensuring engagement is meaningful, respectful and appropriately timed.

This theme focuses on strengthening how Council listens, reflects and incorporates Aboriginal voices where appropriate, while recognising that participation should be guided by Aboriginal communities themselves.

ACTION 3.1:

Strengthen Aboriginal participation in Council.

Deliverables:

3.1.1 Collaborate with local Aboriginal communities to ensure their perspectives are meaningfully and respectfully reflected in Council initiatives and planning.

3.1.2 Explore the establishment of an Aboriginal working group or committee to provide ongoing cultural guidance and input into Council activities.

Responsibility:

General Manager and Community Services Manager



An example of an Aboriginal midden found in Tasmania. Many of these are located along the East Coast of Tasmania

Implementation

This Strategy will be implemented as an organisational plan, guiding internal practice, learning and decision-making across Break O'Day Council. Responsibility for delivery of individual actions sits with nominated positions to ensure accountability is clear and embedded within existing roles and functions.

Implementation will be supported by the Working Group, which will act as internal champions for the plan, support learning across the organisation, and provide advice on culturally respectful practice as Council continues its reconciliation journey.

Importantly, implementation will remain flexible and responsive, recognising that meaningful reconciliation is not linear and must be guided by respectful relationships, learning, and Aboriginal community priorities.

Governance & oversight

Working Group

The Working Group will continue to play an important role in supporting implementation of this plan. The group brings together staff from across the organisation and provides a space for reflection, learning and shared responsibility.

The Working Group's role includes:

- supporting delivery of Strategy actions
- acting as champions for respectful practice and learning
- assisting with internal communication and awareness
- providing advice to leadership as required

The Working Group does not replace Aboriginal voices or leadership. Rather, it supports Council to engage appropriately, respectfully and within its organisational role.

Measuring progress & reporting

How Council will know this Strategy is working

Progress against this Strategy will be monitored through existing organisational reporting mechanisms. Rather than focusing solely on completion of actions, Council will also reflect on changes in understanding, confidence and practice across the organisation.

Reporting will focus on:

- progress against agreed deliverables
- lessons learned through implementation
- areas where Council's approach may need to evolve

This approach recognises that reconciliation is not measured only by outputs, but by how Council's culture, decision-making and relationships develop over time.

Continuous learning & evolution

A living document

This Strategy represents a starting point, not an end point. Council recognises that reconciliation requires ongoing learning, reflection and adaptation.

As Council's understanding deepens and relationships develop, actions may evolve, new opportunities may emerge, and approaches may change. Future iterations of this Strategy will build on the learning and foundations established through this work.

Closing statement

Break O'Day Council acknowledges that reconciliation is a shared journey that requires humility, honesty and respect. Through this Strategy, Council commits to continuing its learning, strengthening respectful relationships, and embedding reconciliation into the way it works — guided by Aboriginal voices and grounded in genuine intent.



The St Helens History Room houses an impressive display of local aboriginal artifacts. Pictured above, flints and shell necklace.