



9.2 MORNING OF MOURNING AND REMEMBRANCE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**PREPARED BY: TODD CONDIE, INDIGENOUS POLICY OFFICER
LEO KELLY, COORDINATOR COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Council on a proposed 'Morning of Mourning and Remembrance' on the morning of Australia Day, 2020 as per the proposal of the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council providing clarity around event details, timing, costs and funding sources.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 18 September 2019 Council received a formal proposal for The Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC) to work with the City of Port Phillip; to develop and include a Morning of Mourning and Remembrance in the City of Port Phillip's 2020 Australia Day celebrations. (Attachment 1)
- 2.2 The BLSC proposal described an intention to "create a significant ritual process that endorses and enhances all subsequent ceremonies of the day, that will enrich the awareness of our community with new citizens that acknowledges, the past, injustices, the survival and achievements and triumphs of the original traditional owners".
- 2.3 At the 16 October 2019 Council endorsed a Notice of Motion that noted advice received from the BLSC that they were prepared to work with the City of Port Phillip to develop Morning of Mourning & Remembrance to recognise and commemorate the loss of country – remembrance of Ancestors and Elders who maintained traditional elements of our community's ancient cultural heritage since colonisation circa 1835 - as an integral part of its Australia Day ceremonies.
- 2.4 The City of Port Phillip has a long-standing commitment to reconciliation that is driven through the establishment of its Reconciliation Action Plan.
- 2.5 The proposal for a Morning of Mourning and Remembrance event advances the commitments of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019.
- 2.6 The Morning of Mourning and Remembrance is proposed to occur at a significant, central location with views to the bay. The preferred location is noted as Alfred Square, St Kilda.
- 2.7 The event is proposed to be one hour in duration and occur pre-dawn (6 a.m.) to incorporate the rising of the sun. It is envisaged that the ceremony will include cultural symbolism through symbolic sounds, gestures, natural elements and dance.
- 2.8 In keeping with Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Framework it is envisaged that significant cultural aspects of this ceremony such as the Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, cultural dance and song will incur a cost along with costs associated with staging the event.
- 2.9 The Australia Day Council are supportive of the initiative and have offered funds to contribute to the event.



- 2.10 Consultation carried out under Council's Reconciliation Action Plan indicated that residents are supportive of Council taking actions to promote reconciliation.
- 2.11 Specific consultation was undertaken about this proposal with 19 people expressing support and five opposing the event.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Supports the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council in the development and delivery of a Morning of Mourning & Remembrance Ceremony as part of the City of Port Phillip's 2020 Australia Day celebrations.
- 3.2 Notes that some aspects of the event details are still to be finalised with the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC)
- 3.3 Approves up to \$20,000 expenditure to support the Morning of Mourning and Remembrance Ceremony, subject to the Chief Executive Officer finalising event arrangements with the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC).
- 3.4 Accepts Australia Day Council funds to be provided to the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC) for cultural delivery aspects of this event.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 On 18 September 2019 Council received a formal proposal for The Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC) to "work with the City of Port Phillip; to develop and include a Morning of Mourning & Remembrance to recognise and commemorate the loss of country – remembrance of Ancestors and Elders who maintained traditional elements of the community's ancient cultural heritage since colonisation circa 1835 and that this be an integral part of the City's Australia Day ceremonies".
- 4.2 The BLSC proposal described the creation of a significant ritual process "that endorses and enhances all subsequent ceremonies of the day that will enrich the awareness of our community with new citizens that acknowledges, the past, injustices, the survival and achievements and triumphs of the lands and seas original traditional owners- providing a moment of mourning, remembrance and a traditional 'Blessing' that enables us as a broad and diverse community located in the most beautiful parts of Australia to move forward while acknowledging the past and working towards sincere and effective future partnerships between the City of Port Phillip and the BLSC".
- 4.3 At the 16 October 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council, Council endorsed a Notice of Motion that noted advice received from the BLSC that they were "prepared to work with the City of Port Phillip; to develop Morning of Mourning and Remembrance to recognise and commemorate the loss of country – remembrance of Ancestors and Elders who maintained traditional elements of our community's ancient cultural heritage since colonisation circa 1835 - as an integral part of its Australia Day ceremonies".
- 4.4 The City of Port Phillip has a long-standing commitment to reconciliation. Significant milestones include
 - 4.4.1 1994 - the first dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Officer appointed in the City.



- 4.4.2 1997 - Council offers an apology to the Stolen Generations, endorsed the Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australia and introduced a protocol of acknowledgement for Mayor, Councillors and officers.
- 4.4.3 1998 - Council endorsed development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Indigenous community
- 4.4.4 2002 - First 'Bless Your Blak Arts' Festival', as part of the St Kilda Festival
- 4.4.5 2008 – City of Port Phillip MOU with local Indigenous community to include service agreements with the Boon Wurrung Foundation, Our Rainbow Place, and Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation.
- 4.4.6 2012 - Council launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- 4.4.7 2017 - City of Port Phillip Launched its second RAP and implementation plan
- 4.5 The City of Port Phillip delivers its commitment to reconciliation through the establishment of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The proposal of a Morning of Mourning and Remembrance advances commitments of the RAP, in particular:
 - 4.5.1 Action 3 'to develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.
 - 4.5.2 Action 9 'Support community understanding of matters relevant to reconciliation such as Constitutional Recognition and Treaty.
- 4.6 On 30 November Council Officers met with members of the BLSC to discuss the proposal and consider both ceremonial and operational logistics associated with such an event.
- 4.7 The Morning of Mourning and Remembrance is proposed to occur at a significant, central location that allows views of the bay. The preferred location is noted as Alfred Square, St Kilda - The site has a view of the bay, a flagpole, power and would accommodate 500 people. Alternative locations would be South Beach Reserve or West Beach St Kilda.
- 4.8 The event is proposed to be one hour in duration and occur pre-dawn (6 a.m.) to incorporate the rising of the sun. Important to the event will be the incorporation of a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and the recognition and sharing of stories and statements that represent ancestors and early pioneers. It is envisaged that ceremonial and cultural symbolism will occur through symbolic sounds, gestures and the inclusion of natural elements and dance.
- 4.9 The event will require a small stage or platform with a podium and PA system, 50 folding chairs and a marquee in case of poor weather.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council, Australia Day Council and Victoria Police have been consulted as part of the scoping the Morning of Mourning and Remembrance.
- 5.2 Victoria Police will be involved in the planning of the event.
- 5.3 As part of Council's RAP commitments Council has carried out a local attitude to reconciliation survey. The survey was completed by 400 people in 2014 and 563 people in 2019.



- 5.4 The 2019 barometer confirmed that Port Phillip community are increasingly aware of Council's reconciliation actions with 40% (225) of respondents aware of actions that the City of Port Phillip has put in place to promote reconciliation between Indigenous people and other Australians compared to 17% (68) in 2014.
- 5.5 Further to this 80% (440) of people surveyed were supportive of Council taking actions to promote reconciliation. This was an increase of 27% when compared with the 2014 barometer.
- 5.6 Following a Notice of Motion at the 16 October 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council, Council introduced a 'Have Your Say' online consultation seeking feedback on the motion to develop Morning of Mourning & Remembrance.
- 5.7 24 people provided feedback via 'Have Your Say' on Council's Notice of Motion. Of these 79% (19) people were supportive of the motion while 20% (5) did not support this motion.
- 5.8 Separate to 'Have Your Say' feedback, Council received correspondence from 19 people regarding the proposed Morning of Mourning and Remembrance ceremony. Of these 57% (11) did not support such an event compared to 42% (8) who were supportive.
- 5.9 The Mayor consulted with the Older Person's Consultative committee on the Morning of Mourning and Remembrance proposal at their October meeting.
- 5.10 The proposed ceremony was tabled for discussion at the City of Port Phillip Youth Services Network of forty service representatives and received unanimous support.
- 5.11 The Council's Multi-Faith Network were consulted on the concept and unanimously agreed that the Ceremony was an innovative way of acknowledging Australia's complex history. The Network advised that any initiative by Council must ensure that Aboriginal leadership is at the forefront and that they did not view the proposal as divisive; rather they saw it as bringing the community together to truly acknowledge the reality of Australia's history. The Network emphasised the importance of a ceremonial component that symbolises the transition between mourning and celebrations.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal from the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council is for an event that aligns with, and adds to, the City's Australia Day celebrations and will work towards an inclusive approach to Australia Day.
- 6.2 Decision making around Australia Day can raise national interest and potentially result in increased enquiries to Council and a heightened number of media and ASSIST enquiries.
- 6.3 A security assessment needs to be undertaken to determine the level of security required. This should include an assessment of the potential for protest.
- 6.4 Weather contingency plans would be in place with the opportunity to stage the event at St Kilda Town Hall if required.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The event will require the hiring, setting up and removal of infrastructure including staging, seating, marquee and PA system. Security and council event staff will also be required. An operational cost of \$15K should be anticipated.



- 7.2 If the numbers grow significantly then road closures and additional security may be required, this would be an additional \$5K.
- 7.3 Owing to the significance of this event and the importance of Traditional Owner leadership and participation in cultural advice and ceremony (for example Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, cultural dance and song), costs will be incurred by the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council in delivering cultural aspects of the event. It is proposed that these costs be covered by the Australia Day support.
- 7.4 The BLSC are a not for profit organisation and do not have the resources to contribute financially to the Morning of Mourning and Remembrance Ceremony. The BLSC will provide in kind support for the planning, design and delivery of the event.
- 7.5 Responding to Council's motion to 'provide a further report for consideration by Council with event details, timing, costs and funding sources', sponsorship avenues have been investigated.
- 7.6 The Australia Day Council has informed Council that a grant of up to \$4K to 5K will be made available to assist with staging costs.
- 7.7 At the time of preparing this report, no additional sponsorship streams have been sourced.
- 7.8 Total anticipated costs of this event would be \$24 K less grants and sponsorship currently at \$4K. This leaves an unfunded cost of \$20 K

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The event may have temporary and limited impact on the amenity of a local park.
- 8.2 Smoke emissions can be anticipated from any fire elements included in the ceremony.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The BLSC see the proposed event as enabling a broad and diverse community, located in the most beautiful parts of Australia, to move forward while acknowledging the past and working towards sincere and effective future partnerships between the City of Port Phillip and the BLSC.
- 9.2 Consultation processes have confirmed that a large percentage of community is strongly supportive of Council's commitment to reconciliation.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The Morning of Mourning and Remembrance ceremony delivers upon strategic direction 1 of the Council Plan, "We embrace difference and people belong. 1.4 Community diversity is valued and celebrated. Through this action Council commit to 'protecting and promoting Aboriginal culture and heritage and continuing reconciliation with our indigenous community'.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Upon Council's endorsement of the Morning of Mourning Ceremony Council officers will notify BLSC and the Australia Day Council of its intention to work together in delivery of the Australia Day Ceremony.

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 4 DECEMBER 2019



- 11.1.2 Council Events, Communications and Community Strengthening will meet with BLSC to refine event details and plan the event

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council proposal for a Morning of Mourning and Remembrance ceremony is in-keeping with the Council Plan and Council's long commitment to reconciliation.
- 11.2.2 The Morning of Mourning and Remembrance Ceremony will enrich the City's Australia Day celebrations.
- 11.2.3 A Communications and Engagement plan will be developed following the endorsement of the recommended option in this report.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

TRIM FILE NO: 46/02/79

ATTACHMENTS 1. MORNING OF MOURNING Proposal