
Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group - appointment of Councillor Members

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That:

1. Nominations for the appointment of Councillor Member and alternate Councillor Member as Chair of the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group (RAPAG) be sought from councillors, and
2. The Chair hold the position for the duration of the current term of Council.

Background

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) are practical plans of action built on relationships, respect and opportunities. They are designed to create social change and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Rous is continuing the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through its RAP. The 2021-2023 Plan has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia ([Attachment 1](#)).

Rous' Innovate 2021-2023 RAP (extended to 2024/25) builds on the foundations and achievement of the initial Reflect RAP and aims to consolidate and increase engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Rous' aim is to focus on relationships with an intent to increase representatives in the Advisory Group to enable increased visibility and further opportunity to provide input into the work we do. Rous is continuing to encourage staff to become a part of the RAP implementation process and learn and share alongside Elders and community members.

In relation to the bulk water supply function, Rocky Creek Dam, our supply network's principal source, sits on Widjabul Wia-bal country of the Bundjalung Nation. We acknowledge the Widjabul Wia-bal people's deep relationship with the land and water, and strongly value their traditional laws, knowledge and lessons about places and sustainability. Our flood mitigation and weed biosecurity functions extend across many other tribal/clan areas within the Bundjalung Nation.

Reconciliation aims to recognise, protect and restore ecological, cultural and social values that are unique to our region.

The RAP provides for the establishment of a RAP Advisory Group to assist staff with implementation of RAP actions.

The RAP Advisory Group is supported by a Terms of Reference (refer [Attachment 2](#)).

Membership

The RAPAG consists of up to fifteen (15) members as follows:

- a) One (1) Rous councillor; and
- b) Fourteen (14) community members

The community members consist of up to:

- i) Two (2) Traditional Custodians of Widjabal/Wia-bal catchment areas
- ii) Six (6) representatives in total – 1 from each of the following Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) in the RCC operational footprint: Ngulingah, Jali, Tweed-Byron, Bogal, Casino-Boolangle, and Gugin Gudduba;
- iii) Three (3) representatives in total: One (1) from Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) of each of the following Native Title Holder groups in the RCC operational footprint: Widjabul Wia-bal (or interim body); Bundjalung Aboriginal Corporation, Bundjalung of Byron Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal).

(NB. An alternate (male/female) representative can be nominated. If there are issues identified on the agenda that can only be spoken to by the alternate representative, then the alternate (male/female) representative shall be invited and welcome to attend).

- iv) Three (3) additional community representatives.

Meeting attendees

Staff representatives as required.

Term

The term of membership of the RAP Advisory Group is two (2) years with the possibility of extension as Council develops future RAPs.

The Rous Councillor Member is the Chair of the RAP Advisory Group meetings and the term of that role aligns with Council's term. The alternate Councillor Member is appointed as a contingency for situations when the primary Councillor Member is unable to attend meetings.

Meeting schedule

Meetings are held quarterly in person or via video conferencing if required.

Multiple nominations

If there are multiple Councillor nominations for the position of Chair an election process will be undertaken.

Finance

The Operational Plan 2024/25 includes a budget of \$121,300 for Reconciliation initiatives, which covers costs for:

- Reconciliation Liaison Officer (1 x full time employee)
- RAP Advisory Group meetings, including sitting fees
- participation in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events; and
- cultural awareness training.

The Chair position is not a paid position, however actual travel and out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed.

Conclusion

The position of Chair on the RAP Advisory Group is vacant. It is proposed that nominations from Councillors be called to fill that vacancy. Term of office for the Chair is for the term of this Council.

Nominations are to be made by Councillors by completing the form provided at [Attachment 3](#).

Attachments

1. [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#)
2. [Terms of Reference](#)
3. Nomination form (*copy also available at the meeting*)