



TWEED
SHIRE COUNCIL

DRAFT Policy

Aboriginal Statement of Commitment

Version 1.4

Division: Community and Natural Resources
Section: Community and Cultural Services
File Reference: Council Policies/Protocols/Procedures
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Reviewed 21 July 2009
Reviewed 20 June 2013
Reviewed and updated March 2018

Historical reference

Version	Date of adoption	Minute No	Description
1.2	17 April 2007		
	21 July 2009		Reviewed
	20 June 2013		Reviewed
1.3	18 March 2018		Updated

Aboriginal Statement of Commitment

Policy Objective

The policy aims to provide Council's acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people. Additionally, the policy creates an overarching link to the Community Strategic Plan and establishes the connection with:

- a) Reconciliation Action Plan;
- b) Tweed Shire Council Cultural Plan 2018 - 2021
- c) North Coast Regional Plan 2036.

Definitions

RAP – Reconciliation Action Plan

ACHMP - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

CSP - Community Strategic Plan

AAC – Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Policy Background

The policy has been developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to provide guidance for staff in the following areas:

- Council's acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in written and verbal communication with the community.
- Council's commitment to reconciliation and Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- Council's commitment to managing and protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Tweed.
- Council's commitment to celebrating culture, and working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and bringing about social justice and economic development outcomes.

Policy

Reconciliation

Council is committed to strengthening its relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to ensure that all people live in harmonious communities where people feel safe, welcome, share common goals, trust and respect each other and work cooperatively.

Council's vision for reconciliation is to create a place where all people are healthy, safe, connected and in harmony with the natural environment to retain and improve the quality of community life.

Council's Aboriginal Reconciliation Statement is as follows:

- *Tweed Shire Council acknowledges that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples were the first peoples of this land and have survived 200 years of sometime violent dispossession of their land.*
- *Tweed Shire Council recognises that colonisation initiated massive changes to the land and its people.*
- *As a vital step towards building a just, common future, Tweed Shire Council recognises the loss and grief held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples. Council acknowledges that this loss and grief has been caused by alienation from their traditional lands, the loss of their lives and their freedom and the forced removal of their children.*
- *Tweed Shire Council supports the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples to live according to their own values and culture within the laws of Australia.*
- *Tweed Shire Council recognises the vital importance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples' contribution to strengthening and enriching our region and our community.*

Acknowledgement

Council, on significant occasions such as State, National, and International functions/events and other appropriate functions/events will use the following statement:

"We wish to recognise the generations of the local Aboriginal people of the Bundjalung Nation who have lived in and derived their physical and spiritual needs from the forests, rivers, lakes and streams of this beautiful valley over many thousands of years as the traditional owners and custodians of these lands."

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Council will work collaboratively with the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Communities by protecting, preserving and maintaining the significance of tangible and intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Tweed Shire by following these objectives:

- Protection of Aboriginal sites;
- Enhance the capacity of the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait community to conserve and protect natural resources and cultural sites in the Tweed Shire;
- Consult with the Aboriginal community on heritage matters within the shire.

The identification, ongoing protection and presentation of cultural values are paramount and include, tangible and intangible heritage, such as story places, totemic species, artefacts, walking trails, stories, dances, language and spiritual beings.

Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Tweed Shire belongs to the local Aboriginal people. As such, they assert to control and manage its protection, presentation and conservation.

Whilst it is the Aboriginal community's duty to preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage, it is a cultural asset that should be valued and appreciated by the wider community.

Significant Events - Celebrating Culture

Council will support cultural events and celebrate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait community, significant cultural ceremonies and events including:

- Sorry Day;
- Reconciliation Week;
- National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) events.

Social inclusion/justice and economic development

Working together with the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, Council will seek to address issues of political and social exclusion, economic development issues and disadvantage and health inequality. Council recognises the valuable skills and contribution the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait community make to the shire and to the cultural diversity of the Tweed.

We will achieve these outcomes by:

- Having a greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people and culture;
- Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people to achieve social inclusion, economic participation and health equality;
- Continuing to maintain respectful and meaningful partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and organisations;
- Advocating for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.
- Work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait employment opportunities in the Tweed Shire.

Related Legislation

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act, 1991 which aims to promote a process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait and the wider Australian community.
Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983 which establishes the local Aboriginal Land Councils and their responsibility for the functions of protecting the cultural and heritage of Aboriginal people within their area.

National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, is the primary legislation in New South Wales relied upon within the State to effectively manage and protect the State's Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Compliance

Not applicable

Forms

Not applicable

Review Period

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of the election of each new Council or more frequently in the event of any legislative changes or change in circumstances.

Useful Links

Not applicable

Version Control:

Version History		
Version #	Summary of changes made	Date changes made
1.2	adopted	17 April 2007
	Reviewed	21 July 2009
	Reviewed	20 June 2013
1.3	Incorporated into new policy template	20 June 2013
1.4	Reviewed and updated to include Council's commitment to reconciliation and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Council's commitment to managing and protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Council's commitment to celebrating culture and addressing social justice and economic development issues.	June 2018