



First Nations Employment Strategy

Employee recruitment, professional development
and retention approach



Interpreter service

9840 9355

普通话 | 廣東話 | Ελληνικά

Italiano | عربي | فارسی

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Definitions	1
Message from the CEO	2
Introduction	3
Our vision	3
Consultation and reviews	4
Our strategy	5
Pillar One: Cultural competency	6
Strategic objective	6
Key actions	6
Metrics of success	7
Pillar Two: Attraction, recruitment and selection	8
Strategic objective	8
Key actions	8
Metrics of success	9
Pillar Three: Professional development and retention	10
Strategic objective	10
Key actions	10
Metrics of success	11
Pillar Four: First Nations employment engagement	12
Strategic objective	12
Key actions	12
Metrics of success	13
Implementation	14
Related documents	14

Cover image: **Ash Firebrace, *Coming Together* (detail), 2021, acrylic on canvas, 147 x 215cm.**

Commissioned as part of the exhibition *Myths and Legends* held at the Manningham Art Gallery in 2021 that depicted Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung ancestral beings and deities in Ash's powerful graphic style.

Acknowledgement of Country

Manningham Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways now known as Manningham.

Council pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and values the ongoing contribution to enrich and appreciate the cultural heritage of Manningham.

Council acknowledges and respects Australia's First Peoples as Traditional Owners of lands and waterways across Country, and encourages reconciliation between all.

Statement of diversity

Manningham Council also values the contribution made to Manningham over the years by people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Definitions

Throughout this document, the following terms apply:

First Nations is used to refer to individuals of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Cultural Awareness is having an awareness of, and developing a sensitivity to, cultural difference and cultural diversity in the workplace.

Cultural Immersion is the act of integrating oneself into another culture by interacting with the people and places that form a community, in an effort to better understand the way they live.

Cultural Load describes the expectation that a First Nations individual is the go-to person for all questions about First Nations culture, should educate others, speak on behalf of all First Nations peoples, and take on extra work (usually without financial or timely compensation).

Cultural Safety describes the fundamental right to a working environment that is physically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally safe and free of any threat or challenge to one's identity of who they are and what they need.

Message from the CEO

Dear colleagues,

Manningham Council is committed to being an inclusive and connected community. We proudly acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways known as Manningham and are respectful of the Victorian First Nations communities.

In 2023, Manningham committed to our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023 - 2025. This is the most recent milestone in a journey that began in 1997, where a Statement of Commitment to Indigenous People was developed with the Eastern Region Councils and adopted by Manningham Council. There have been many years of work since then to build on our organisation's commitment to First Nations Peoples and the work of reconciliation.

Manningham's First Nations Employment Strategy is the most recent addition to this work and a key deliverable of our Innovate RAP. This strategy demonstrates our commitment to improving cultural competency across our workforce and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, career opportunities, retention, and professional development across our organisation.

We thank the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group who guided the development of this document and our People Experience team who have led its development.

We continue to be committed to fostering respect for and understanding of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights throughout our organisation and the municipality.



Andrew Day

CEO of Manningham Council

Introduction

Manningham Council are proud to launch the First Nations Employment strategy, focusing on our organisation's approach to supporting the cultural safety, recruitment, professional development, and retention of Manningham Employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

This strategy is a key commitment linked to **Action 10** of the [Manningham Innovate RAP 2023-25](#); that aims, to "Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development." The Manningham Innovate RAP 2023-25 has been developed in partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, local First Nations peoples, local residents, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and Reconciliation Australia.

Our vision

Manningham Council is committed to fostering respect for and understanding of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights throughout our organisation and the municipality.

The purpose of the First Nations Employment strategy is to provide a roadmap for Manningham Council's journey, in furthering our commitment to being a diverse, inclusive and culturally safe employer, enhancing relationships across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and improving First Nations employment outcomes within our organisation.

Consultation and reviews

Over the period of August 2023 to March 2024, our Human Resources Team have worked alongside our Social Planning and Community Strengthening team in progressing towards the Human Resources owned objectives of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Through this we've been able to gain an understanding of what practices, procedures and approaches have been taken by other Local Government and Public Sector organisations on their respective journeys in the First Nations Employment space. These discussions, as well as recent direct consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Elders have all supported to inform Manningham Council's strategy and approach outlined in this document.

An overview of the key outputs and priority considerations of these consultations are outlined below:

- Cultural Immersion and Cultural Safety and Awareness Training is a foundational requirement for strategy implementation.
- Cultural Safety and Learning Frameworks should be established to support strategy, and the organisation should be educated on this.
- The support of Executive and Leadership teams is crucial to the implementation of any approach.
- The "Cultural Load" of First Nations People extends beyond their roles in the workplace.
- Social and community-based responsibilities and commitments have an impact on the work-life balance of First Nations individuals.
- The weight of community, family, and health as cultural considerations are prioritised differently to what can be typically depicted in dominant work culture.
- The cultural commitments for First Nations individuals differ on an individual basis and should be discussed with sensitivity and respect.

Our strategy

Manningham Council recognises the role that Local Government plays in activating Reconciliation and in its ability to facilitate and support First Nations employment and economic participation opportunities.

In alignment with this, the First Nations Employment strategy aims to build the foundation of a culturally aware and safe working environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, as well as meaningfully increasing the employment opportunities for First Nations people in Manningham Council, across all levels of the organisation.

Manningham Council also recognises the importance of nurturing a diverse and talented workforce that is reflective of the community we serve and understand that the employment of First Nations staff and connectedness to community, is critical to the effective delivery of customer-focused services for First Nations people. The First Nations Employment strategy, therefore, also aims to provide sustainable and fulfilling career progression for our People who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The approach for this strategy is grounded in 4 key focus areas or “Pillars” which include:

1. Cultural Competency
2. Attraction, Recruitment and Selection
3. Professional Development and Retention
4. First Nations Employment Engagement

These pillars are informed by Strategic Objectives and associated Key Actions to support progress towards embedding these objectives across Manningham Council.

Pillar One: Cultural competency

Strategic objective

To foster a culturally inclusive, safe, and supportive working environment within Manningham Council, that:

- a) supports an understanding and acknowledgement of the holistic wellbeing and cultural practices of First Nations people and,
- b) enables First Nations employees to feel valued, respected and to work effectively.

Key actions

Action No.	Action	Action lead	Delivery timeframe (indicative)
1	Continuing to develop cultural inclusivity through the physical representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture across the Manningham Council office environments and spaces.	Economic and Cultural Activation	Ongoing
2	Facilitating cultural immersion activities for Manningham Council staff to connect with the land they work on in their day- to-day roles; for example, conducting off-site team meeting and smoking ceremonies.	Community Wellbeing and Partnerships	3 to 4 years
3	Embedding culturally responsive and considerate recruitment, selection, and onboarding practices for First Nations individuals; including a stronger focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and/or initiatives and highlighting key Council commitments.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years
4	Delivering Cultural Competence training to Manningham Council People Leaders, regarding Cultural Immersion, Cultural Safety, Cultural Awareness, and the distinction between these concepts.	People Experience - OD	2 to 3 years
5	Exploring training opportunities for all Manningham Council staff to develop the knowledge, respect, understanding and awareness of First Nations Peoples and Culture; including topics of Cultural Safety, Cultural Load, Casual Racism, and the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of First Nations people.	People Experience - OD	2 to 3 years
6	Engaging with First Nations owned organisations and external bodies to support the development of a cultural safety learning program.	Community Wellbeing and Partnerships and People Experience OD	2 to 3 years

	This includes working in consultation with Organisational Development to develop and deliver cultural learning frameworks and cultural competency training.		
7	Communication of current Manningham Council Cultural Leave procedure, considering First Nations staff, key cultural events, periods, and occurrences, for example NAIDOC week, Sorry Business and Community Leave.	People Experience - HR	Ongoing

Metrics of success

- An increase in the annual amount of cultural competence training sessions delivered to Manningham Council Leadership.
- An increase in the percentage of Manningham Council staff who have access to and/or undertake cultural immersion opportunities annually.

Pillar Two: Attraction, recruitment and selection

Strategic objective

To enhance existing attraction, recruitment, and selection processes to be more culturally inclusive and diverse, with a focus on:

- a) developing meaningful and sustainable First Nations employment opportunities at all levels within Manningham Council and,
- b) building Manningham Council's connectedness and partnership with the First Nations employment community and, over time, the organisations profile as a First Nations employer of choice.

Key actions

Action No.	Action	Action lead	Delivery timeframe (indicative)
1	Embedding inclusive attraction, recruitment, and selection guidelines to support the elimination of bias and potential employment barriers in the Manningham Council hiring process and enhance the experience of First Nations potential candidates and employees.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years
2	Advertising employment opportunities, including those targeted for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals, directly to the First Nations communities and employment networks through targeted campaigns.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years, then ongoing
3	Cultivating meaningful partnerships with First Nations owned organisations, communities, and employment networks to provide support with candidate readiness, advertising of employment vacancies and targeted First Nations recruitment services.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years
4	Including First Nations representation on interview panels, where possible, when interviewing potential candidates of a First Nations background.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years

5	Continuing to review Manningham Council's HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure they are culturally appropriate and consider potential employment barriers to First Nations individuals.	People Experience - HR	Ongoing
---	---	------------------------	---------

Metrics of success

Increase in the amount of job vacancies advertised annually through targeted campaigns, First Nations employment networks and First Nations recruitment agencies.

- Increase in the amount of First Nations candidate applications received annually across advertised job vacancies.
- Increase the percentage of First Nations staff employed in our workforce.

Pillar Three: Professional development and retention

Strategic objective

To provide support to First Nations employees in progressing their careers through practical or formalised training and professional development opportunities and the recognition of community contribution and cultural skills, across all levels in the organisation.

Key actions

Action No.	Action	Action lead	Delivery timeframe (indicative)
1	Ensuring all First Nations employees have a professional development plan in place.	People leaders across all directorates	Ongoing
2	Identifying First Nations employees for internal and external leadership programs and supporting opportunities to undertake higher duties roles, secondments and acting arrangements, to support their individual career and leadership development.	People leaders across all directorates and People Experience - Workforce Planning	2 to 3 years
3	Providing First Nations staff opportunities to engage in culturally appropriate mentoring, training programs, or similar activities, so that they can mentor, support and guide their peers. These programs could extend from understanding a day-to-day role or establishing a peer network, to broader cultural awareness. The aim would be to encourage the individual career growth and personal leadership for First Nations employees.	People leaders across all directorates and People Experience - OD	3 to 4 years
4	Support study leave for First Nations employees to gain formalised qualifications or complete tailored training to support career progression within Manningham Council and/or Local Government in general.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years

5	Advocating for the representation of First Nations individuals on key committees across Manningham Council.	People leaders across all directorates	1 to 2 years
6	Reviewing exit interview questions and processes for First Nations employees for better insight into their reasons for exiting Manningham Council and ensure necessary cultural inclusivity, cultural safety and culturally appropriate supports are available.	People Experience - HR	1 to 2 years

Metrics of success

Increase in the amount of First Nations employees that are requesting and/or accessing professional mentoring from a manager or senior leader.

- Increase in the number of First Nations individuals employed by a range of classification levels across Manningham Council.

Pillar Four: First Nations employment engagement

Strategic objective

To establish and maintain engagement with external First Nations community groups, staff networks, forums and Public Sector employees that specialise in First Nations employment, to support the ongoing monitoring, review and development of this strategy.

Key actions

Action No.	Action	Action lead	Delivery timeframe (indicative)
1	Continuing to engage with the First Nations Project Officer(s) to support wider community engagement, partnership and shared learning in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	People Experience - HR	Ongoing
2	Continuing to participate in 'Yarning Circles', where applicable, across the Aboriginal Employment Network group every two months, to support direct job advertisement channels and open conversation/awareness on First Nations employment discussions.	People Experience - HR	Ongoing
3	Ongoing knowledge sharing and discussions across other Local Councils and Public Sector organisations, to exchange ideas and key learnings on practices for optimising First Nations employment outcomes, cultural competence, end-to-end recruitment practices and candidate experiences.	People Experience - HR	Ongoing
4	Establishing Manningham-led 'Yarning Circles' in specific locations as a means of authentically engaging with local communities to explain and promote Manningham Council's work in the First Nations employment space.	Community Wellbeing and Partnerships	Ongoing
5	Inviting external First Nations staff networks, organisations and community groups to provide input into the design and implementation	People Experience	3 to 4 years

	of strategic initiatives to support Manningham Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.		
--	---	--	--

Metrics of success

- Increase in the amount and quality of meaningful strategic relationships and engagements we build with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities.
- Development of further strategic documentation, processes, and practices to support First Nations employment across Manningham Council.

Implementation

We know the success of our First Nations Employment Strategy is reliant on the commitment and support of leadership across Manningham Council to integrate the suggested practices into broader business strategy and planning processes.

This strategy is further anticipated to support the key inputs and objectives of the next Manningham Council Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The continued engagement with the First Nations Project Officer(s) and continued engagement with First Nations staff networks, organisations and community groups will support and enhance the design and implementation of 13 strategic initiatives to support Manningham Council's First Nations employees and potential candidates, as well as review and monitor proposed practices outlined in this strategy.

A key objective is establishing a working environment within Manningham Council that is culturally aware, safe, and capable of supporting high-level initiatives beyond First Nations employment.

The strategy does not prescribe or set targets related to First Nations employee headcount. Rather, it seeks to ensure that Manningham Council focuses on its organisational growth to ensure a strong cultural immersion, awareness, and safety foundation.

The key actions and indicative delivery timeframes outlined in this strategy have been developed through initial consultation; however, they are subject to further discussion and alignment with Service Planning across Directorates.

Once the strategy is in place for 12 months, we will review and measure its impacts and the experiences of First Nations staff and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Related documents

[Inclusive Recruitment Guidelines](#)

[Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

[Manningham Council Plan](#)

Manningham Council

P: 9840 9333

E: manningham@manningham.vic.gov.au

W: manningham.vic.gov.au

