



**TWEED**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

INNOVATE  
**Reconciliation Action Plan**  
March 2018 – March 2020




## Our vision for reconciliation

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.



### **Cook Island nature reserve**

Cook Island is important to the local Bundjalung Aboriginal people, with a number of mythological stories associated with the island and a cultural connection with other sites in the landscape.



## Mayoral message



This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an historic moment for the whole Tweed Shire Community. This is the first RAP ever developed between the Tweed Shire Council and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to Council.

The plan marks the first stage of commitments from Council to the Aboriginal community to act in good faith, to recognise the significance of the Aboriginal communities' long standing and special place in the Tweed, to continue the process to redress the wrongs of the past and those still being inflicted on Aboriginal people, and to work with the community to treasure this ancient, long standing culture and Country.

This is a moment to be celebrated as the official beginning of the RAP for the Tweed. It is not a static document though; it is just the start. There is certainly much more to look forward to still being achieved on this journey of reconciliation.

The Tweed Aboriginal Community and Tweed Council have had a long relationship that has grown to be more positive and respectful, deeper and more understanding over time. This year the Aboriginal Advisory Committee will be celebrating their official 20 year anniversary of working with Council. They are undoubtedly the hardest working Committee on Council and this plan is just one of their many important achievements.

Congratulations to all the committee members, the Council staff and the many Councillors who have been involved over the years in advancing this important cause of justice and reconciliation.

Warm regards,

Mayor Katie Milne

## Tweed Shire Executive

As the Executive Leadership Team of Tweed Shire Council, we are firmly committed to strong and supportive leadership that will guide the implementation of our RAP.

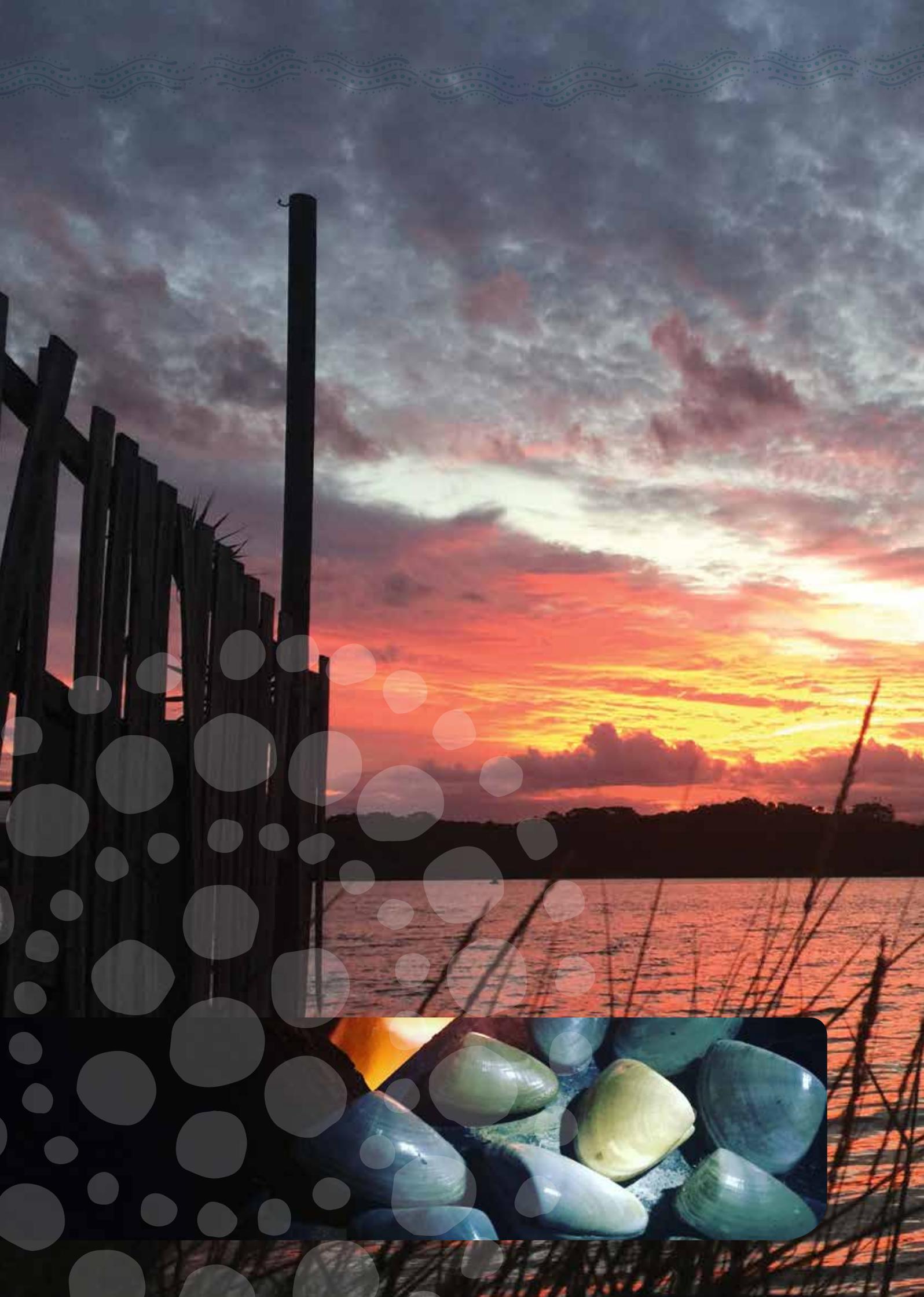
This is our genuine commitment and encouragement to support all staff to make a difference through our actions. It is so much more than just words on a page or representational targets. It is about tangible changes that will make a difference and clearly demonstrate our respect and pride in our Tweed history, our commitment to protect cultural heritage and honour the significant contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community today.

We will walk the talk and actively seek ongoing feedback from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure our behaviours are consistent with our commitment.

We cannot undo what has been done before but we can acknowledge what has happened and strive to lead in a different way to inspire, reward and celebrate reconciliation across our organisation and the community.

As we respect and acknowledge the past we will enthusiastically embrace what the future can bring by walking together, working together, celebrating together and leading our organisation and the community to an inspired future for all.







## Our business

Tweed Shire Council, the largest Council on the north coast of New South Wales, was declared on 1 January 1947 following the amalgamation of the municipality of Murwillumbah and Shire of Tweed. With an annual budget of approximately \$194 million, we are the largest employer in the Tweed with a workforce of approximately 670 employees, with approximately 3% (20) of staff identifying as Indigenous across a wide range of programs and services. Tweed Shire covers 1303 square kilometres and adjoins the NSW shires of Byron, Lismore and Kyogle, with the NSW/Queensland border to its north where it divides the twin towns of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta.

Council delivers services for the more than 35,000 ratepayers and approximately 89,000 plus residents who call the Tweed home. They include planning and development, water and wastewater, major and minor works, waste management, natural resource management, community and cultural development, art galleries, recreational facilities, parks and reserves, cemeteries, aquatic facilities and much more.

Council is guided by its seven councillors elected by the community for a term of four years with the Mayor elected by the Councillors in September each year for a two year term.

Tweed Shire Council's main office is located in Murwillumbah with a branch office in Tweed Heads.

**Vision:** The Tweed will be recognised for its desirable lifestyle, strong community, unique character and environment, and the opportunities its residents enjoy.

**Mission:** Working with community and partners, provide leadership in facilitating and delivering services that manage growth sustainably; create opportunity; and enhance the value of our civic and natural assets for this and future generations.

**Tweed Shire Council's Values:** Living and loving the Tweed. We look after people and places, explore all opportunities and are proud of our passionate approach. We care about each other, choose to be here, and are in this together. We have conversations where everyone can contribute and we are willing to have a go. We put back in to make a difference, so that our Tweed community is even better tomorrow than it is today.



### Yugari

Yugari is the cultural name for pipi. It is a widely used resource by local Aboriginal people and regularly gathered by the community along the Tweed coast.





## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Aboriginal sites and places in the Tweed Shire are recognised by Traditional Custodian descendants as tangible evidence of their ancestral cultural practice and traditions; as such, they retain a very real and meaningful value through to the present day.

A common feature of our Aboriginal community's identity is language, which is known in the Tweed and further south as Bundjalung; in south east Queensland people prefer Yugambeh; and further west, in Kyogle Shire, people use Githabul as both a language and name for group identification. The language dialect for the Tweed is known as Ngandowal, a name referring to the people who say 'Ngando' for the word 'who' or 'somebody'. However, part of the Tweed Coast and south to the Byron area is Minyungbal, where the word 'Minyung' means 'what' or 'something' and can be used as identification for people of this area.

Council acknowledges the Ngandowal and Minyungbal people of the Bundjalung nation, in particular the Goodjinburra, Tulligi-gin and Moorung-moobah clans as being the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water within the Tweed Shire boundaries.

Council also acknowledges and respects the Tweed Aboriginal community's right to speak for its Country and to care for its traditional Country in accordance with its laws, customs and traditions.

The heritage of the Aboriginal peoples struggle and achievements are recognised, and Tweed Shire Council welcomes the Aboriginal community's contribution to protecting, strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians within the wider community.

Council recognise the valuable skills and contribution the Tweed Aboriginal community make to the shire and to the cultural diversity of the Tweed.

For more than 20 years Council has been working to improve our relationship with the local Aboriginal community with the establishment of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. During this time the AAC and Aboriginal community have given valuable advice to Council on all matters relating to the Aboriginal community including:

- community development
- cultural heritage
- social issues

Council recognise that the AAC includes representation from a range of Aboriginal community groups and organisations including; the Tweed/Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council; Tweed/Wollumbin Aboriginal Education Consultative Group; Tweed Aboriginal Cooperative Society; Canowindra Aged Care Facility; Tweed Corporation for Sport (Stingrays); Bugalwena Aboriginal Health service and other community representatives who may provide advice and input when required.



### Pooningbah

The traditional name for Fingal Head is Pooningbah, which is an old story of the place of the echidna, referring to the shape of the basalt outcrop at the top of the headland.



Council's commitment to further develop its relationship with the Aboriginal community through a RAP is supported throughout the organisation.

Actions in our RAP align with Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017–2027 service streams. This plan is the overarching, visionary document in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It translates the community's key priorities and aspirations into long-term strategic goals that guide the future direction of Tweed Shire. Environmental protection and stronger communities were leading concerns identified during community engagement to create the plan. The service streams are:

- **Leaving a legacy** – Looking out for future generations.
- **Making decisions with you** – We're in this together.
- **People, places and moving around** – Who we are and how we live.
- **Behind the scenes** – Providing support to make it happen.

The Director of Community and Natural Resources, Tracey Stinson has the responsibility of RAP Champion on behalf of Tweed Shire Council and is supported by the Executive Leadership Team. Council recognises the success of the RAP depends on all staff acknowledging and working together towards reconciliation which will be achieved through strong leadership from the organisation.

In July 2016 an expression of interest was circulated to all council staff asking for nominations for our RAP Working Group (RWG).

The role of RWG is to champion reconciliation throughout the organisation, to provide strategic direction, leadership and advice to Council in order to encourage and monitor the implementation of the RAP within the organisation.

They will do this by:

- Monitoring the implementation of the RAP.
- Contributing to the development of a co-operative vision for reconciliation across Tweed Shire.
- Encouraging a more culturally safe and tolerant workplace.
- Providing a forum for ideas and discussions on a wide range of issues.
- Contributing to the development of strategic policies and plans in keeping with the RAP actions.
- Building awareness and ownership of the RAP and its objectives and actions.

In preparing for our RAP, Council has undertaken cultural intelligence training for Councillors, the Executive Leadership Team, the Corporate Management Team and our RWG to assist in guiding our reconciliation journey.



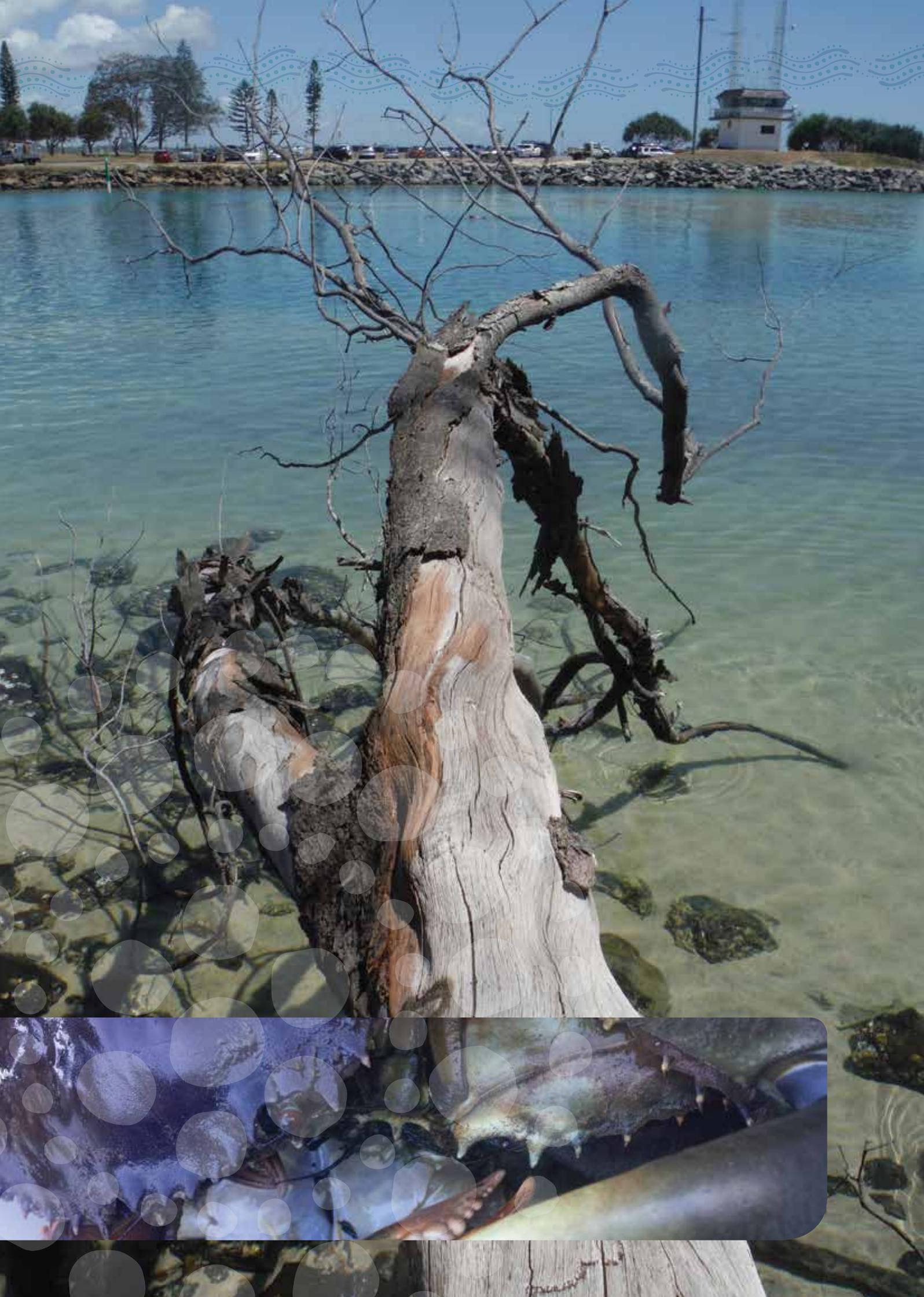
## The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

The RWG members represent all divisions within Council and comprise 4 Indigenous and 11 non-Indigenous staff and is supported by the Community Development Officer – Aboriginal and Council’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Our RWG members are:

- Tracey Stinson: Director Community and Natural Resources
- Paul Wright: Coordinator – Tweed Laboratory Centre
- Alyson Dowling: Administrative Officer – Office of the General Manager
- Shane Davidson: Executive Officer
- Joanne Kay: Town Planner
- Colleen Forbes: Team Leader – Development Assessment
- Tim Mackney: Manager Infrastructure Delivery
- Yvette Van Amstel: Administrative Officer – Waste
- Erika Chadburn: Ganger – Parks
- Barry Chadburn: Plant Operator Level 1 – Recreation Services
- James Smith: Labourer – Recreation Services
- Deb Souter: Human Resources – Senior Human Resources Officer
- Alex Nash: Acting Coordinator – Work Health & Safety
- Emily Hamilton: Learning & Development Officer

The RAP Champion and working group members are committed to the success of the RAP and act as champions supporting its implementation across the organisation.



## Relationships

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

**Focus area: Leaving a legacy** – Looking out for future generations

### Action

#### 1. RWG actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) RWG oversees the endorsement and launch of the RAP.	March 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services RWG
b) Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG.	April 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
c) Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	May 2018–2019	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b>
	August 2018–2019	Community and Cultural Services RWG
d) Establish terms of reference for the RWG.	May 2019	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services RWG
e) Provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural awareness training.	March 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance
	March 2020	



### Jubi

Jubi is the Bundjalung name for mud crab which is an important cultural resource for the community. Commonly found around mangroves in the rivers and creeks.

## Action

### 2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year such as by holding a story telling session each year through the Libraries or creating PC wallpaper during National Reconciliation Week for Council staff to use.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
b) Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
c) Support an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
d) Ensure our Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
e) Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to share their reconciliation experiences or stories.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
f) Encourage staff to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	
g) Download Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and circulate to staff.	27 May – 3 June 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	27 May – 3 June 2019	

## Action

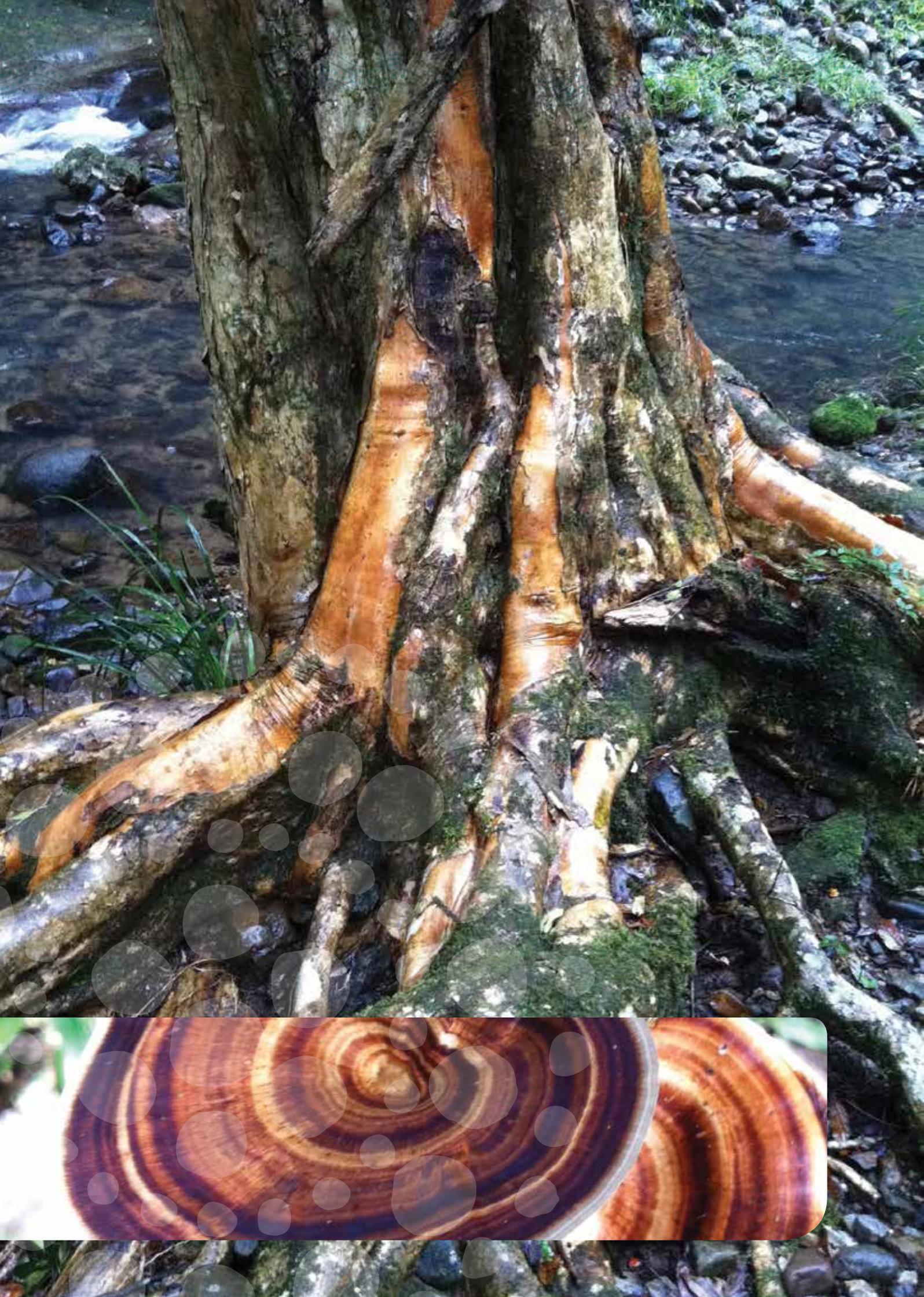
### 3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	July 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
b) Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	December 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services

## Action

### 4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	May 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
b) Display our reconciliation statement on Council's web site	December 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
c) Disseminate our RAP at citizenship ceremonies in the shire.	Review in December 2018 Review in December 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
d) Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.	December 2019	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG



## Respect

Council wishes 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. As such Council respects the unique relationship local Aboriginal people have with the Tweed shire.

**Focus areas:** **Leaving a legacy** – Looking out for future generations  
**People, places and moving around** – Who we are and how we live  
**Behind the scenes** – Providing support to make it happen

### Action

#### 1. Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion).	September 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
b) Provide ongoing opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural awareness training.	March 2019 March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
c) Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training.	June 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
d) Develop appropriate Aboriginal cultural heritage induction training for all outdoor staff.	May 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources



### Boorum

Tea tree has multiple uses, and is widely used traditionally by the Aboriginal community for medicinal purposes as well as the bark for wrapping food and shelter.



**Action**

**2. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
a) Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	April 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
b) Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.	April 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
c) Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at least one significant event such as Art Gallery exhibition openings, Council meetings and large event functions run by Council.	Review in December 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources <b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
	Review in December 2019	
d) Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important internal and external events and meetings.	December 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
e) Adopt Acknowledgement of Country protocol into the Code of Meeting practise for Tweed Shire Council.	July 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources Executive Officer
f) Develop Aboriginal branding and signage policy to include items such as Acknowledgement of Country on the bottom of Council emails and Website.	July 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services

## Action

### 3. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance
	May 2019	<b>Unit</b> Human Resources
b) Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.	July 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance
	July 2019	<b>Unit</b> Human Resources
c) Support the Tweed NAIDOC Week Committee community week of events.	July 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources
	July 2019	<b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services
d) Encourage all staff to celebrate additional significant cultural dates such as Indigenous literacy Day and Mabo Day with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	May 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance
	May 2019	<b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
e) Include significant dates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on Council's calendar of events.	May 2018	RWG Chair
	May 2019	<b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services
f) Contact our local NAIDOC Week Committee to discover events in our community.	July 2018	RWG Chair
	July 2019	<b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Services



## Opportunities

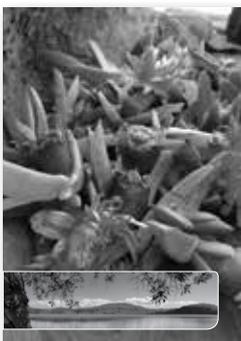
Tweed Shire Council are committed to working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to increase employment and economic development opportunities in the Tweed Shire. Council will work in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community when developing policies or programs which improves the economic, political, and social well-being of the Tweed Shire.

**Focus areas:** **Making decisions with you** – We're in this together  
**People, places and moving around** – Who we are and how we live  
**Behind the scenes** – Providing support to make it happen

### Action

#### 1. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and retention strategy to include:		
a) a recruitment, retention and professional development program developed and delivered in partnership with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
b) Consider designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions through a process of natural attrition.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
c) Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for work experience with Council by reviewing process, and advertising.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
d) Introduce Consideration for leave for sorry business and funerals in recognition of Aboriginal kinship systems and the community responsibility to attend.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources



### Yuli

Yuli is a popular bush tucker commonly known as pig face which is an Australian native ground cover which grows in sandy soils close to the coast.



**Action** (continued)

**1. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
e) Investigate options for the establishment of culturally appropriate work trials in areas such as; Bush regeneration, Aboriginal sites maintenance etc within the Shire.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
f) Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
g) Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.	August 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
h) Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
i) Promote access for staff to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health providers through health and wellbeing material/ strategy.	March 2020	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
j) Increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at school career information day/fairs.	November 2019	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources
k) Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	December 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance <b>Unit</b> Human Resources



## Action

### 2. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
a) Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services.	December 2018	Manager Infrastructure Delivery <b>Unit</b> Infrastructure Delivery
b) Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.	December 2018	Manager Infrastructure Delivery <b>Unit</b> Infrastructure Delivery
c) Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.	June 2019	Manager Infrastructure Delivery <b>Unit</b> Infrastructure Delivery
d) Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2019	Manager Infrastructure Delivery <b>Unit</b> Infrastructure Delivery



## Tracking progress and reporting

### Action

#### Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	30 September 2018	Director Community and Natural Resources RWG
	30 September 2019	
b) Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.	May 2018	

### Action

#### Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings.	August 2018	Executive Manager People, Communication and Governance
	August 2019	<b>Unit</b> Communication and Customer Experience Corporate Governance

### Action

#### Review, refresh and update RAP

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
a) Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	September 2019	Director Community and Natural Resources
b) Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.	March 2020	<b>Unit</b> Community and Cultural Services



## Images and illustrations by Christine Slabb

Imagine a lifestyle surrounded by culture, art and saltwater. Bundjalung/Yugambeh Artist and Graphic Designer, Christine Slabb lives out this very lifestyle.

Her family lives a lifestyle that is connected to nature and continues to practice traditional cultural principles.

Christine's inspiration comes from her strong connection to her local environment and community. From connection and environment comes cultural stories, cultural practices, nature, seasons and everyday life.

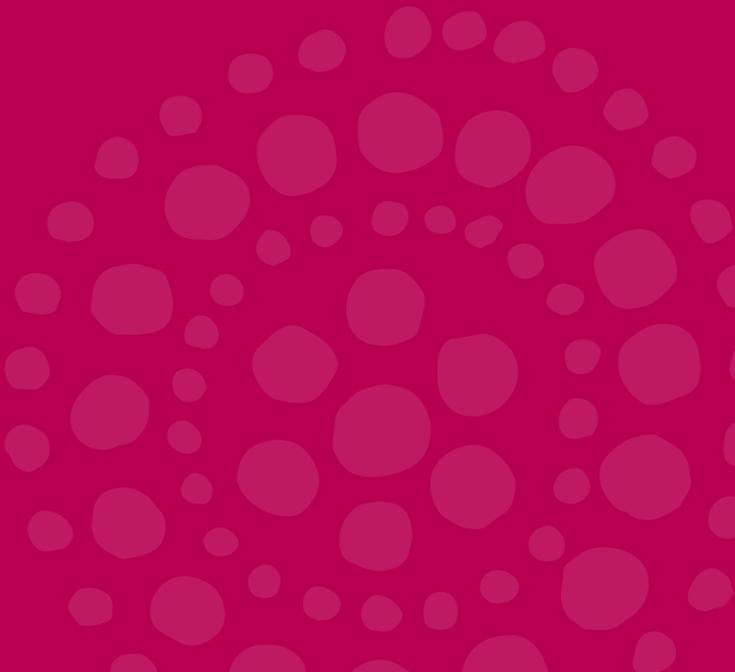
***Being from a coastal group of Aboriginal people we have a strong affiliation with the sea and all of its richness and resources, so a lot of my designs are inspired by the coastal lifestyle that we find here on the coast.***

Christine Slabb

## Contact details

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