

Policy

Aboriginal Statement of Commitment

Version 1.5

Adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 September 2025

Division:
Section:
File Reference:
Historical Reference:

Sustainable Communities and Environment
Inclusive and Creative Communities
Council Policies/Protocols/Procedures
See Version Control

Tweed Shire Council is committed to using plain language so that our documents and publications are easy to understand.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear information about Council's Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The main readers of the document are Tweed residents and business owners.

Aboriginal Statement of Commitment Policy

1. Policy objective

The Aboriginal Statement of Commitment outlines Council's acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The policy creates an overarching link to Tweed Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan and the connections with key plans including:

- a) Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- b) Reconciliation Action Plan
- c) North Coast Regional Plan.

1.1. Definitions

RAP Reconciliation Action Plan

ACHMP Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

CSP Community Strategic Plan

TBLALC Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council

AAC Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) membership as per the Aboriginal Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Terminology use: The following term is used interchangeably: Aboriginal is used throughout the document and will refer to the local Aboriginal community and is inclusive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The terms local Aboriginal community and Bundjalung will be used to refer to the local Aboriginal community of the Tweed Shire area, specifically the Ngandowal and Minyungbal speaking people of the Bundjalung Language Chain, of the Goodjinburra, Tulgi-gin and Moorung-Moobah clans.

1.2. Policy background

Council is committed to actively contributing to the national reconciliation movement while creating a Tweed Shire that is celebrated for its unity, inclusivity, and deep respect for all.

The policy has been developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to provide guidance for staff on Council's commitment to:

- Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in written and verbal communication with the community.
- Commitment to reconciliation and Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- Commitment to managing and protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Tweed.
- Commitment to celebrating culture and working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and bringing about social justice and economic development outcomes.
- Recognises the Aboriginal Advisory Committee as the primary source of advice under the Terms of Reference for the Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

2. Policy

Council is committed to strengthening its relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 will demonstrate this commitment through:

Reconciliation

Council aspires for a future where reconciliation is woven into the fabric of our community. Our goal extends beyond cultural acknowledgement and is about living and loving the Tweed in a way that includes everyone.

Council is committed to delivering actions reflected in Council's Reconciliation Action Plan across the following priority areas:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Relationships: | We aim to further develop and build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, groups and organisations |
| Respect: | We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and knowledge and recognise this has shaped the Tweed's identity |
| Opportunities: | We acknowledge the rich cultural heritage and unique perspectives that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities bring to the table, and embrace opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, groups, and communities. |
| Governance: | We support and advance Reconciliation within Council through achievements that align with our Reconciliation Action Plan priorities. |

Acknowledgement

The following acknowledgement statement has been endorsed by the Aboriginal community for Council's use. Great importance is placed on recognising the specific clans within the Tweed Shire area which distinguishes Aboriginal community's cultural identity:

"We wish to acknowledge the Ngandowal and Minyungbal speaking people of Bundjalung Country, in particular the Goodjinburra, Tul-gi-gin and Moorung – Moobah clans, as being the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters within the Tweed Shire boundaries. We also acknowledge and respect the Tweed Aboriginal community's right to speak for its Country and to care for its traditional Country in accordance with its lore, customs and traditions."

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Council recognises the significance of identifying and protecting tangible and intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. It is fundamental to the continuation of a living Aboriginal culture, supporting ongoing cultural practice, connection to the land and place and cultural identity.

Council is committed to working collaboratively with the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by protecting, preserving and maintaining the tangible and intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Tweed Shire by following these objectives:

- Protection of Aboriginal culturally significant sites
- Enhance the capacity of the Tweed Aboriginal 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.
- Collaborate with the TBLAC to maintain data sources relating to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Mapping.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage of the Tweed Shire belongs to the local Aboriginal people. As such, they reserve the right to control and manage its protection, presentation and conservation.

While it is the Aboriginal community's Cultural responsibility to preserve Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, it is everyone's legal responsibility to conserve and protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. It is a cultural asset to be valued and appreciated by the wider community.

Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge

Aboriginal Cultural knowledge of the Tweed Shire belongs to the local Aboriginal people. They reserve the right to govern its use and application, observing cultural protocols and maintaining cultural integrity of Aboriginal Cultural knowledge, e.g. artwork, language and stories.

Aboriginal Cultural knowledge may be protected by Intellectual Property legislation and would require further permissions before the content is used, the owner or artist must be credited.

Council is committed to:

- Only using pre-approved/ shared Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge or knowledge that is already available in the public domain.
- Honouring cultural protocols by seeking the Aboriginal community's approval for the use/ application of Aboriginal Cultural knowledge, that Council has not already been given permission to use.
- Respecting Aboriginal community's decisions not to share specific details of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge with the wider community when it is determined not culturally appropriate.
- Honouring Aboriginal community's conditions or limitations around the use of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge.

Significant Events - Celebrating Culture

Council acknowledges culturally significant dates, supports cultural events and ceremonies.

Council commits to recognising the following culturally significant ceremonies and events and encourages staff participation to celebrate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

- National Close the Gap Day
- Sorry Day
- Reconciliation Week
- National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week events.

Social inclusion/justice and economic development

Working together with the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Council will seek to address issues of political and social exclusion, economic development issues and disadvantage and health inequality.

As outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. And values the skills and contribution the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community make to the shire and to the cultural diversity of the Tweed.

Council commits to working together with the Tweed Aboriginal community through advocacy and capacity building initiatives that seek to address issues of political and social exclusion, socio-economic development and employment, disadvantage, housing, education and health inequality by:

- Having a greater understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and culture.
- Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve social inclusion, economic participation and health equality.
- Continuing to strengthen existing respectful and meaningful partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.
- Advocating for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Ensuring Aboriginal perspectives are adequately represented during the consultation process for Council business activities and projects.
- Working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities in the Tweed Shire.
- Promoting shared decision making and facilitating access to relevant data to inform and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community decision making.

- Creating an environment where Aboriginal employees thrive in a culturally safe workplace.

Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Council values community input and ensures diverse voices are heard for equitable decisions that benefit all.

Council recognises the Aboriginal Advisory Committee as the primary course of advice under the Terms of Reference for the Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

The primary objective of the Committee is to provide advice to Council to encourage and facilitate the development of the Tweed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Tweed Shire.

Council is committed to the continuation of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee as the conduit for shared learning and work in partnership with the Aboriginal community.

3. Related legislation

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act, 1991 which aims to promote a process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the wider Australian community.

Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983 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.

4. Compliance

Not applicable.

5. Forms

Not applicable.

6. Review period

This Policy will be reviewed at least once within each Council term.

7. Useful links

[Tweed Shire Council website](#)

8. Version control

Version #	Summary of changes made	Date changes made
1.2	Adopted	17 April 2007
	Reviewed	21 July 2009
1.3	Reviewed. 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. Updated and amended as per Aboriginal Advisory Committee recommendations 5 October 2018 and 2 November 2018.	8 November 2018
1.4	Adopted by Council	15 November 2018
1.5	Reviewed and updated to include Council's new acknowledgement statement, commitment to reconciliation and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024-2026, 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. Updated and amended as per Aboriginal Advisory Committee recommendations 1 August 2025 and resolution of Council at the 18 September 2025 meeting.	Adopted 18 September 2025