



# **WEST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## **INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

**JULY 2021 - JULY 2023**

**WEST ARNHEM**

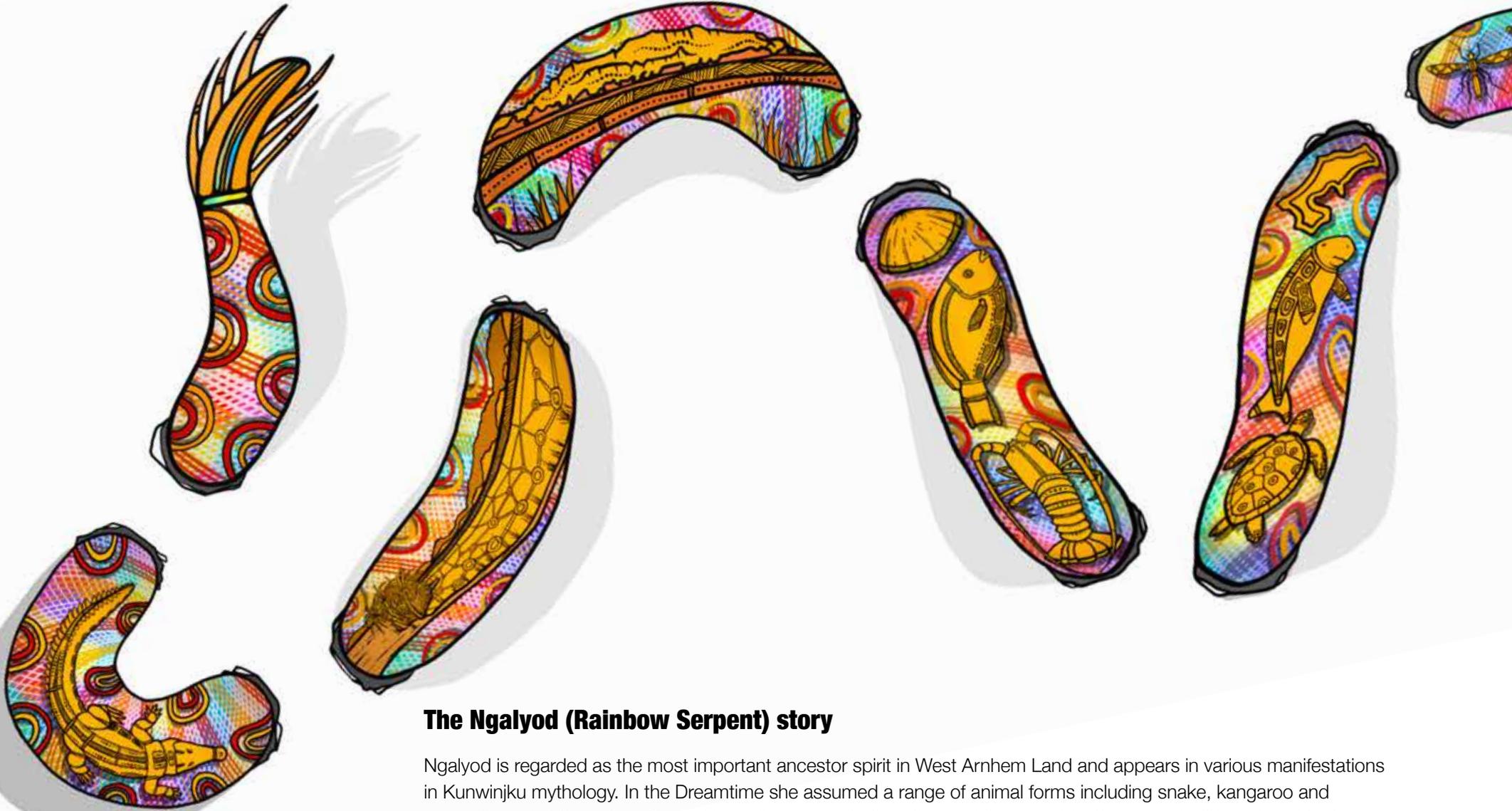


**REGIONAL COUNCIL**



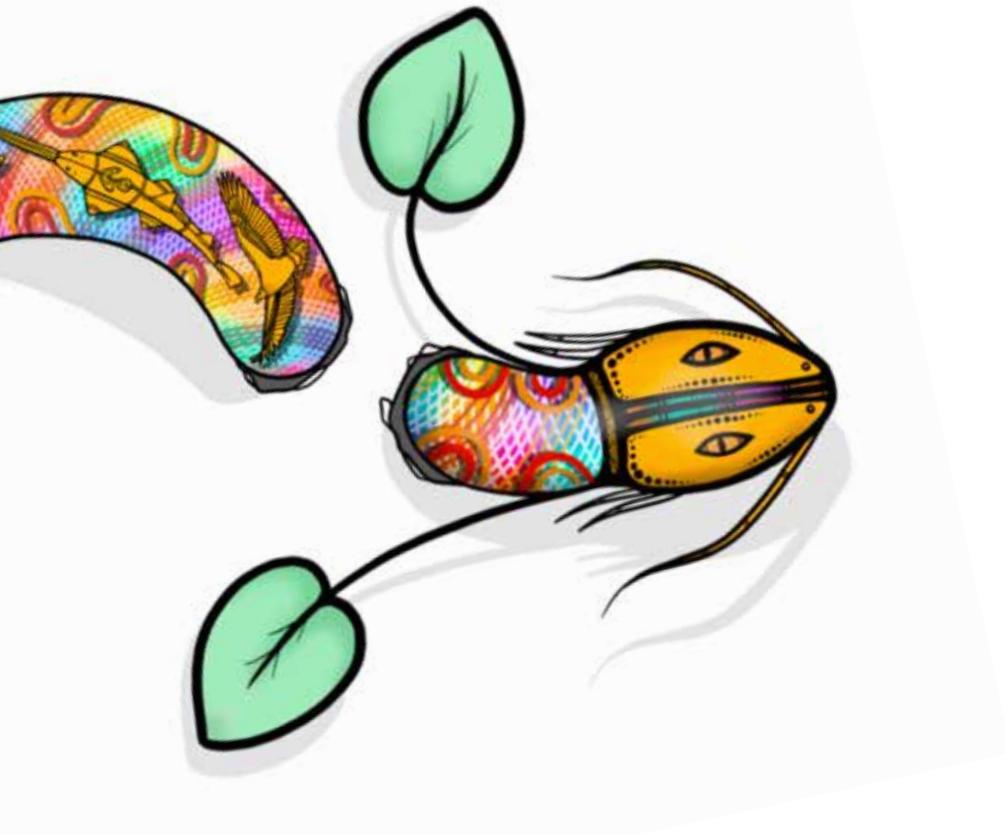
**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**INNOVATE**



### **The Ngalyod (Rainbow Serpent) story**

Ngalyod is regarded as the most important ancestor spirit in West Arnhem Land and appears in various manifestations in Kunwinjku mythology. In the Dreamtime she assumed a range of animal forms including snake, kangaroo and crocodile and at times transformed herself from one to the other, or into a combination of each. It is believed that as a serpent she tunnels underground using barbed extensions from her head and the bony protuberance from her neck as aids. It is believed that Ngalyod dwells in various billabongs in Arnhem Land today, sometimes swallowing bininj (the Kunwinjku term for Aboriginal people) as punishment when they break traditional laws.



## How He got his colours story

Two young men, Bil-bil, or the Rainbow Lorikeet brothers had no shelter and they came to the Rainbow Serpent...He hid in the sky away from the people chasing him and he saw their sadness at losing these two young men. He decided to try and make them happy again so turned his body into a big arc of beautiful colours.

There are various types of vibrant images displayed and embedded throughout the document. In partnership with WARC, Larrakia artist Shaun Lee created images in digital form that were suggested and inspired by each of the communities to capture, highlight and share our diverse environments and culture.

The rainbow serpent artwork is shaped to replicate the geographical placement of Darwin and the West Arnhem Land communities as they appear on a map.

*Thank you to those involved in the creation of these artworks.*

## Acknowledgment of Country

West Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges the First Nations Custodians; and the many Language and Family groups who are Managers and Care-takers to each of their Traditional homelands and Waters across the West Arnhem Region's Wards. West Arnhem Regional Council pay their respects and acknowledge Elders, past present and rising.

## Terms use for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Throughout this document we use First Nations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders when we are referring to Bininj - (people-or men in Bininj Kunwok). We want to acknowledge that there are many terms to identify oneself, including stating the name of their country of belonging.

# Contents

page 8

## Our vision for Reconciliation

page 10

## Our business

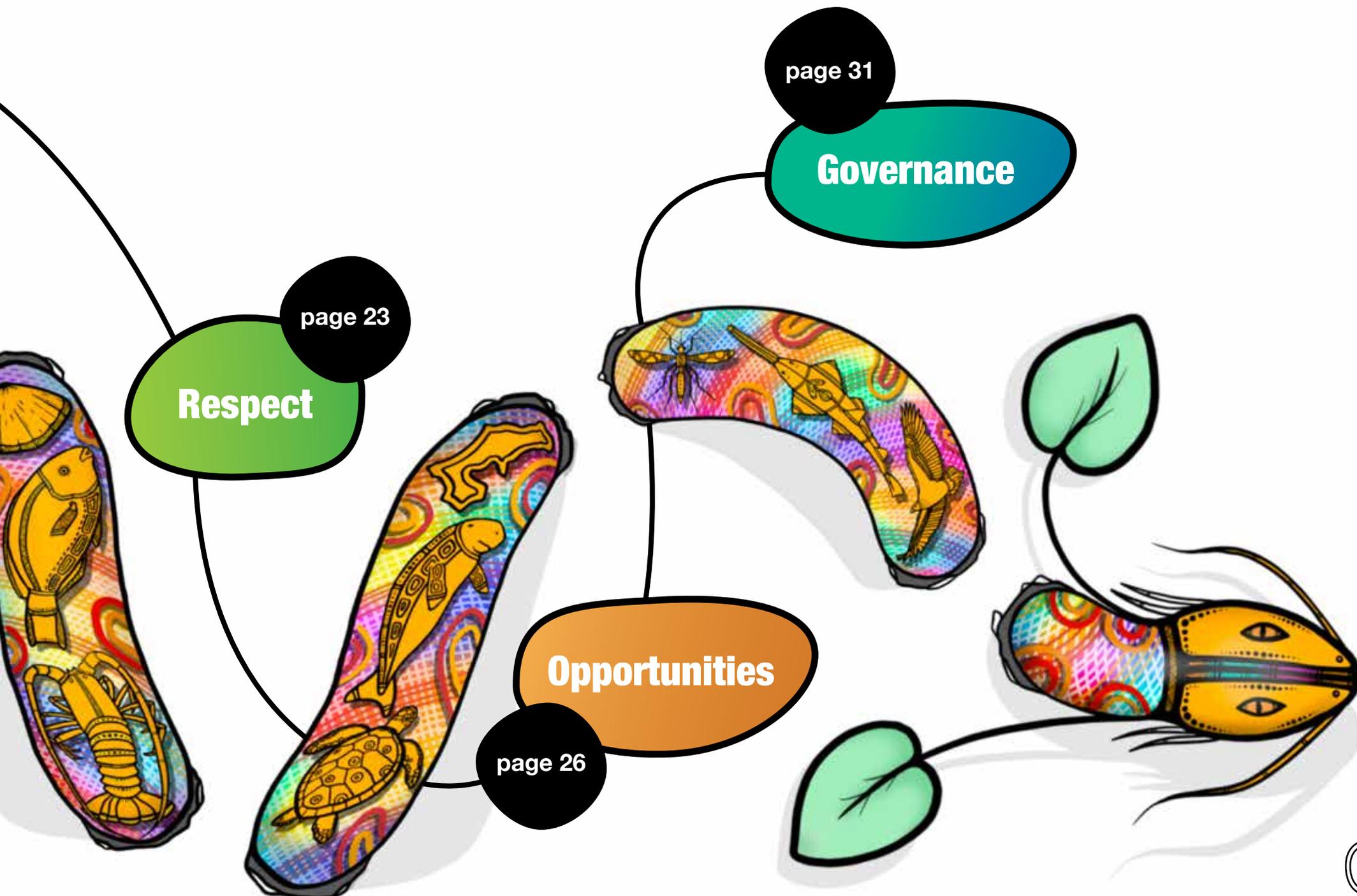
## Relationships

page 17

## Our region

page 12







# Mayor and CEO Message

## A message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of Elected Members and our staff, we are very proud to present the first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for West Arnhem Regional Council.

It was the first day of National Reconciliation Week in 2020 when we announced to our staff and Elected Members that our Council would commence the significant journey of our first RAP. With more than 55 per cent of our team identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the communities we support situated in Aboriginal Lands, this RAP is significant in supporting our staff to learn and understand what it means to walk in both worlds.

Our RAP incorporates the five dimensions developed by Reconciliation Australia which paves the way to strengthening connections between non-Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This includes race relations, equity and equality, unity, institutional integrity and historical acceptance. As a living document, the RAP sets out the guiding principles for our organisation to foster and progress respect, relationships and opportunities for our staff and the people living in West Arnhem Land communities.

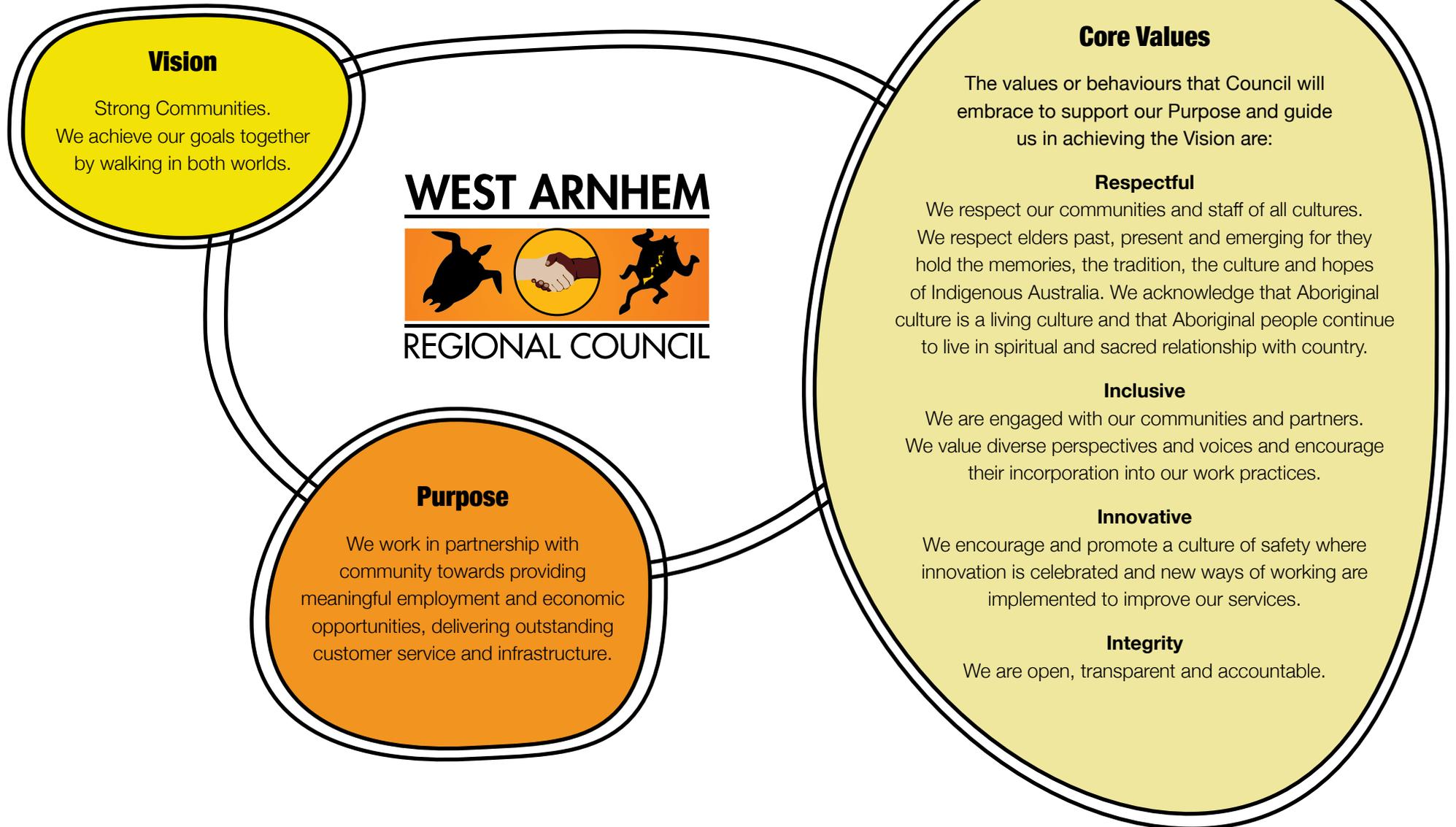
Just as importantly, our RAP also aligns with our organisation's vision and purpose to work in partnership with community towards providing meaningful employment and economic opportunities. In doing so, we will achieve our goals together by walking in both worlds.

Since announcing this journey, our incredible working group have guided, supported and shared stories with our staff, Elected Members, Local Authority members and wider communities for our RAP. We want to thank those working group members for sharing their vision, thoughts and advice about reconciliation with us and also acknowledge everyone who took part during the sharing stories consultation process.

*It has been a long time coming and we are proud to be here.*

*Mayor Matthew Ryan and CEO Daniel Findley*

# Organisational Vision, Purpose and Values



# Our Vision For Reconciliation

West Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges that the land on which we live and work is the traditional land of First Nations People.

Our vision for reconciliation is to champion meaningful consultation and improve relationships with First Nations Peoples, based on the values: Integrity, Respect, Innovation and Inclusiveness; to deliver beneficial outcomes for the West Arnhem region.

West Arnhem Regional Council is developing its first RAP to ensure we have a strategic document that supports our organisational goals and will assist us in our contribution towards reconciliation and benefit the communities we work with.

Brooke Darmanin, Executive Manager Office of the CEO has championed and has executive oversight of the development and implementation of this Innovate RAP.

RAP Working group - Daniel Findley CEO, Brooke Darmanin Executive Manager Office of the CEO, Noni Eather Community Engagement Officer, Jillian May Librarian, Kailah Williams Wellbeing Coordinator and Doreen Alusa Governance Coordinator.

Cross Cultural Consultants assisted with consultations in every community we support and also guided the RAP working group with the Reconciliation Australia RAP Framework.

We have been privileged to have three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as part of our working group.

This is West Arnhem's first RAP and we are excited about the Journey we have begun.

# Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends West Arnhem Regional Council on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for West Arnhem Regional Council to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, West Arnhem Regional Council will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. West Arnhem Regional Council is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals West Arnhem Regional Council's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations West Arnhem Regional Council on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

## Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



**This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for West Arnhem Regional Council to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.**



## Our business

West Arnhem Regional Council covers an area of almost 50,000 square kilometres across West Arnhem Land, encompassing the communities and homelands of Minjilang, Warruwi, Maningrida, Gunbalanya and Jabiru. More than two thirds of the region's population of just over 6,000 identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Council provides a large array of local government services, including community wellbeing, corporate and core services to the communities, and is one of the largest employers in the region. Currently, Council employs approximately 250 people across six offices, of which, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff represents approximately 55%.

Our organisation's performance objectives set out within the strategic plan revolve around inclusive community engagement, effective local government administration, local infrastructure which is fit for purpose, local environment health initiatives, civic services which respect culture and heritage and community social programmes and commercial services which contribute to the wellbeing of community members.

Through our 12 Elected Members, who represent the Kakadu, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Warruwi and Minjilang wards, our Council plays a large role in advocacy and representation for the people residing in our communities. The Innovate RAP reinforces this by demonstrating Council's commitment to supporting and empowering residents in the West Arnhem region.

We have office locations in Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Warruwi, Minjilang, Jabiru and Darwin.





# Our region

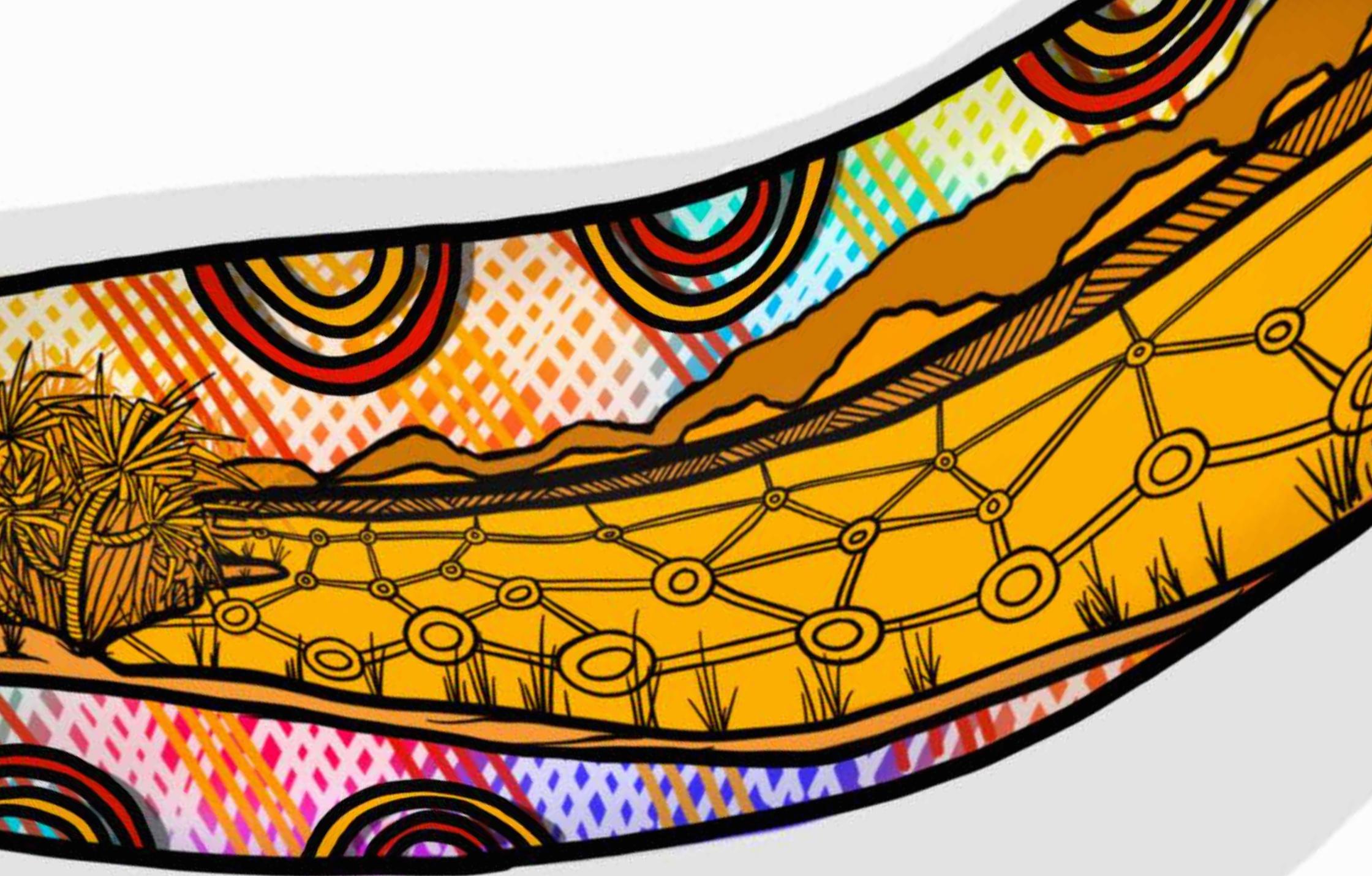
Our communities are all uniquely different and are rich in natural landscapes scattered across salt and fresh water, stone country and within the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park.

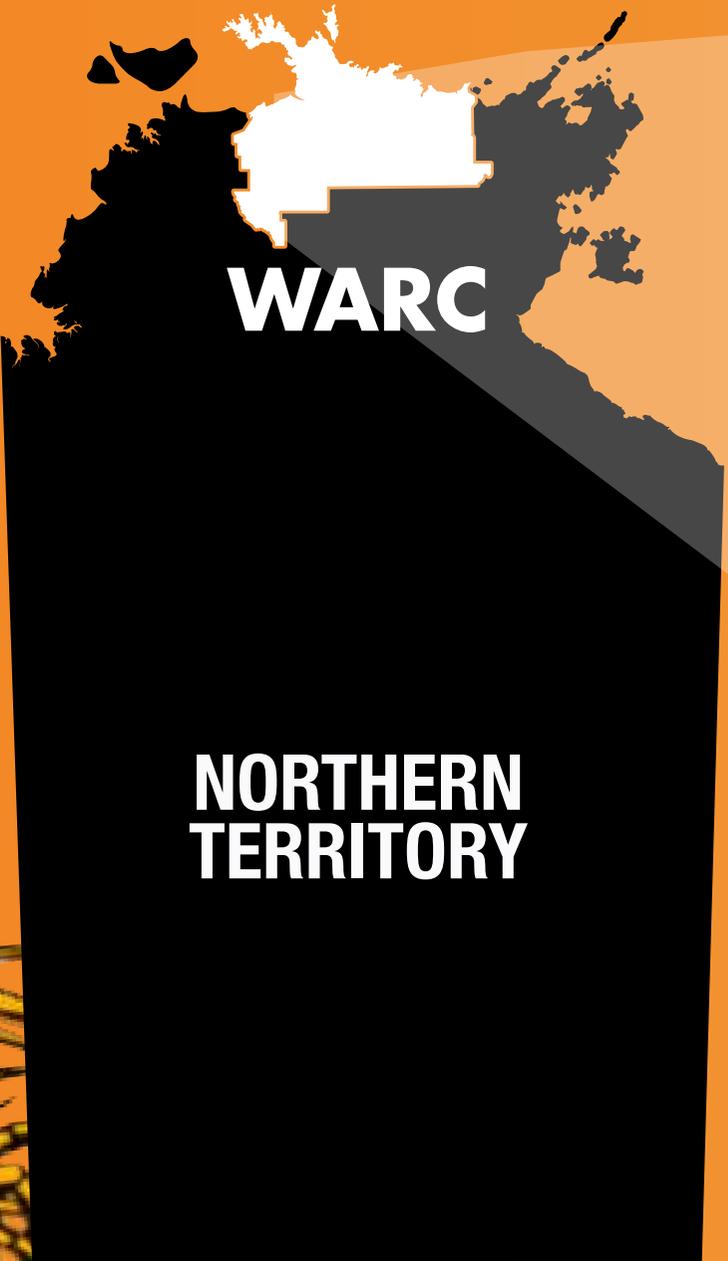
Our region is divided into five wards, following an important change to the ward boundaries which includes the creation of a Minjilang and Warruwi Ward, and dissolving the Barrah Ward in 2021. The other wards are the Maningrida Ward, the Gunbalanya Ward and the town of Jabiru is situated in the Kakadu Ward.

There are many popular tourist destinations within the region's boundaries, including stunning outback landscapes, colourful rock escarpments, glorious wetlands and picture-perfect beaches.

The sensational mix of flora, fauna and wildlife, alongside the rich and diverse culture on display, provides a spectacular visual experience for the visitor and residents to this part of Australia.







**WARC**

A map of the Northern Territory of Australia is shown in black silhouette against an orange background. A white rectangular area in the northern part of the map is labeled 'WARC'. A red curved line on the left side of the map points towards the WARC area. Below the map is a stylized illustration of yellow and black palm trees.

**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY**







# Relationships

Forming strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is fundamental to West Arnhem Regional Council achieving our Reconciliation Action Plan goals. We are committed to forming genuine and meaningful connections with community, and engaging in mutually beneficial collaboration.

## FOCUS AREA

### Relevant WARC Strategic Goals:

Goal 1 Inclusive Community Engagement within the region

Goal 2 Effective and supportive Local Government Administration

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	The Council Service Manager of each community  Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Compile a list of stakeholders, including Traditional Owners and local authority members, in each of our communities and share information about our RAP and our broader service profile.	The Council Service Manager of each Community, Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Create internal communications to be sent out to all council staff and community members to promote awareness and involvement in NRW activities or other cultural events; develop community aligned communication materials to encourage participation in NRW activities.	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator with assistance from  The Council Service Manager of each community  Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	May 2022
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	The Council Service Manager of each community  Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	May 2022
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. Organise at least one NRW event each year at all communities in the West Arnhem Regional Council's sphere of influence.	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator	May 2023



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>3. Raise internal and external awareness of WARC's RAP to promote reconciliation across all our communities and organisations operating in our sphere of influence.</b>	Celebrate the launch of the Innovate RAP through a series of internal and external communications; promote the RAP to all council staff, subcontractors, and community members and develop community aligned marketing materials (i.e. in language, verbal communication, radio ads, etc.)	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships and Communications and Public Relations Coordinator	July 2021
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	Communications and Public Relations Coordinator in conjunction with RAP Working Group and CEO	July 2022
	Ensure RAP is promoted through on boarding and induction processes.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships and People and Capability Manager	December 2022
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes; promote the RAP in our communities and provide local stakeholders with opportunities to partner and share resources to further our RAP plan.	The Council Service Manager of each community  Executive Manager Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2023

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Collaborate with other like-minded organisations who have a RAP in place to develop ways to advance reconciliation in all WARC communities.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	Ensure regular RAP meeting updates are promoted to all West Arnhem communities.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2021
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for WARC; develop language based materials to ensure accessibility for staff (consider second language English speakers); implement as an ongoing process to familiarise new staff with the policy and ensure these policies are communicated to new staff.	People & Capability Manager	December 2021
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	People & Capability Manager	June 2022
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives/consultant to review anti-discrimination policies and equity policies and ensure content promotes positive race relations; review this process annually to ensure it remains updated with our progressing reconciliation journey.	Executive Manager - Office of the CEO	December 2022
	Conduct training with senior management on effects of racism in Australia, and educate senior management on how to identify racism when it occurs.	People & Capability Manager	July 2022







# Respect

West Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges that we are living in and working on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and we respect the cultures, traditions and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We are dedicated to educating our staff and ensuring that we are always operating in a culturally safe and respectful way.

## FOCUS AREA

### Relevant WARC Strategic Goals:

Goal 5 Local Civic Services which respect culture and heritage

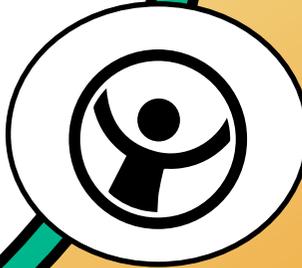
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>5. Ensure all WARC staff have access to continued cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.</b>	Develop and implement a cross cultural learning framework for all WARC employees.	People & Capability Manager	December 2022
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation and consider whether cultural learning can be provided online, F2F, and through cultural immersion.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Work with Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training in a place based format, specific to each community in WARC's sphere of influence.	Independent consultant	December 2022
	Track participation of all council staff and contractors in this cultural awareness training.	Training Coordinator	December 2022
	Support staff and contractors to continually develop their cultural awareness by offering continual training and review opportunities.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning, both online and face to face.	People & Capability Manager	December 2022
	Design an in community orientation and cultural awareness induction for new council staff and contractors at all WARC communities.	People and Capability Manager	June 2023
<b>6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Increase staff's and contractors understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Executive Manager - Office of the CEO	December 2022
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country for all communities in the West Arnhem region.	Executive Manager - Office of the CEO and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Identify the key community members (Traditional Owners) and create a contact list for Welcome to Country activities.	The Council Service Manager of each community and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events and meetings each year.	The Council Service Manager of each community and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2021

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Support community to design (and access) guided tours for new staff and contractors to induct them into the community and identify areas of cultural significance and no-go zones, and safety protocol.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of meetings and promote this to all staff.	All meeting chairs	December 2021
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	July 2021
	Review and develop HR policies and procedures to staff to encourage them to participate in NAIDOC Week; advertise these policies to staff to ensure they are aware of them.	People & Capability Manager	July 2022
	Provide opportunities to promote participation for place based historical education for community staff and visitors.	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	Communications and Public Relations Coordinator and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	July 2021
	Create NAIDOC specific budget to fund events in each community.	Executive Manager Office of CEO	July 2021

# Opportunities

West Arnhem Regional Council is committed to being an inclusive workplace, and providing meaningful employment opportunities. We aim to identify and remove any barriers within our sphere of influence that may prevent or hinder Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from working with West Arnhem Regional Council.



## FOCUS AREA:

**Relevant WARC Strategic Goals:**

**Goal 1 Inclusive Community Engagement within the region**

**Goal 2 Effective and supportive Local Government Administration**

**Goal 6 Social and Commercial Services which contribute to the wellbeing of community members**

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>8. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes and seek to build relationships with organisations to provide opportunities for local community business development.</b>	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	Ensure Aboriginal employment and retention is part of WARC's procurement process for contractors working in communities.	Chief Operating Officer	December 2022
	Investigate Supply Nation membership and Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network membership.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	July 2022
	Build relationships with Indigenous business support providers such as NTG, IBA, ILC, NLC.	Executive Manager - Office of the CEO	July 2022

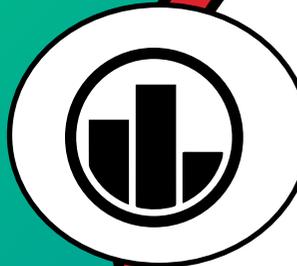


ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator	January 2023
	Present annual procurement opportunities at community events as well as Aboriginal business events i.e. Aboriginal Economic Development Forum; NTIBN Black Coffee Events.	Executive Manager - Office of the CEO	June 2023
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	September 2022
	Seek and develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Chief Corporate Officer Chief Operating officer Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022
	Develop a community business register in each community of local businesses and their local employment numbers.	The Council Service Manager of each community Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2022



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	People & Capability Manager	December 2021
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	People & Capability Manager	June 2022
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	People & Capability Manager	December 2022
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	People & Capability Manager	December 2021
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	People & Capability Manager	June 2022
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	People & Capability Manager	June 2023
<b>10. Create an Identified Executive position to coordinate, facilitate, and drive continued reconciliation across WARC.</b>	Develop position description and advertise widely.	CEO	July 2021





## Governance

West Arnhem Regional Council will ensure that we are achieving our Reconciliation goals by developing and implementing strong monitoring and evaluation tools and processes.

### FOCUS AREA:

Relevant WARC Strategic Goals:

Goal 1 Inclusive Community Engagement within the region

Goal 2 Effective and supportive Local Government Administration

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	CEO Executive Manager, Office of CEO	June 2022
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG and promote membership to the communities in WARC's sphere of influence to ensure each community has input into the RAP.	The Council Service Manager of each community Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2021
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
	Establish a RAP Working Group annual calendar and communicate this calendar to Community Service Managers to ensure community can have input to the process.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships and Communications and Public Relations Coordinator	June 2022

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Open up applications for representatives from each community to join the RWG to champion each community's priorities for reconciliation.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	July 2021
<b>12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Chief Corporate Officer	June 2021
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	CEO Executive Manager, Office of CEO, Chief Operating Officer	June 2022
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	The Council Service Manager of each community Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2021
	Develop a RAP reporting spreadsheet for Community Service Managers and local RAP Working Groups to track, measure and report on the RAP commitments.	Local RAP Working Groups The Council Service Manager of each community Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	December 2021
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2021



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<b>13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	September 2021
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly and develop quarterly RAP updates to be sent out through internal communication channels.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships and Communications & Public Relations Coordinator	June 2022
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships and Communications & Public Relations Coordinator	July 2022
	Create community language based materials to communicate through platforms such as radio, community specific social media or other relevant community channels.	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator	July 2023
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	June 2022
<b>14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Executive Manager, Cultural Safety & Partnerships	January 2023





The Council logo of a sea turtle and a freshwater or long-necked tortoise indicates the coming together or unity of the coastal people and people from further inland, up to the stone country of the Arnhemland escarpment.

The hands in the centre of the logo signify the partnership of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people working together for a better community.

The actual location where the West Arnhem Regional Council story comes together, as identified by custodians and councillors, is near Minjilang on Croker Island. As you go from Minjilang Airstrip to the township, there is a large floodplain called Warrawrlu.

At the end of the floodplain, closest to the airstrip, there is a small ridge between the floodplain and the ocean.

This ridge is where the story of the West Arnhem Regional Council begins. In the Dreamtime, large sea turtles lived in the freshwater and freshwater tortoises lived in the ocean.

Because the sea turtles were fat, they decided to change the water they lived in, which is why the sea turtles now live in the sea and the tortoises in fresh water. They went down to the swamp Warrawrlu and the arrangement to change water types happened on the edge of that swamp.

From the ridge near the beach there are rocks on the road that are taken down to the beach and scattered into the water each year in the dry season. This is to make both turtles fat and provide nourishment for families.

In the dry seasons, the saltwater turtles start to mate and then lay eggs in the wet season (Barrah and Jimuru seasons). This coming together and sharing of resources regardless of backgrounds is what embodies the West Arnhem Regional Council.

# WEST ARNHEM



## REGIONAL COUNCIL

### Contact details

#### Jabiru Headquarters

(08) 8979 9444

13 Tasman Crescent, Jabiru NT 0886

[www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au](http://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au)



**WEST ARNHEM**



**REGIONAL COUNCIL**



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**INNOVATE**