

OFFICERS REPORT**WELCOMING THE YOO-RROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION**

Submitting Councillor: Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the announcement this month of the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission, which will examine the lasting effects of colonisation on social, economic and health outcomes for First Nations people;*
- 2. Publicly expresses its support for the establishment of the Commission, and for the Uluru Statement from the Heart which preceded it;*
- 3. Acknowledge that First Nations people never ceded sovereignty of their lands and have continuously cared for their country for over 60,000 years, as the world's oldest living culture;*
- 4. Notes that the first Day of Mourning was held on January 26 1938, being the 150th anniversary of the British invasion, attended by First Nations people and non-indigenous supporters in protest of the national holiday and the treatment of First Nations people;*
- 5. Lowers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to half-mast each year on January 26 to acknowledge the pain and suffering experience by First Nations people, befitting a day of grief and remembrance;*
- 6. To contribute to Makarrata, truth-telling, justice and reconciliation, commits to hosting a dawn service on January 26 from the year 2022 onwards, acknowledging the loss of culture, language and identity felt by many First Nations people on January 26;*
- 7. Commits to talking with our community and improving their understanding of First Nations issues, as well as strengthening our understanding of community views on these issues.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that a dawn service would require an estimated \$5000 - \$10000 dependent upon scale and scope.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

The hosting of a dawn service which contributes to Makarrata on January 26 will require additional resources, particularly as relevant Council staff are fully utilized on this day with existing events and functions. Significant work would also need to occur in conjunction with the Aboriginal community in the lead up to this event to ensure that it is respectful and reflects their aspirations for a service of this kind.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

Monash Council has a strong commitment to its community, supporting cultural diversity and justice for all. Monash Council has demonstrated significant leadership in the areas of

multicultural policy development, service provision and support for culturally and linguistically diverse residents.

In 2017 Council adopted *A Healthy & Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021* as the guiding strategic document. This Plan provides context to Council's work in relation to the health and wellbeing of the Monash community, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The next four-year municipal health & wellbeing plan is currently under development. In setting this strategic direction, Officers will actively seek to engage Indigenous stakeholders in the development of the health & wellbeing plan, with the aim to include specific outcomes related to increasing cultural awareness and reconciliation through local partnerships.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

Monash Council has been a leading advocate on multicultural and social justice issues, including those relating to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In the delivery of existing work, Officers regularly engage with organisations including;

- Reconciliation Victoria
- Wurundjeri Council
- Boo Wurrung Foundation
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Bunurong Land and Sea Association Inc
- Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Eastern Region Local Government Portfolio Network

Many Council departments have embedded cultural awareness and advocacy into their existing programs and activities, including Community Strengthening, Sustainability, Monash Public Library Service, Social Inclusion, Children, Youth & Families, Arts & Culture and Horticulture. These teams currently deliver a range of very successful annual community programs and events, all of which acknowledge Indigenous culture, offer educational value and highlight Indigenous heritage, as relevant to Monash. There is a strong interest in strengthening initiatives which support the social, economic and health outcomes of First Nations people.

A Monash Indigenous Framework is also under development by Officers. The intention of this work is to establish a clear policy position and a unified understanding of Council's role in improving the lives of First Nations people, to fostering reconciliation and to raising greater awareness and respect of Indigenous history and culture.

By doing this work, Council will also strengthen its relationships with Indigenous organisations (representing both Wurundjeri and Bunurong people).

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Council will be guided by State- and nation-wide action, initiatives and policy to inform Council's approach to work in relation to the social, political, cultural and economic lives of First Nations people.

The work of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission may also inform the approach that Council takes to affecting local change, reconciliation and cultural awareness.