

Child Safety Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety

This Statement sets out Mount Isa City Council's (Council) commitment to cultural safety, respect and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. It is intended to support culturally safe practice across Council services, facilities, workplaces and community settings, and should be read alongside Council's child safe framework and other relevant policies and procedures.

This Statement applies across the varied operating environments of council, including council-managed services, child and family-facing programs, community facilities, public spaces and activities delivered directly, in partnership, or through contractors and third-party providers. It includes settings where children, young people and families may access Council services or facilities, while recognising that in some open-access environments Council may not control all public behaviour or directly supervise all children.

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

This Statement of Commitment is guided by the *Human Rights Act 2019*, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and relevant Queensland Government frameworks supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, cultural rights and community-led outcomes.

- Council proudly acknowledges Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their rich culture and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of Country. We recognise their continuing and enduring connection to land, waters and community on which we live, work and play.
- We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and how this enriches our society more broadly. We embrace self-determination and reconciliation, working towards equality of outcomes and ensuring an equitable voice.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples are culturally diverse, with enduring and distinct heritages and histories. We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise that, while these impacts have caused profound harm, they have not diminished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' enduring connection to Country, culture, language or community.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations continue to strengthen and grow through the resurgence and transmission of language, lore and cultural knowledge. These histories, and the resilience, leadership and resistance they reflect, must be understood and acknowledged to fully recognise the ongoing fight for survival, justice and Country.
- We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and peoples play a critical role in exercising cultural authority, strengthening governance and driving community-led outcomes grounded in local knowledge and self-determination.
- We recognise cultural safety as a continuum that is developed through ongoing engagement, shared decision-making and co-design. This continuum begins with cultural awareness, progresses through cultural sensitivity and cultural competence, and is realised when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples themselves determine that interactions, services and environments are culturally safe.
- Council affirms the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination and recognises this as an ongoing process of choice, participation and empowerment. Council is committed to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through respectful, inclusive and culturally informed approaches that support shared decision-making and co-design, particularly in matters that affect communities, culture, services and outcomes.

- Council is committed to providing responsive and respectful services that recognise cultural diversity, the rich and distinct histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the impacts of transgenerational trauma on social and emotional wellbeing.
- We commit to working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through shared decision-making and co-design processes. This includes taking time to listen, understand lived experiences and local contexts, and supporting our workforce to engage meaningfully with community to strengthen culturally informed, effective and responsive service delivery and child safe practices.

Responsibilities

This policy statement commits all employees to deliver this commitment statement and to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at the forefront of our decision making. Creating supportive environments where stakeholders feel empowered to act, allows our Council to move collectively in the same direction.

Our Journey together so far

Council recognises that cultural safety is not achieved through words alone, but through ongoing listening, learning, relationship building and action. Our journey so far has included engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, participation in reconciliation and cultural capability work, and steps to strengthen culturally respectful services, facilities and workplaces.

Council is committed to the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as a meaningful step toward strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This commitment reflects a dedication to acknowledging past injustices, promoting respect for culture and heritage, and advancing opportunities for inclusion and equity within the community. Through the RAP, Council aims to embed reconciliation principles across its policies, programs, and services, guided by genuine engagement, collaboration, and continuous learning. By working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, Council seeks to create lasting, positive change and contribute to a more inclusive and respectful future for all.

THIS STATEMENT COMMITS COUNCIL TO:

- **understand transgenerational trauma** and its impact on social and emotional wellbeing
- **build our understanding and appreciation** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures, governance and rights as the foundation for respectful relationships and services create culturally safe spaces in our communities and within our workplaces
- support culturally safe and respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families across Council services, programs, facilities and community settings
- **value and celebrate** the diversity that exists within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories and communities
- **actively listen and engage** with stakeholders through shared decision-making and co-design processes and demonstrate a willingness to utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived experience and knowledge to inform all our work
- recognise local cultural authority, community knowledge and lived experience in shaping culturally safe practice
- **develop strong relationships** with communities to foster locally led solutions through culturally safe co-design and partnerships that reflect the knowledge, priorities and needs of each community
- **work together to develop and implement** policies, programs and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be represented and to thrive in their communities



MOUNT ISA CITY COUNCIL

- **value, include and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in our workplaces**
- strive to create an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees thrive in fulfilling careers and a **culturally safe workplace**.
- recognise that everyone has a role in ensuring cultural safety

Council recognises that this Statement must be supported by action, accountability and ongoing review if it is to be meaningful in practice.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Self-determination: Council recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination and is committed to respectful engagement, participation and shared decision-making in matters that affect communities, culture, services and outcomes.

Equity: Council is committed to fair, inclusive and culturally informed practice. This includes identifying and reducing barriers that may affect access, participation, safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Transparency: Council is committed to honest, respectful and open communication, and to decision-making processes that support trust, accountability and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Accountability: Council accepts responsibility for embedding this commitment into its governance, services, workplaces and community interactions, and for reviewing and improving its practice over time.

Reciprocity: Council values relationships built on mutual respect, listening, shared learning and partnership, and recognises the importance of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in ways that are respectful and locally informed.

Cultural contextuality: Council recognises that culturally safe practice must reflect local context, cultural authority, community knowledge and lived experience. Council is committed to strengthening cultural capability and supporting culturally safe environments, services and relationships.

These principles guide how Council approaches cultural safety, engagement, decision-making and continuous improvement in practice.

DEFINITIONS

Co-design: Co-design means working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations in ways that support genuine participation in the design, delivery, review or improvement of policies, services, programs or environments that affect them.

Cultural safety: Cultural safety is an environment, relationship or way of working that is experienced as safe by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is developed through ongoing respect, reflection, shared learning, meaningful engagement and culturally informed practice. Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples themselves.

Self-determination: Self-determination is the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make decisions about matters that affect their lives, communities, cultures and futures, and to participate in decision-making in ways that reflect their priorities, knowledge and authority.

Transgenerational trauma: Transgenerational trauma refers to the ongoing impacts of trauma that can be passed from one generation to the next through the effects of colonisation, dispossession, forced removal, racism and other harmful policies and practices. These impacts may affect social and emotional wellbeing, trust, connection and access to services.

Cultural capability: Cultural capability means the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes needed to work respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It includes ongoing learning, reflection and the ability to apply cultural understanding in practice.