



Reconciliation Action Planning

Northern and Yorke Region SA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reconciliation is a loaded term, yet a pivotal step in the ongoing relationship between local governments and Australia's Indigenous peoples. There are many modes by which this relationship may evolve, but the building of partnerships and peaceful co-existence are key to its success.

In this report, we present the results of a project that explored how reconciliation is viewed and pursued by local government and regional development and Aboriginal peoples who are part of the Yorke Mid North Regional Alliance (including all Legatus Group Councils) in South Australia. We interviewed a range of staff from the Regional Development Associations, council staff and elected members, including some Mayors. We also interviewed people from the Landscape Board and Aboriginal representatives. Participants were identified via data bases which included representatives from peak Aboriginal bodies, Native Title groups, stakeholder organisations, NRM, heritage, cultural, health and education organisations. We also talked to people who were referred to us by others we had interviewed. People either identified and spoke on behalf of their organisation or on behalf or with relation their country. A few spoke as individuals. We asked representatives of different local councils and Aboriginal groups in the region how they defined reconciliation, what actions they have undertaken, or are undertaking, to build reconciliation, what opportunities they saw for the future and whether they would be interested in developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). To answer these questions, we undertook documentary and web site analysis, semi structured interviews and held a workshop.

Our findings reflected a wide range of views, which supported the idea of reconciliation but also reflected much uncertainty, reticence and lack of information about the process. Importantly though, there was across the board, a strong willingness to enter into further discussions about how to build the reconciliation agenda in the region. People agreed that the region is their home and all live there *together*.

Generally, non-Indigenous participants saw reconciliation as a process of acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples as the first peoples, and a desire to work together, in a mutually agreed way to build partnerships into the future. Indigenous participants also indicated that reconciliation was about working together, but their views were attenuated by an emphasis

on acknowledging past wrongs and the history of invasion, and that trust and equity were integral components in building reconciliation.

Overall non- Indigenous discussed a wide range of initiatives that they felt they had undertaken in the spirit of reconciliation. These included flying the Aboriginal flag, participating in NAIDOC week, working on cultural tourism, and employment of Indigenous peoples in their area. Interest in reconciliation was high in most cases, but even so, those councils felt they faced such severe resource constraints into the future that they felt it impeded the likelihood of them being able to invest in formal reconciliation in the short term.

Overall Indigenous participants felt that some of these actions were tokenistic and that generally a lot more needed to be done at a deeper level to be considered reconciliation- that Councils needed to lead by example, and approach Indigenous peoples more often and consistently. Some councils like Port Pirie and Flinders, as well as the Landscape Board, were presented as examples of how some productive and practical reconciliation actions could occur.

All participants were largely unaware of the opportunity offered by RAPs but very interested in hearing more about it and potentially progressing.

We make a number of recommendations including establishment of a process for and commitment to RAPs including employment of a reconciliation coordinator for the region to build mutually agreed reconciliation actions, and development of cultural competency training.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation is a loaded term, yet a pivotal step in the ongoing relationship between local governments and Australia's Indigenous peoples. There are many modes by which this relationship may evolve, but the building of partnerships and peaceful co-existence are key to its success (McKinnon 2011). Since the official reconciliation process in Australia was initiated in 1991, it has been pursued in a number of ways. At present, the process is overseen by Reconciliation Australia, a non-governmental organisation that took over from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 2001 (Burrige 2009; Reconciliation Australia 2019). One of the key ways in which Reconciliation Australia promotes reconciliation is through their RAP framework, which offers opportunities to start conversations between Indigenous peoples and others on a local scale (McKinnon 2011) and thus provides a good starting point for those seeking to initiate reconciliation.

In this report, we present the results of a project that explored how reconciliation is viewed and pursued by members of the Yorke and Mid North Alliance plus other Legatus Group Councils (which included local government staff, elected members, RDAs and the Landscape Board) and Aboriginal peoples in the Legatus Group region in South Australia (see figure 1). The Indigenous peoples of the area we covered were the (i) Ngadjuri, (ii) Nukunu, (iii) Narungga, (iv) Kurna, (v) Adnyamathanha and the (vi) Peramangk peoples. Figure 1 shows both the range of these countries as well as the Legatus Group region. While the map indicates a range of boundaries, we also acknowledged that at the interfaces between them, that there may be overlap with each other, and also with other Aboriginal groups. This was kept in mind when consulting with different groups, and it is important in that context, that local governments, as part of their engagement with Aboriginal groups in the region, are aware of these overlaps, and also which organisations have had/are in the process of native title determinations. In particular, we asked representatives of different local councils and Aboriginal groups in the region how they defined reconciliation, what actions they have undertaken, or are undertaking, to build reconciliation, what opportunities they saw for the future and whether they would be interested in developing a RAP.

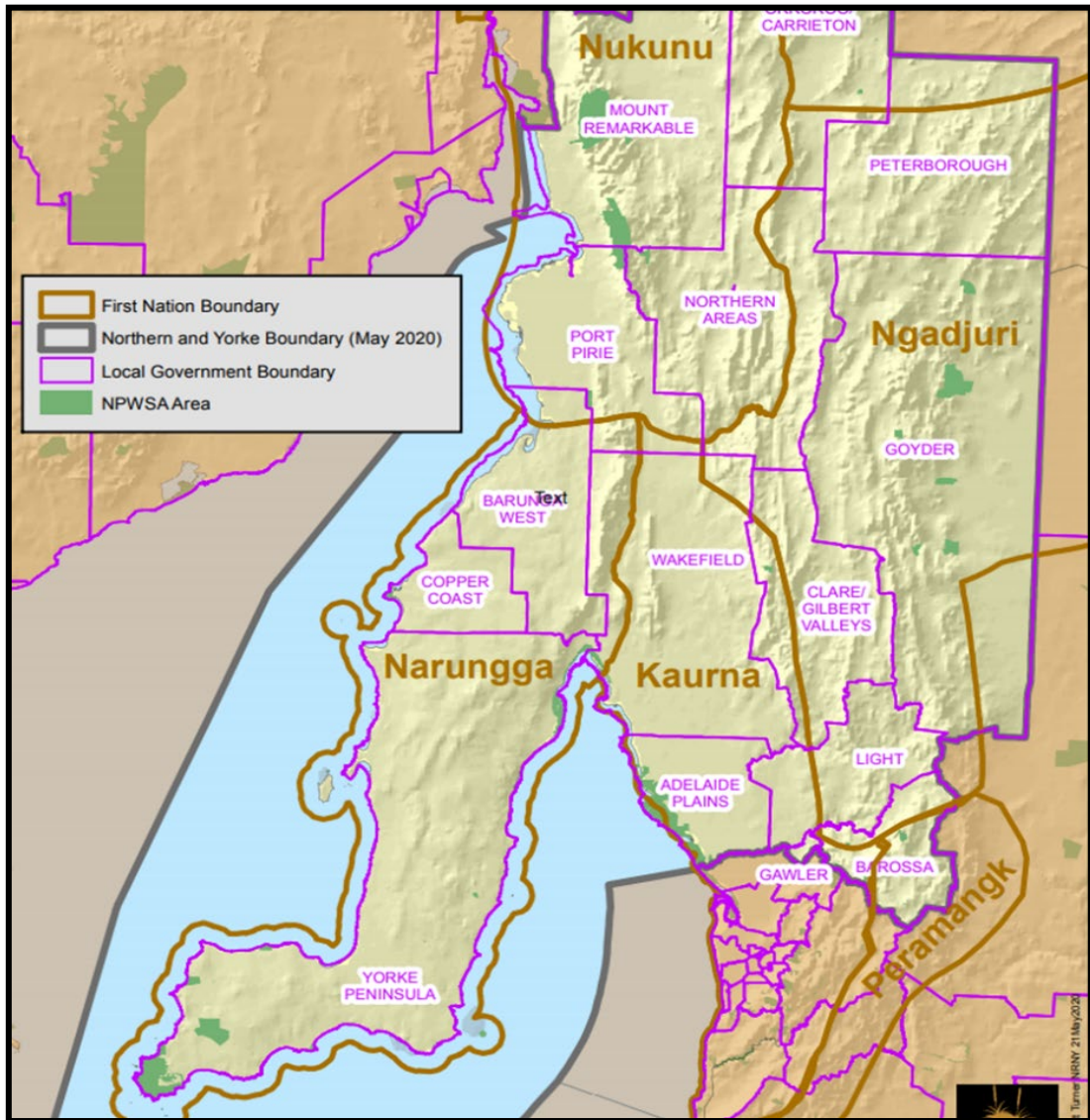


Figure 1: Indigenous peoples in the region

Source: Landscape Board

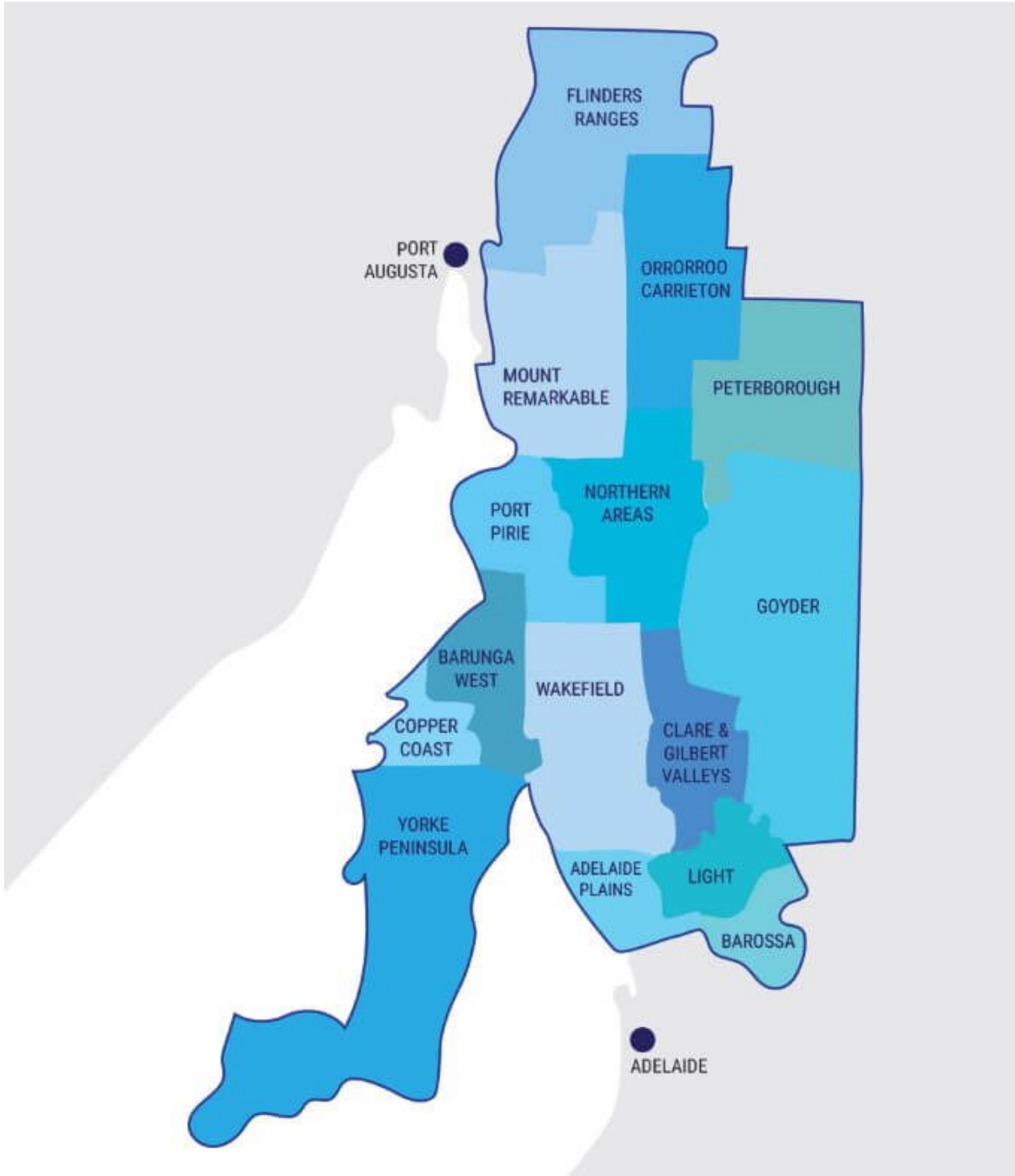


Figure 2: The Legatus Region

Source: Legatus Group 2018a

FINAL REPORT

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

This project was initiated through the Legatus Group and supported by the Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance to develop a project that sought to build towards reconciliation actions in the region, consistent with their Regional RoadMap¹. It is part of an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Adelaide. As part of this project, we agreed to complete a range of pre-identified tasks. These were as follows:

1. To undertake a desk top survey of other RAPs in Australia and the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region.
2. To create a data base of local and representative Aboriginal organisations and people in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region.
3. To create a data base of other stakeholders, including identified staff in the relevant councils and regional organisations who will participate in the planning process.
4. To conduct a demographic/statistical analysis of issues Aboriginal peoples face in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region.
5. To organise and hold a targeted workshop with key stakeholders and Aboriginal peoples to discuss what a RAP looks like, including its feasibility and a strategy for its development.
6. On basis of the above, to develop a draft RAP template relevant for the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region.

In terms of task completion, we successfully undertook a desktop survey of other RAPs, and of different forms of local government reconciliation, in Australia and the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region, which allowed us to identify a range of possible modes and processes of reconciliation. We also successfully undertook a demographic/statistical analysis of the issue face by Aboriginal peoples in the region and engaged with a range of stakeholders to gain an understanding of past and present reconciliation modes, as well as future opportunities. Finally, we successfully held a workshop at the very end of the project, to present our initial results and offer the opportunity to collect final feedback. We did not, however, develop a RAP template, as it became increasingly clear throughout the project that

¹ <https://www.yorkeandmidnorth.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Regional-Roadmap-26-April-v-2-final-low-1.pdf>

this was not feasible. Instead, we talked to different stakeholders about reconciliation to start the conversation and developed raft of principles that may be used as a starting point to progress action on reconciliation planning. We also provide information about the formal RAP process as an addendum.

3. METHODOLOGY

We adopted a qualitative research approach for this project, which is a useful approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and actions of different people and the contexts in which these occur (Bryman 2012). In this section, we provide an overview of how data was collected and analysed and how the validity of our analysis was ensured. Brief consideration is also given to the key challenges we encountered.

3.1 Research Methods

Data Collection: Data was collected in three ways, including: (i) a documentary analysis, (ii) meetings and semi-structured interviews and (iii) a workshop. The documentary analysis included an analysis of census data to create baseline profiles of current issues Aboriginal peoples face in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region, as well as a literature and policy review, to deepen our understanding of these issues and document how reconciliation is enacted in other regions. The meetings and semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of local councils, regional development organisations and Indigenous organisations within the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region, to gain an understanding of how reconciliation is viewed and pursued by different stakeholders. The questions we used to start these conversations are outlined in the Box below. Initial results were shared with these stakeholders during an online workshop and all feedback was recorded, making the workshop an integral part of our data collection and analysis processes.

Box 1: Key research questions used to guide interviews

- How do you define reconciliation?
- What actions have been undertaken, or are about to be undertaken to build reconciliation?
- What would practical reconciliations look like?
- To what extent can reconciliation be resourced into the future?
- What opportunities are in the future for building partnerships and the reconciliation agenda?
- Do you know about the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program led by Reconciliation Australia?
- Are you interested in developing a RAP?

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis was used to code and categorise the results. Thematic analysis permits the identifying of patterned meaning across a data set that provides an answer to the question being investigated (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). It is a flexible method that can be used across methodologies and questions as it assists in understanding people's perceptions, feelings, values and experiences. We took an inductive approach to the analysis in that we let the coding and theme development be indicated by the data, rather than assume anything before beginning. Specifically, we conducted the analysis in five stages, including (i) familiarisation with the data, (ii) searching for themes, (iii) coding, (iv) reviewing and amending themes, and (v) writing up. While we found that there were additional details gathered via the interviews, it is significant that the final analysis revealed that the dominant themes are consistent with the results of the AHP survey - in our analysis, while there were obviously variations due to data type, we were able to discern clear consistency around core themes.

Validity: Triangulation is a common technique adopted within the social science domain to ensure validation of data via cross verification from two or more sources (Heale and Forbes 2013). It allows for the employment and combination of several research methods to investigate the same phenomenon, which creates added confidence in the results (Denzin 1970). To ensure the validity of our results, we utilised three different forms of triangulation, including: (i) method triangulation, (ii) data triangulation and (iii) investigator triangulation.

- *Method triangulation* refers to the use of multiple methods of data collection, which minimises the biases created by individual methods (Salkind 2010). As discussed

above, we used a documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and a workshop to collect data for this project.

- *Data triangulation* refers to the comparison of information generated from different data sources, to corroborate findings by identifying similar messages and patterns (Salkind 2010). In our case, we used a variety of different documents for the document analysis and spoke to a variety of different individuals.
- *Investigator triangulation* refers to the inclusion of multiple investigators in the analysis process, which reduces the influence of individual investigators on the research findings (Salkind 2010). In this case, our team consisted of five people from three different institutions who collected the data and then reviewed the results and agreed on final findings as presented in this report.

In addition, the report was reviewed by the working group and 2 Indigenous reviewers as well as evaluated via a large zoom workshop, which further enhanced the validity of our final findings.

3.2 Constraints

There were three key challenges that we encountered during this project. The first is that COVID-19 made it very difficult to progress field work as we would otherwise have done. Workshops, interviews and meetings were held either by zoom or phone. Contacting Indigenous representatives became additionally problematic due to the fact that many wanted to wait till later to meet face to face, which then elongated the time taken to get the information. Finally, although all councils were contacted multiple times, a number still decided not to participate or simply declined to respond at all. For these reasons, the project took longer than expected.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW: What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is a contested term, which has been defined in a variety of different, and often contradictory, ways. In part, these multiple definitions arise from the widespread use of the term, as reconciliation can be pursued between individuals or between groups (Dwyer 1999) and in post-conflict or settler-colonial contexts (van Zyl 1999; Avruch 2010; Clark et al. 2016). However, as this review demonstrates, even if only one particular form of reconciliation is considered, such as reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in

Australia, there still is widespread disagreement on what reconciliation is and how it is best achieved. Yet before these different perceptions are discussed in more detail, we must briefly turn to the history of reconciliation and its application in different contexts around the world.

Over the last three decades, reconciliation has become an increasingly popular political strategy in post-conflict and settler-colonial societies (Clark et al. 2016). In the former context, this increasing popularity is demonstrated by the growing number of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, which are established instead of war tribunals, to address and overcome the harm and division created by civil wars, genocides or dictatorships (DeMinck 2007; Avruch 2010; Moses 2011). While war tribunals focus on the punishment of perpetrators, TRCs focus on the addressing the needs of victims by recognising their truths and providing them with symbolic and/or material forms of reparations (Avruch 2010). Even though these two aims are not always mutually exclusive, proponents of TRCs argue that the latter is of higher importance if both cannot be pursued simultaneously, as the prosecution of all perpetrators is impossible to achieve after large scale conflicts (Majzub 2002) and because it does not address the harm done by systemic injustice (van Zyl 1999). In post-conflict societies, reconciliation is thus often seen as the better strategy to achieve, or at least work towards, peaceful coexistence.

In settler-colonial societies, the emphasis on addressing the needs of victims rather than punishing perpetrators is even stronger, as the latter is often not even considered (Short 2003). Considering that the conflict of colonialism is ongoing (Strakosch 2016) and that official strategies to address it are usually implemented by settler governments (Corntassel & Holder 2008), it is not surprising that reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and settler descendants is often presented as the only viable option. While the overarching aim, here too, is peaceful coexistence, the specific strategies to promote reconciliation in settler-colonial societies vary across countries (Pratt 2004; Corntassel & Holder 2008) and over time (Reconciliation Australia 2019), and there is considerable disagreement regarding the merits of each of them.

In Australia, the disagreements over individual reconciliation strategies are tied to an underlying debate on what reconciliation is and should be. A review of the academic literature on reconciliation in Australia has identified three competing conceptualisations of

reconciliation, each of which is supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics and public figures. The first of these views conceptualises reconciliation as the reduction of socioeconomic inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Langton 2010), which are seen as the real and immediate causes of Indigenous disadvantage in current day Australia (Pearson 2003; Sutton 2011). Proponents of this view argue for practical steps to be taken by governments and Indigenous communities to enhance the access of Indigenous people to social services and economic opportunities (Langton 2010; Pearson 2010a; Sutton 2011), with the aim to fully integrate them into the wider Australian society and market economy (Pearson 2010b; Sutton 2011). Put simply, reconciliation is seen as the pursuit of economic equality and social unity between individual members of the Australian nation state.

The second dominant view of reconciliation in the Australian context stands in stark contrast to the first. To proponents of this view, reconciliation requires the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty (Short 2012; Finegan 2018) and the protection of cultural diversity (Veracini 2011; Tuck & Yang 2012). This protection includes the maintenance and expansion of economic hybridity, instead of integration (Altman 2012), as well as recognition of Indigenous law and systems of governance (Behrendt & Kelly 2008; Howitt 2010; Altman 2016). Rather than aiming for assimilation, proponents of this conceptualisation of reconciliation thus believe it should aim for greater political equality between officially recognised and distinct sovereign nations.

Proponents of the third dominant view of reconciliation take a more pragmatic approach, by focusing mainly on achievable aims. While some among this group of people go as far as to argue that calls for fundamental socio-political change are a waste of time and even potentially harmful (Reynolds 1997 in Moran 1998; Moses 2010), others perceive such change as theoretically beneficial, but do not consider its absence to be a good enough reason to refuse to engage in imperfect government policies and strategies, as long as their benefits outweigh their costs (O'Donoghue 1997; Dodson 2013). In their view, opportunities for productive political engagement exist even within the limitations of the settler colonial system (Rowse 2010) and reconciliation is best served by making the most of them (O'Donoghue 1997; Dodson 2013). In other words, proponents of this view conceptualise

reconciliation as the gradual pursuit of achievable aims through genuine and ongoing intercultural collaboration.

If there is anything the proponents of these vastly different views of reconciliation agree on, it is the fact that the success of past attempts to achieve reconciliation has been limited (Pearson 2005; Dodson 2007; Short 2008; Gunstone 2009; Sutton 2011). Yet, part of the reason why this is the case may very well be the lack of agreement on what reconciliation is and how it can be promoted. Regarding specific reconciliation strategies, this lack of agreement becomes more likely the more people are involved in them. In the Australian reconciliation literature, the most frequently discussed reconciliation strategies include the work done by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (Sutton 2011; Short 2012; Clark et al. 2017), the pursuit of practical reconciliation by the Howard government (Howard 2000; Dodson 2007; Gunstone 2008) and the ongoing Closing the Gap strategy (Altman et al. 2009; Pearson 2010b; Altman, 2014). Additionally, the most frequently discussed events in the context of Australian reconciliation include the Mabo Decision (O'Donoghue 1997; Pearson 1997; Foley & Anderson 2006), the passing of the Native Title Act (Foley & Anderson 2006; Behrendt & Kelly 2008; Howitt 2010; Langton 2011) and the federal government's official apology to members of the Stolen Generations (Calma 2008; Pearson 2008, Auguste 2010; Dominello 2018). There are also a wide range of initiatives that have been established that promote reconciliation in education (e.g. see <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards>) which [consider pathways to build awareness of Indigenous history at all school levels.](#)

While these examples do, by no means, represent a complete list of all actions that have been taken to promote reconciliation in Australia, they nonetheless demonstrate that reconciliation has mainly been thought of and pursued on a national scale, where agreement is least likely to be achieved.

However, while this change is not yet fully reflected in the academic literature, there has been a growing focus on more local approaches to reconciliation in recent years. One important way in which this growing focus has been realised is through Reconciliation Australia's RAP framework. Once the ten-year term of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation came to an end in 2001, Reconciliation Australia was established to take over with the mandate to continue working towards a 'just, equitable and reconciled Australia' (Reconciliation Australia

2017 p.1). Soon after, in 2006, Reconciliation Australia established their RAP framework (McKinnon 2011) and has been supporting businesses, education institutions, non-governmental organisations and government bodies wishing to collaborate with local Indigenous organisations in their region to develop RAPs ever since (Reconciliation Australia 2020a).

At the time of writing, 516 organisations and institutions across Australia have an active RAP and in South Australia there are 46 RAPs that have been initiated and are in different stages of development. Nationally, there are 41 local governments (Reconciliation Australia 2020b) with active RAPs, seven of those are in South Australia and include the cities of Mount Gambier, Prospect, Adelaide, Port Adelaide-Enfield, Whyalla, Marion and Gawler. Seeing that there are 537 local governments in total (ALGA 2020), the uptake across the sector is still relatively low, even though local governments appear to be in an ideal position to collaborate with local Indigenous communities to develop targeted strategies on a local level. Evidence from Victoria, where local government reconciliation has been researched most extensively, suggests that this low uptake can be attributed to a range of factors, including a lack of awareness about the RAP framework across the local government sector, as well as a lack of clarity regarding the distinct benefits of the framework compared to alternative approaches (McKinnon 2011). Without assuming that developing a RAP is the most appropriate course of action in all contexts, progressing the conversation to increase general awareness and provide guidance to those interested in developing a RAP certainly appears to be beneficial. As part of this project, we have done so in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance region in South Australia, which we introduce in the next section, before we draw on our results to discuss local government reconciliation in the region.

5. THE LEGATUS/YORKE and MID NORTH ALLIANCE REGION

The Legatus Group is a regional local government organisation, which was established to promote the social cohesion and socio-economic wellbeing of its councils and communities (Legatus Group 2018b). The organisation works with several regional partners and its members are the following fifteen councils in South Australia, the Adelaide Plains Council, Light Regional Council, Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council, Orroroo Carrieton District Council, Peterborough District Council, Northern Areas Council, Goyder Regional Council, The Barossa

Council, Mount Remarkable District Council, Barunga West Council, Port Pirie Regional Council, Copper Coast Council, Wakefield Regional Council, Yorke Peninsula Council and The Flinders Ranges Council (Legatus Group 2018c). The Legatus Group region thus refers to the area of land covered by the fifteen local council areas, which overlaps with the lands of six Aboriginal peoples. The Legatus Groups is also part of the Yorke and Mid North Alliance, which is a partnership between the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and Regional Development Australia (RDA) Yorke and Mid North; collectively as the Alliance their Road Map seeks to work towards reconciliation action. In this section, we introduce the area that the report covers, beginning by providing an overview of the Aboriginal countries in the region and of the socio-demographic profiles of each council area. The Legatus Group also have an informal alliance with RDA Barossa Light Gawler Adelaide Plains and RDA Far North.

5.1 Aboriginal Countries in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance Group Region

The Legatus Group region lies on the lands of the Adnyamathanha, Kurna, Narungga, Ngadjuri, Nukunu and Peramangk peoples). This section provides an overview of the geographic boundaries of each Aboriginal country and of which local council areas lie within those geographic boundaries.

Adnyamathanha Country: At the time of European invasion, the area now known as Adnyamathanha country was home to the Wailpi, Guyani, Jadiaura and Pilatapa people (SLSA 2020). Today, descendants of these groups identify as Kuyani-Adnyamathanha, Wailpi-Adnyamathanha, Yadiawarda-Adnyamathanha, Pirlatpa-Adnyamathanha, or simply Adnyamathanha. Together, the Adnyamathanha people are now considered to be the Traditional Owners of the greater Flinders Ranges area (MLT 2020a), which means that the Flinders Ranges council area is located on Adnyamathanha land.

Kurna Country: The Kurna people are the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide Plains. Their lands extend from Crystal Brook in the north to Adelaide in the south, and from Cape Jervis in the west to the Mount Lofty Ranges in the east (Tindale 1974). The Adelaide Plains council area is thus located on Kurna country, and so are parts of the Barossa, Light, Clare and Gilbert Valley and Wakefield council areas.

Narungga Country: The Narungga people, who consisted of the Winderera, Kurnara, Dilpa and Wari clan groups before European invasion, are the Traditional Owners of the Yorke Peninsula (Fleming & O’Connell 1999). Narungga country covers the entire peninsula and extends as far as Port Broughton in the north and the Hummock Range in the east (Tindale 1974). The Yorke Peninsula, Copper Coast and Barunga West council areas are thus located on Narungga county.

Ngadjuri Country: The Ngadjuri people are the Traditional Owners of an area in the mid-north of South Australia, which extends from Angaston and Gawler in the south to the southern Flinders Ranges in the north, and from Crystal Brook in the west to Manna Hill in the east (Tindale 1974; Ngadjuri Nation 2016). The Goyder and Peterborough council areas are thus located on Ngadjuri country, and so are parts of the Light, Barossa, Clare and Gilbert Valleys, Northern Areas and Orroroo Carrieton council areas.

Nukunu Country: The Nukunu people are the Traditional Owners of the Spencer Gulf area. Nukunu country extends from Quorn and Port Augusta in the north to the Broughton River in the south (Tindale 1974; MLT 2020b). The Mount Remarkable and Port Pirie council areas thus lie on Nukunu country, as well as parts of the Northern Areas and Orroroo Carrieton council areas.

Peramangk Country: The Peramangk people are the Traditional Owners of an area of land which is primarily located in the Mount Lofty Ranges, but also extends from the Barossa Valley in the north to Myponga in the southwest and to the Murray River in in the east (Tindale 1974). Part of the Barossa and Light council areas are thus located in Peramangk country.

5.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance Region

To describe the socio-demographic profile of the Legatus Group region, we draw on the most recent census data to provide an overview of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population in each council area, which is followed by an overview of the socio-economic profiles of each area.

5.2.1 Population of the Region

According to the most recent census data, the region has an estimated total population of 137,216 people and an estimated Aboriginal population of 2,798 people, who thus represent 2.04% of the total population (see table 1). Across the region, the Aboriginal population is relatively young, with the 0-14 and 15-29 age cohorts representing 35.7% and 24.7% of the total population respectively, and the 60+ age cohort representation only 8.3% of the total Aboriginal population.

Table 1: Overview of Population in each Council Area

Council	Population	Aboriginal Population	
		No.	%
Adelaide Plains Council	22,063	233	1.06
Light Regional Council	14,736	160	1.09
Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council	9,023	103	1.14
Orroroo Carrieton District Council	896	8	0.89
Peterborough District Council	1,712	105	6.13
Northern Areas Council	4,623	84	1.82
Goyder Regional Council	4,136	73	1.76
Barossa Council	23,558	210	0.89
Mount Remarkable District Council	2,920	88	3.01
Barunga West Council	2,544	54	0.21
Port Pirie Regional Council	17,364	623	3.59
Copper Coast Council	14,139	371	2.62
Wakefield Regional Council	6,803	156	2.29
Yorke Peninsula Council	11,056	304	2.75
Flinders Ranges Council	1,643	226	13.76
Total	137,216	2,798	2.04

Source: ABS, 2016

Table 2: Overview of Age & Gender of the Aboriginal Population in each Council Area

Council	Total	Age					Gender	
		0-14	15-29	30-44	45-59	60+	M	F
Adelaide Plains Council	233	33	90	56	47	7	131	102
Light Regional Council	160	61	49	17	22	11	86	74
Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council	103	39	26	13	18	7	46	57
Orroroo Carrieton District Council	8	8	0	0	0	0	2	6
Peterborough District Council	105	49	17	15	10	14	47	58
Northern Areas Council	84	26	19	9	15	15	45	39
Goyder Regional Council	73	21	17	7	19	9	36	37
Barossa Council	210	79	57	35	20	19	112	98
Mount Remarkable District Council	88	27	13	12	23	13	48	40
Barunga West Council	54	18	15	12	9	0	32	22
Port Pirie Regional Council	623	141	90	54	56	30	173	198
Copper Coast Council	371	264	158	94	76	31	287	336
Wakefield Regional Council	156	59	37	23	28	9	82	74
Yorke Peninsula Council	304	100	51	43	66	44	158	146
Flinders Ranges Council	226	75	51	33	45	22	94	132
Total	2798	1000	690	423	454	231	1379	1419

Source: ABS, 2016

5.2.2 Socio-Economic Profiles of Local Council Areas in the Region

Even though reconciliation, to most people, is about more than the reduction of Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage (see section 4), the aim has nonetheless been an important part of the Australian reconciliation process from the very beginning (Australian Government 1991; Altman 2016). Despite ongoing efforts in the name of Practical Reconciliation and, more recently, Closing the Gap (Altman et al. 2009), the most recent census data still revealed that the rate of unemployment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 18% in 2016, which is significantly higher than the overall Australian unemployment rate of 6.9%, and the South Australian unemployment rate of 7.5% at the time. Similarly, none of the targets in the areas of health, education and housing have yet been reached (DPMC 2019), which means that the reduction of Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage remains an important part of the Australian reconciliation process today (Reconciliation Australia 2018). To gain an understanding of the context in which strategies to work towards this aim might be implemented in the region, this subsection provides an overview of the socio-economic profiles of the fifteen council areas in the region.

The estimated unemployment rate in the region was 6.6% in 2016 and thus lower than the Australian and South Australian unemployment rates at the time (ABS 2016). However, there was, and likely still is, a lot of variation between council areas. Out of all council areas, the Peterborough District Council had the highest overall unemployment rate (13.5%) and it was also the council with the lowest percentage of the population (3.1%) in the high income (\$1,750 or more per week) group and highest population (55.9%) in the low income (\$500 or less per week) group in the region.

In contrast, the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council had the lowest overall unemployment rate (3.6%) and the Light Regional Council had the highest percentage of the population (8.8%) in the high income (\$1,750 or more per week) group. Similarly, the Peterborough District Council had the lowest score (804), while the Light Regional Council had the highest score on the SEIFA index (996), which provides insights into the relative socio-economic disadvantage of an area, with a higher score indicating a lower level of disadvantage and vice versa.

Table 3: Overview of Socio-Economic Profiles of each Council Area

Council	Unemployment (%)	Income Group (%)		SEIFA Index
		High (>\$1750)	Low (<\$500)	
Adelaide Plains Council	7.0	6.2%	39.8%	1058
Light Regional Council	5.3	8.8%	37.6%	996
Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council	3.6	7.2%	38.6%	976
Orroroo Carrieton District Council	4.8	7.4%	43.6%	977
Peterborough District Council	13.5	3.1%	55.9%	804
Northern Areas Council	4.7	6.7%	43.3%	961
Goyder Regional Council	6.2	4.4%	47.1%	934
Barossa Council	4.6	8.5%	37.7%	987
Mount Remarkable District Council	5.6	6.0%	45.5%	965
Barunga West Council	5.9	6.9%	46.6%	934
Port Pirie Regional Council	10.8	6.3%	48.0%	873
Copper Coast Council	8.8	5.0%	47.5%	898
Wakefield Regional Council	6.3	4.9%	42.5%	915
Yorke Peninsula Council	5.7	5.1%	48.2%	931
Flinders Ranges Council	6.5	6.2%	43.4%	921

Source: ABS, 2016

6. RESULTS

One of the aims in this project was been to determine what efforts are currently undertaken by local government and their regional partners in the Legatus Group region to pursue reconciliation and what opportunities exist to expand these efforts. In this section, we present

our findings. We begin with an overview of the different modes of local government reconciliation that exist in Australia, which is followed by detailed overviews of how reconciliation is perceived by different stakeholders in the region, what efforts these stakeholders have undertaken to promote reconciliation to date and what efforts they perceive to be both beneficial and feasible in the future.

6.1 Local Government Reconciliation across Australia

To gain an understanding of the different ways in which reconciliation can be promoted by local governments across the country, a comparison of all states and territories was conducted. Firstly, the development of RAPs by local governments in every state and territory was compared. Secondly, as a comparison of all individual reconciliation actions undertaken by all local governments across the country was not feasible within the parameters of this project, a review of state- and territory-based research and initiatives to promote local government reconciliation was conducted. This includes analysis of legislation and acts, such as the NRM Act or Heritage legislation, which have a requirement to consult with Aboriginal people. The aim of this review was to gain an understanding of how the role of local government in the promotion of reconciliation is perceived in every state and territory and what initiatives or resources exist, in addition to RAPs, to support those interested in engaging in the process.

6.1.1 Comparison of RAP Uptake by Local Governments across Australia

A comparison of the number of local governments with a current RAP to the total number of local governments in every state and territory with separate local governments has shown that the uptake ranges from 3% in Tasmania and Queensland to 10% in Victoria (see table 4). These numbers demonstrate that while there is some variation across states and territories, the overall uptake of RAPs by local governments remains low across the country.

Table 4: Comparison of RAP Uptake in Australian States and Territories

State/Territory	Number of LGs	Number of LGs with RAPs	Percentage of LGs with RAPs
ACT	NA	NA	NA
NSW	128	12	9%
NT	17	1	6%
QLD	78	2	3%
SA	68	6	8%
TAS	29	1	3%
VIC	79	8	10%
WA	139	10	7%
Australia	538	40	7%

Sources: DLCSC 2020a; LGASA 2020; LGAT 2020; LGNSW 2020; Northern Territory Government 2020; Queensland Government 2019; Reconciliation Australia 2020b; State of Victoria 2015

6.1.2 Comparison of Local Government Reconciliation Research and Initiatives across Australia

In addition to the development of RAPs, local government reconciliation in Australia has been promoted through various initiatives and research projects. The following paragraphs provide summaries of key local government reconciliation initiatives and research that have been conducted in every state and territory to date.

Australian Capital Territory: As the ACT has no separate local government, the functions normally performed by local government are performed by the Territory Government instead. For this reason, initiatives and events run by the ACT government were taken into consideration. The most notable of these include the establishment of the ACT Reconciliation Council, which provides advice to the Territory Government regarding effective strategies for community engagement and reconciliation events, such as Reconciliation Day (Community Services 2020). Reconciliation Day has been turned into a public holiday in the ACT in 2018 with the aim to allow ‘all Canberrans to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia’ (Midena 2019 p.1).

New South Wales: In NSW, the role local governments can play in the promotion of reconciliation has been officially recognised by various government associations and departments. To support local governments that are interested in developing locally driven engagement strategies, a resource kit was developed in 2007, which provides them with an overview of all relevant legislation and policy frameworks in NSW, as well as descriptions of

council responsibilities and opportunities for the inclusion of local Aboriginal groups in the strategic planning of local councils (LGNSW et al. 2017). In addition, a formal partnership between the NSW Reconciliation Council (representing local reconciliation groups) and Local Government NSW (representing local governments) was established in 2016 with the aim to 'promote greater engagement in reconciliation and the local council level' (LGNSW & NSWRC 2016 p.2).

Northern Territory: The role local governments can play in the promotion of reconciliation is often not explicitly discussed in the context of the NT. With the exception of an Acknowledgement of Country guide published by the Territory Government in 2010 (Northern Territory Government 2010), no specific resources to support this role were found. However, compared to many other states, there appears to be a greater emphasis on current forms of and opportunities for local and regional forms of Indigenous self-governance (Smith 2004; Sanders & Holcombe 2008; ACELG 2012). In terms of power sharing, self-governance goes far beyond community engagement and initiatives like RAPs, which suggests that such strategies are not the only way in which reconciliation can be promoted and that they are not necessarily the most appropriate choice in all contexts.

Queensland: In QLD, the need for local approaches to reconciliation, including approaches led by local governments, is officially recognised by the State Government (Queensland Government 2018). To support such approaches, the 'Celebrating Reconciliation Small Grants Program' was established to provide funds to local organisations, including local governments, who are interested in implementing them (DATSIP 2020a; DATSIP 2020b). In addition, self-governance in remote areas also exists in QLD, where Indigenous councils have officially been recognised as local government authorities since 2009 (ACELG 2012), suggesting again that different strategies are most appropriate in different contexts.

South Australia: While several reconciliation initiatives exist in SA, many do not focus specifically on the role of local governments (DPC 2019a). By far the most active local government has been the Adelaide City Council, which has carried out several reconciliation initiatives, including the establishment of a Reconciliation Committee in 2002 to promote reconciliation in the city (City of Adelaide 2020a), the organisation of annual of NAIDOC celebrations, the establishment of a reconciliation room in the Adelaide Town Hall, the

development of their Aboriginal Employment Policy and Action Plan and their Community Development Grants Program (City of Adelaide 2020b). Additional reconciliation efforts undertaken by other councils and organisations in SA include a preferred Acknowledgement of Country guide published by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DSDAAR 2015; DPC 2019b) and a report commissioned by the City of Charles Sturt, which provides a series of specific recommendations regarding ways in which this particular council can recognise and include Kaurna culture and history in public spaces (Tefler & Malone 2011). Moreover, a workshop for local government staff was planned by Reconciliation Australia in 2019 (LGASA 2019), however, no information could be located to determine with certainty whether this workshop occurred and if it did, what its main focus was.

Tasmania: Other than the development of a RAP by the City of Hobart (City of Hobart 2020), minimal efforts have been made to promote local government reconciliation in TAS. The only additional information that could be located was a Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Australians made by Glenorchy City Council in 2001 (ANTS 2011).

Victoria: Across Australia, by far the most research and initiatives specifically addressing local government reconciliation have been conducted in VIC. As early as 2001, a 'Local Government Indigenous Communities Survey' was conducted in the state, which provided the baseline for a research project in 2011 and a state-wide survey in 2012. The research project specifically explored the benefits and shortcomings of RAPs and the experiences of local councils that are developing them (McKinnon 2011). It illustrated how engagement with RAPs can tie local government into a range of commitments, while exposing in what areas, local government still need more work. One of its recommendations was the state-wide survey of all local government activities to promote reconciliation, as well as perceived barriers to greater engagement, which was completed by 95% of all local councils in the following year (Reconciliation Victoria 2012). Moreover, a Local Government Aboriginal Partnerships project was run from 2011 to 2015, which included targeted consultations with Aboriginal communities and led to the development of state-wide Local Government Aboriginal Partnership Principles, the Maggolee website the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan (Reconciliation Victoria 2019). While the latter provides an overarching framework that connects and supports councils and Aboriginal communities across Victoria (State of Victoria 2016), the Maggolee website provides valuable resources to local councils

wishing to work more closely with Aboriginal communities in their region (Reconciliation Victoria 2020). Furthermore, the Municipal Association of Victoria is currently running an Aboriginal employment project, which aims to increase the local government employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in all 79 local councils (MAV 2020) and suggestions have been made regarding the potential use of the *Local Government Act* to pursue more substantive forms of reconciliation in addition to all past and present efforts (Landau-Ward et al. 2018).

Western Australia: In WA, several research projects and initiatives promoting local government reconciliation have been conducted. Specifically, important initiatives include the annual Reconciliation Week Street Banner project that many local governments engage in (DLGSC 2020b), the development of Regional Aboriginal Consultation Guidelines outlining when, why and how to conduct consultations (EMRC 2013), the cultural awareness and capacity training provided to local government staff by the Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA 2018), as well as a workshop run by Reconciliation WA on the steps local governments can take to promote reconciliation (Innes & Smith 2019). In addition, two research projects have been conducted to improve local government service delivery in remote parts of WA, which emphasise the benefits of the employment of Aboriginal staff, the provision of cultural awareness training for non-Aboriginal staff, active community engagement and the development of collaborative modes of service delivery (Morris et al. 2010; ACELG 2012). While neither project specifically mentions reconciliation, both support the previous point that partnerships and engagement are best achieved in different ways in different contexts.

6.1.3 Implications for Local Government Reconciliation in South Australia

Compared to other states and territories, moderate efforts have gone into the promotion of local government reconciliation in South Australia. However, as there is still a need for further reconciliation actions even in the state with the greatest efforts thus far (Landau-Ward et al. 2018), there certainly is a need in South Australia too. Importantly, experiences from the NT, QLD and WA demonstrate that there are many ways through which engagement with Indigenous peoples can be achieved on a local government level and the development of RAPs is not always the most appropriate course of action (Smith 2004; Sanders & Holcombe 2008;

Morris et al. 2010; ACELG 2012). However, in cases with little current engagement, the RAP framework provides opportunities to start the conversation between local stakeholders and to collaboratively develop goals and strategies to work towards these goals (McKinnon 2011). To determine the usefulness of developing RAPs across the region, it is thus necessary to gain an understanding of what forms of engagement already exist and what forms of engagement are generally seen as most beneficial by different stakeholders.

6.2 Local Government Reconciliation in the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Regional Alliance Region

This section summarises the results of our document and web site analysis, stakeholder interviews and workshop. We then present the results of the thematic analysis. In so doing have decided not to be specific about which group/council said what, as that seemed to mitigate against the spirit of reconciliation. However, there were clear themes and narratives that we relay here. The results clearly show that while there is a very different perception of what reconciliation is and opinions varied as to whether or not it is occurring between Indigenous and local government respondents, there was a willingness overall to engage with the idea of reconciliation per se. While there is still a long way to go before reconciliation is embedded as practice within the region, the conversation has begun.

6.2.1 Perceptions of Reconciliation in the Region

As demonstrated in section 4, there are multiple, and often contradictory, views on what reconciliation is. For this reason, any attempt to promote reconciliation needs to start by establishing what reconciliation means to all those involved. In this subsection, we present an overview of how reconciliation is currently perceived by local governments and their regional partners, as well as different Aboriginal organisations in the region. One of the key questions sought to understand how different people understood reconciliation per se. As the Box below shows, there is a wide range of views around what this meant. However, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, there were some common themes – talking together emerged as very important, as well as being open and willing to build trusting relationships. The importance of acknowledging the past, telling the truth about history and taking responsibility were other key themes.

Definitions of Reconciliation

“Reconciliation is friendship“

“It’s having a conversation with Indigenous people in your community to work together for the future“

“Providing opportunities of meaningful conversations to raise/address issues“

“Effecting cultural change and involving Indigenous peoples very early on in the decision making process“

“Inclusiveness, awareness, accessibility“

“Acknowledging the country and traditional owners, their history“

“Being open/willing to accommodate Indigenous concerns“

“Understanding the history - the good, the bad, the ugly“

“Setting the path for collaborations into the future“

“Better relationships“

“Actually, putting some action into planning “

“Proper engagement that is broad, holistic and inter-generational“

“Learning the true history of Australia, stop saying I wasn’t there, it’s not my fault“

“Working together, working as one“

“Its local governments leading, initiating not waiting for them to come to us“

6.2.2 Synthesis of themes about the issue of reconciliation: Local Governments and Regional Partners

Consistent with the quotes above, there were a number of ways in which reconciliation was described by councils, the RDAs and staff from the Landscape Board. The following sections summarise the key themes that arose in discussion with participants about their views on reconciliation, what it looks like, and what appetite there is to progress it in the region.

Equality

A predominant theme was the assertion of reconciliation being about establishing equal rights. This was articulated as being about the creation of equal opportunities, and two-way respect. Practical ideas around how to operationalise this aspiration included inviting Indigenous peoples to be part of committees, to do the welcome to country and to be

employed in various capacities. It is important to differentiate between a welcome to, and acknowledgement of country. Participants reflected on how it would be possible to bring equity and equality together.

Overcoming racism

Many participants believed that overcoming racism and discrimination a key tenet of achieving reconciliation. Many referred to the Black Lives matter movement and a few stated they believed racism was entrenched and needed a lot of work to resolve. In this context, the need to acknowledge and teach Australia's history, and not be afraid to acknowledge it was an invasion, was presented as a first step towards reconciliation. However, there was also a positive assertion by many that 'we are no longer strangers', and participants reflected on the importance of working together, building friendships and having safe spaces within which to share each other's hurts, histories and to build new links into the future.

Two way

Many participants couched their responses in the context of 'two way' learning or interaction. Many council participants in particular felt they were willing to be involved in reconciliation actions but that they needed to be guided by Indigenous peoples in their area and that this should be two way – an interaction between Indigenous peoples and themselves.

We will take all ideas on board, but not do them without Indigenous permission and support (LG participant 2020)

We continually make it clear we are willing and open to engage but we won't direct what it should look like, it's a matter of waiting so they can let us know what they would like us to do... (LG participant 2020)

In other words, they felt it is "not just something white people have to do". 'Two way' was used as a term to express positive and ongoing relations with regard to knowledge sharing, inclusiveness in each other's business, mutual respect and two-way learning. Two-way processes are also about *sharing* not *separating* the problem so it becomes 'us and them'. It is about acknowledging that "reconciliation is *our* journey and that our collective history is

our problem” (LG participant 2020). It is about working out what a culturally safe space looks like. Two way learning and conversations were constructed as being not just about welcoming Indigenous peoples into what is in effect a foreign Eurocentric space, but also working out how to have these conversations in culturally responsive ways.

Engagement

Business Engagement and Employment

Reconciliation was also constructed as a form of ongoing engagement with Indigenous peoples. As such it was discussed as a means by which to include Indigenous peoples into regional business. While some institutions expressed a dynamic and current engagement with the Indigenous peoples in their region (e.g. Port Pirie, Flinders Ranges and Landscape Board), many, when questioned did not know of any Indigenous person they could contact. For example, Flinders Council has actively employed Aboriginal people in tourism, bush food, health and stockman positions. Port Pirie has an Aboriginal Activation group and works successfully with Indigenous people in the region.

Who to engage?

The dilemma of who to approach to engage with Indigenous interests was an issue for many Councils. Many participants pointed out that they wanted to engage Indigenous people but simply did not know who to approach. In particular, many reflected that it would be good to know who to talk to and specifically, where traditional owners from their region lived now. While some respondents had worked with Indigenous organisations and/or individuals in the past, some did not know who Traditional Owners of their region are, others knew who the Traditional Owners are, but didn't know any organisations and/or individuals.

Many expressed a lack of knowledge about who to contact and how to go about it. Further, many used the fact that Indigenous people had been moved out of the region, and therefore were not, in their view living in the area now, as a rationale for why they did not have a current relationship or knowledge of who to contact². In addition, discussions revealed that most participants felt that it was not their responsibility to initiate

² Note that for Indigenous respondents this situation was easily explained by the history of dispossession and colonization but did not mean Aboriginal peoples were not present.

engagement, but that they were very happy to respond if Indigenous individuals/groups came to them:

We have a lot of things to do and would prefer to support but not be in the driver's seat, rather see others run initiatives, but if nobody will, we'll step up.

Others noted that effort could be put into finding out who the different Indigenous groups were, with one participant suggesting that councils follow family names to develop new contacts.

What does it look like in practice?

When asked this question, some participants made some strong statements, which are reproduced below as they sum up some of the key themes well:

Providing an opportunity for meaningful conversation to raise and address issues.

There is a lack of voice, places to be heard for local Aboriginal people. Reconciliation shows we are committed to hearing the voice and acting on the issues raised (Landscape Board participant 2020).

Reconciliation is about effecting cultural change. And early on – early in the decision-making process. We need to hear Indigenous voices and ideas around how to operationalise how to do it, ingrain it in all parts of our business, increase awareness of our people and their connection to land (RDA participant 2020).

Reconciliation is about inclusiveness, accessibility and awareness. Recognising identity, a sense of identity – who we are, as a broader collective of people (Legatus participant 2020).

However, in more pragmatic ways, as the project progressed, it became clear that for Councils, outside of flying the Aboriginal Flag, NAIDOC work and some commitment to Indigenous representation on committees and employment, that most participants were at a loss as to what they should do to demonstrate reconciliation in practice. For some councils, this was not really seen as a problem as reconciliation is not a priority but for many participants, they seemed willing to contribute and do something, but also a bit of a loss as to what that should look like. A few mentioned this held them back from doing anything as they feared doing 'the wrong thing'.

Resourcing Reconciliation

As noted, almost all participants appeared willing to be responsive to and progress Indigenous aspirations. However, it became very clear that most Councils were not planning to do anything into the future, and moreover, that resources to do so were very stretched. Most Council staff were amenable to the idea of groups working together so as to consolidate resources. Others suggested other mechanisms that may help resource reconciliation including supporting passionate staff members willing to put in time to support initiatives, applying for grants on behalf of/with Indigenous peoples, accessing monies from key initiatives such as the drought or community grants. Participants reflected that there were opportunities for structural reform however, that could occur without needing additional resourcing. This is an important component of reconciliation – relationship building and doesn't need money *per se* but may be exercised via capacity building and assistance to Aboriginal organisations in terms of mentoring, sharing views, skills etc – the establishment of reciprocal benefit sharing approaches.

6.2.3 Synthesis of themes about the issue of reconciliation: Indigenous peoples

Acknowledging the past and raising awareness

All Indigenous participants spoke about the need to acknowledge the past, and to build on that to work to a future together. By this they meant to acknowledge the past invasion of the British of Australia, to understand the hurt caused by days such as Australia Day and to acknowledge the legacy of and continuing impacts of colonisation today. Some spoke about the need for councils and others to be more active about and seek contact with them, noting that there are reasons why they are often not actually living in the region anymore:

Lets understand the past, connecting to the reason why Aboriginal people are not around, haven't been physically here in the region the past 100 years. Understanding that process, leading by example, will go a long way to promote reconciliation (Aboriginal Participant 2020).

A number of Indigenous participants noted that they felt non- Indigenous people/council staff were scared: scared of offending, scared of Indigenous peoples and scared of being wrong. They noted that there was no need to feel this way, and that we all have another

opportunity before us – to talk to each other and without fear. As one participant noted, being scared is just about not knowing what to do where to start. Just start: “ co-existence is not about us living on one side and others on the other - living peacefully and respectfully with each other, respect each other for what we are” (Aboriginal participant 2020).

Equity

The need to be equitable was articulated often as being a central part of achieving reconciliation for Indigenous peoples. Many Indigenous participants reflected on the inherent inequalities in the regions and expressed the fact they felt excluded from regional processes, and overlooked in favour of others. For example, one participant noted that councils and governments are willing to service religious groups and different cultural groups by actively making policy to allow them their own cultural centres, foods, and dress at work and in public places, but that there were no active provisions made in a similar vein for Indigenous cultures.

Being responsive – moving from reluctance to relevance

Many Indigenous participants expressed frustration at why they perceived was a reluctance on behalf of local government and others to engage with them fully and properly – as one person said – we need to move from reluctance to relevance. By this they meant that local governments need to validate Aboriginal knowledge, move beyond tick boxes, and undertake reconciliation actions that are relevant and show pro-active willing to engage. A number of participants actively articulated they felt their local government had not responded to them at all, despite being actively invited by various native title organisations to ‘come and have a yarn’. This quote sums this issue up well:

While Aboriginal communities often feel governments are not listening, local councils often feel like the next level up is not listening to them either. Maybe if we work together, we can get more people to listen (LG participant 2020)

Others felt Councils just ignored them due to lack of knowledge about what to do. Others noted they felt Councils did their best, but needed more education to ensure that reconciliation is not just about ‘words’ or ‘tokenistic’ actions, but was about showing Indigenous people’s commitment via tangible actions (over and above flying the flag and acknowledgment of country). Suggestions included investment in Aboriginal employment, ensuring full and public acknowledgement of their country and peoples, involvement in and membership of governance at all levels, more support services for Indigenous peoples in the regions. Overall, Indigenous participants urged a reconciliation process that went beyond tokenism: “you got to move past the tick box” (Indigenous participant 2020).

Truth Telling

Related to this theme was the reiteration by many Indigenous participants of the need to 'tell the truth' and acknowledge the past was very important. Participants reflected that it was not good enough to simply say "I wasn't there, and so it's not my fault". Being responsive required taking responsibility for the past and being open about communicating the story of that past 'the truth' to children in schools and to the wider public:

People divorce themselves. They say, I wasn't her 150 years ago...well that's not an excuse! It's up to you to rectify injustices, *you* are in the position of power (Indigenous participant 2020).

This discussion revealed that many sites of conflict have never been properly documented, or where those sites are. Respondents argued that this lack of documentation is part of the erasure of the history of colonial conflict. Truth telling thus requires getting people out there, telling people about things like massacre sites, recording them as sites on the register, and have signage about them put up. Bowman Park in Crystal Brook was referred to as a classic example: the Bowman name has a dark history, and was known as a family of local head hunters in the region. It is history that is not known widely and is hidden. Further generally, it is the histories of all those groups that need to be told, people from those groups taken away from their families, children, and many never repatriated, those removed, re-homed to white families, killed or assimilated,: respondents reflected that local governments need to come to terms with this, engage with this past, so as to be able to engage better in more culturally responsive ways.

Indigenous participants made a call to local governments in particular to prepare materials that would tell their story to others. They also advocated the need to prepare narratives that were both honest about the past but positive about the future:

We got to find language that relates to building imagination and hope. Moving us all from reluctance to relevance (Aboriginal participant 2020)

Some participants stated that the production of this document in itself was a beginning in the process of truth telling. Truth telling was also characterised as being able to talk together

about what has occurred, why it occurred, and how to reach out, find and connect with those who have been removed from country, and no longer live in the region.

Lead by example

The need for councils (in particular) to lead by example was reiterated often by Indigenous participants. Many felt they should not have to initiate contact but that it was important that Councils approached them, and invested in reconciliation, not wait to be asked to do something. The initiation or reaching out by councils in itself was seen as a first step towards reconciliation. In this context RAPS were seen to provide an opportunity to start this conversation:

RAPS create the permission to actually be a friend. To stand in a corner on a street, and chat about business. People seeing that interaction as a normal way of life. Not a power imbalance but just as two people and cultures talking to one another and accepted (Aboriginal participant 2020).

6.2.4 Past, Present and Future Reconciliation Actions in the Region

In addition to understanding different views on reconciliation, past, present, and planned future actions need to be determined too, to be able to build on the efforts and relationships that already exist. In this subsection, we present the reconciliation actions that local governments and their regional partners in the region have undertaken, are undertaking and are currently planning. This is followed by an overview of the resources and the relationships that can be drawn on to extend these actions. Finally, we discuss how these actions are viewed by different Aboriginal organisations/individuals in the region.

This section summarises our analysis of the various reconciliation actions that have been taken by local governments and others in the region. It is a combination of an analysis of the web sites of each local government in the region (Tables 5 and 6), as well as reflection/synthesis of themes that emerged in the interviews.

Table 5: Local government breakdown of Reconciliation or Efforts to with Aboriginal groups in the Legatus/ Yorke and Mid North Region (web site analysis)

Goyder	Conservation Management plan, included reconciliation division in stakeholder engagement. Acknowledgement of country at meetings
Clare and Gilbert Valleys	- NAIDOC Event in Clare Town Hall, organised by NRM Indigenous Advisory group
Barossa	- Acknowledgement of country: “The Barossa Council acknowledges the Ngadjuri, Peramangk and Kurna people and their ancestral connection to land and pays respects to Elders past, present and emerging.” Aboriginal Health team – volunteering for distinct Aboriginal Roles -The Barossa, Light and Northern Region Public Health and Well being Plan -Reconciliation Barossa – Partnership for Bushland Gardens, Barossa Reconciliation Group – hosted NAIDOC and other events, holds meeting in Council
Adelaide Plains	-Road and Public naming policy: “Councils should identify the relevant Aboriginal people group for their area and the acknowledged tribal elders or community representatives for this purpose. It would be preferable for Councils to identify an agreed list of appropriate names which can be drawn on, as required” -Library staff were successful in receiving funds (totalling \$1,200) from the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week Grant. 12 July 2019, children and their parents, carers and grandparents learnt traditional aboriginal craft skills from Marra Dreaming indigenous artists. Basket weaving, dot painting on placemats and, on a larger scale, painting on canvases were the activities enjoyed by all.
Yorke Peninsula	-The Yorke Peninsula Council is a member of the Southern Yorke Community Partnership (SYCP) Steering Group. The SYCP was formed after the Southern Yorke Peninsula Partnership of public schools held a Community Partnerships Planning forum in late 2014 -They have an Aboriginal services directory - Southern Yorke Peninsula Partnership of DECD; Point Pearce Aboriginal School
Copper Coast	- Work with Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (NAPA) - <i>Past directs future</i> as Lesley Wanganeen tells of Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (NAPA) work to rediscover and celebrate heritage and culture through a range of innovative community projects. These include the commercial propagation and planting of traditional bush tucker foods and the recording of history and language. Buthera's Rock Story has been recorded in written form and is being used by the Toundi Aboriginal College to teach respect for the land to school children throughout the state. -Greening Australia is working with NAPA to establish commercial bush tucker trial sites. Yvonne Latham, 1999 ANTA Aboriginal Student of the

	<p>Year and a student of the Spencer TAFE is employed by CSRIO to develop site trials in Moonta. The Narungga community is investing heavily in education and training. There are proposals for the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Moonta and the establishment of a Coastal Bush Tucker Interpretive Trail between Moonta Bay and Port Hughes.</p>
Wakefield	<p>-Do acknowledgement of country: “We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we are meeting upon here today. We acknowledge the Kurna, Ngadjuri and Narungga people as the traditional custodians of the Wakefield Regional Council area. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to Country. We also pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal peoples visiting or attending from other areas of Australia present today”.</p> <p>-Flag management: allowing for the flying of Aboriginal flag - “we acknowledge Australia’s indigenous people by ensuring the Aboriginal flag is also flown at the Civic Centre as a further symbol of recognition and respect for Aboriginal Culture”</p> <p>-The Ngadjuri, Narungga, Nukunu and Kurna and people are acknowledged as the traditional custodians of the Yorke and Mid North region: https://www.wrc.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0022/362623/2-SMP-Review-2018-2017_2022.pdf</p> <p>“We acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal peoples as the state’s first peoples and nations and recognise that their spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices come from their traditional lands and waters; and that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance; and acknowledge that the Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters”</p>
Port Pirie	<p>-Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery Exhibition Showcasing Aboriginal Arts 23rd January 2020: <i>Manggan – gather, gathers, gathering</i>, the first national touring exhibition of contemporary works by award-winning artists from the Girringun Aboriginal Arts Centre, Cardwell, QLD.</p> <p>-Aboriginal Art Trail – NAIDOC Week We encourage you to walk the Aboriginal Art Trail in Port Pirie that has been established as part of NAIDOC Week.</p> <p>-Aboriginal Community Action Group - An Aboriginal Community Action Group (ACAG) has formed to create a committee of inaugural Aboriginal leaders for the Port Pirie Regional Council area. This committee aims to break down significant barriers, represent the local Aboriginal communities and seek grant funding for a range of exciting projects.</p> <p>Community Plan 2016 – 2025 – “Recognise and value the enduring culture and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as traditional custodians of the land, and improve community wellbeing through active engagement and reconciliation”.</p> <p>-Tarpari Wellbeing Day, by the Port Pirie Regional Health Service Aboriginal Health Team</p>
Northern Areas	<p>-On the ‘About’ page of website: “The Northern Areas Council is situated in the heartland of the Southern Flinders Ranges, approximately 200 kilometres north of Adelaide and within the traditional lands of the Ngadjuri Aboriginal people.” https://nacouncil.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Road%20and%20Public%20Place%20Naming.pdf</p> <p>-Name Sources: for road names may include Aboriginal names taken from the local Aboriginal language; and statement that the local Aboriginal community</p>

	will be consulted when choosing Aboriginal names or using words from relevant Aboriginal languages
Mount Remarkable	-Northern Passenger Transport Network committee meeting 3 December 2019. -A commitment to target Aboriginal people over 50 for social appointments (Commonwealth Funding), and for medical (Commonwealth Funding)
Orroroo Carrieton	-Had program that engaged children with Aboriginal Art etc. -Tourism information provided on Aboriginal carvings - Multicultural and Aboriginal experiences mentioned as attractions
Flinders Ranges	-Celebrates NAIDOC -There is an Aboriginal Art Gallery -Cultural guiding available in region including to Wakarla Glass Gorge, Aboriginal Story Telling and Aboriginal Cultural Tours at Wilpena Pound Wilpena Road, Hawker, Flinders Ranges -Adnyamathanha guides at Wilpena Pound Resort deliver unique and memorable Aboriginal experiences to visitors to the Flinders Ranges, South Australia. -Far North Region Plan, A volume of the Planning Strategy: the Plan is further underpinned by 19 overarching principles and associated policies including to identify and protect sites with Aboriginal Cultural significance -Council commits to employment of Aboriginal people in the region
Barunga West	-Identify reconciliation and working with Narungga people as a policy in relation to Council Services

Table 6: Summary of reconciliation actions by NRM and Local Government Association of South Australia

Landscape Board (NRM)
<p>-An Aboriginal Engagement Officer position -Aboriginal Partnerships Program</p> <p>Its Aboriginal Partnerships program supports a small, yet innovative employment and training program in conjunction with the principle partner, the Aboriginal Lands Trust. This began as the Aboriginal Learning on Country program and is now known as Aboriginal Lands Trust NRM Services. It supports young Aboriginal people to complete Certificate IV programs in Conservation and Land Management and develop their own self-sustaining contracting service. The Aboriginal Partnerships Program builds the cultural competency and awareness of staff to work respectfully and inclusively with traditional owners and Aboriginal communities. This is done through formal training sessions and by providing positive experiences and places for staff to come together with traditional owners and Aboriginal communities to share knowledge, stories and discuss what's important to all of us.</p> <p>-Co-management of national parks with traditional owners -Department for Environment and Water's Aboriginal partnerships information -Department for Environment and Water's Reconciliation Action Plan</p> <p>-Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2012-2015 - a revision of this strategy will be released soon.</p>

-An Aboriginal Engagement Committee (AEC) has existed within the Northern & Yorke Region since the adoption of the *Natural Resource Management Act* in 2004, with recent recommendations to include First Nations representatives on this committee. Other AEC Recommendations (2020) include: (i) Aboriginal First Nation communities fully appreciate the geographic and diverse nature of the work of the Landscape Board and the various constraints they operate under (ii) Landscape Board to develop a greater understanding of land management issues on Aboriginal land and the constraints Aboriginal communities have in dealing with these issues, (iii) to assist Aboriginal communities get to see the land management issues of other First Nations, (iv) develop strategic capabilities of First Nations

Local Government Association South Australia

Although the LGA SA does not as yet have a RAP, they have started discussions about this. In addition they have been active in promoting Indigenous interests, what other LGAs have been doing in terms of reconciliation and in progressing some of their own initiatives. These include:

- Promoted Reconciliation SA Apology Breakfast 2019
- Reconciliation SA workshop 2019
- Promotion of Reconciliation Week 2019

The interviews also revealed that a number of other actions have been attempted by local councils and others in the region. These include

- Acknowledgement of country (most LGs)
- Flying the Aboriginal flag (most LGs)
- Organisation of community events (NAIDOC week, Aboriginal art trail, Aboriginal art exhibitions) (LG x5)
- Participation in community events organised by others (a few LG)
- Organisation of community events (movie nights, NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Week...) (RDA, few LOG)
- Collaborations with local Aboriginal organisations for specific projects (creation of digital database for historic photos) (1LG)
- Support for commercial/business opportunities for Indigenous people (RDA, LG x2)
- Re-ignition and ongoing support of local reconciliation group (RDA. LG 1, Landscape Board)
- Employment of Aboriginal staff (LG x3)
- Giving Aboriginal names to roads/public places (LG x2)

- Support local reconciliation group (LG x1)
- Creation of an Aboriginal community action group by council to establish collaboration, improve representation and facilitate grant applications (LG 1)
- Promotion of cultural tourism opportunities on council website (LG 2)
- Inclusion of protection of culturally significant sites in council plans (LG1)

6.2.5. Future Reconciliation Actions Planned by Local Governments and Regional Partners

One of the questions we asked all participants was what plans they have to further promote reconciliation in the future. A wide range of ideas was generated across the board. One idea was to commit to working with Aboriginal staff to determine what programs could be put in place. Another was to increase information on Traditional Owners on the council website. One RDA suggested the establishment of Aboriginal representation in forums in their region. Others suggested that opportunities could be created for Aboriginal storytelling. The suggested that the RM Williams way be renamed in local language. One noted that it was important not to homogenise reconciliation but to develop actions that recognised cultural diversity within groups -and also potential conflict between those groups. The development of communications to increase the accessibility of pre-settlement history in the region was suggested by RDAs and a number of councils. Finally, some discussed possibilities around establishing formal and public forms of acknowledgment of the Indigenous peoples in their region via art, sculpture, signs etc in planned town redevelopment.

6.2.6. Perception of RAPs in the Group Region

As discussed above, the development of RAPs is a possible way, but not the only way, to promote reconciliation on a local level. At the time of writing, none of the fifteen local governments in the region have developed a RAP and neither have their regional partners who are overseeing natural resource management and regional development in the region and beyond (Reconciliation Australia 2020b). To determine why this is the case, and whether starting the process of developing RAPs would be beneficial, we asked local governments, their regional partners and Aboriginal organisations across the region whether they were aware of the RAP framework and if they were, whether they would be interested in developing a RAP.

Overall, many local councils did not know about RAPs but once we talked about it expressed interest. Some knew what RAPs are but did not perceive RAP development as a priority, and some expressed willingness to support others to develop one. One participant reflected that RAP development on a larger scale might be better, but many expressed a preference for organic engagement with Indigenous peoples over templates. Many councils were worried about the resource investment a RAP might require. Indigenous participants were also, in the main, not aware of the RAP process. Once it was explained, most thought it was a good idea moving forward but not the only way. One participant referred to the RAP as being a Reconciliation Awareness plan not Action, as it was stressed that awareness must precede everything. All Indigenous participants articulated the need to be involved in the RAP process if it proceeds and emphasised that RAPs need to be about action and implementation, not just end up as a certificate on the wall.

7. DISCUSSION

Our findings reflect a wide range of views, which support the idea of reconciliation but also reflect much uncertainty, reticence and lack of information about the process. Importantly though, there was across the board, a strong willingness to enter into further discussions about how to build the reconciliation agenda in the region.

Generally, local government participants saw reconciliation as a process of acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples as the first peoples, and a desire to work together, in a mutually agreed way to build partnerships into the future. Indigenous participants also indicated that reconciliation was about working together, but their views were attenuated by an emphasis on acknowledging past wrongs and the history of invasion, and that trust and equity were integral components in building reconciliation.

Overall local government participants discussed a wide range of initiatives that they felt they had undertaken in the spirit of reconciliation. These included flying the Aboriginal flag, participating in NAIDOC week, working on cultural tourism, and employment of Indigenous peoples in their area. Interest in reconciliation was high in most cases, but even so, those councils felt they faced such severe resource constraints into the future that they felt it impeded the likelihood of them being able to invest in formal reconciliation in the short term.

Overall Indigenous participants felt that some of these actions were tokenistic and that generally a lot more needed to be done at a deeper level to be considered reconciliation- that Councils needed to lead by example, and approach Indigenous peoples more often and consistently. The key message was that reconciliation moving forward is about conceptualising it as *our space, our playground, our work space, our culture and our common lifestyles*.

Some councils like Port Pirie and Flinders, as well as the Landscape Board, were presented as examples of how some productive and practical reconciliation actions could occur.

All participants were largely unaware of the opportunity offered by Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) but very interested in hearing more about it and potentially progressing.

Moving forward, we recommend three options that the Legatus/Yorke and Mid North Alliance may consider.

1. Formally engage with the Reconciliation Action Plan Process.
2. We also suggest, given feedback from Indigenous peoples around ‘truth telling’ that the 10 principles of truth and reconciliation (see Table 7) are adopted, which will reflect best international practice in progressing such initiatives. These principles have been modified from those adopted by the Canadian government to guide their relations with Canadas First Nations. We suggest that the beginning of reconciliation starts with telling our truths to each other *right now, including all the feelings, emotions and hurts*.

Table 7: Ten Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

1. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of society.
2. First Nations peoples of Australia are accepted and recognised as the original peoples of this country, that sovereignty has never been ceded, and as self-determining peoples, have constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australian.
6. All Australians share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of Aboriginal rights and ownership of Australia, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Australian society.

3. We also recommend the following principles for engagement with the Indigenous nations in the region. Each nation is different and thus developing a 'template' by which to approach them is not possible. Yet, there is the possibility of creating a common understanding based on guiding values, beliefs and principles. There are some excellent resources available which can assist institutions such as Legatus develop appropriate approaches to each group. One of these resources is a set of guidelines produced by CSIRO called *Our Knowledge, our way* and can be found at this link -

<https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/LWF/Areas/Pathways/Sustainable->

[Indigenous/Our-Knowledge-Our-Way](https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/LWF/Areas/Pathways/Sustainable-Indigenous/Our-Knowledge-Our-Way). This document has multiple examples – written by Indigenous peoples across Australia – that outline productive ways of working together and what can be achieved by the building of partnerships.

8. CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings outlined in this report, we have developed three specific recommendations to further promote reconciliation on a local government level in the region. Specifically, we recommend:

1. That a reconciliation coordinator is employed to work with councils and others on a deliberate strategy on how to achieve mutually agreed reconciliation actions.

2. That a staged approach, focussing on supporting individual councils, is developed to build reconciliation plans in the region with appropriate resources.
3. That the Yorke and Mid North Alliance seek advice / formal response from Indigenous peoples in the region about the Uluru Statement and acknowledge it is a matter of interest that could be localised.
4. That cultural competency and cultural responsiveness training is established across the region that encourage two-way conversations, friendships and public interactions. That cultural safety be part of this training.
5. That the region holds a workshop with the Local Government Association to work through what they are doing and investigate partnership options to progress RAPs in South Australia.
6. Develop a leadership program for young aboriginal people 18-30 which will be supported by both business and cultural mentors.
7. Institute Reconciliation Awareness and Sharing Culture Sessions, that include the arts and food style projects (e.g. around the campfire indigenous wisdom sessions etc), in ways that are safe for everyone.
8. That a separate unit / module in Indigenous history be established which becomes a compulsory professional development requirement for all local government staff to do – new and ongoing, and that it is embedded in induction programs
9. That local Aboriginal history groups are supported and resourced to create a safe space for cross cultural engagement for all community members
10. That the Yorke and Mid North Alliance set up a data management and integrity committee around Aboriginal knowledge, sites and information dissemination.
11. That the Legatus Group recommends to its member Councils to institute some initial first actions (if not already undertaken) including but not limited to:
 - i. flying the Aboriginal flag
 - ii. acknowledgement of country at council meetings
 - iii. reworking tourism literature to include recognition of the Indigenous country
 - iv. involvement of Indigenous peoples on various committees

- v. involvement and annual budgeting for NAIDOC and other key events
- vi. investigation of renaming sites using local languages

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Reconciliation Action Plan Process: Why Develop a RAP?

RAPs are making a difference across Australia in workplaces, universities, schools, government and community organisations.

The RAP framework enables organisations to contribute to reconciliation by:

- building and encouraging relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations, and the broader Australian community
- fostering and embedding respect for the world's longest surviving cultures and communities.
- develop opportunities within your organisation or services to improve socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

By developing a RAP, your organisation can:

- implement a tried and tested framework, that is proven to drive reconciliation through practical actions
- turn your organisation's good intentions into action by formalising your organisation's commitment to reconciliation
- reaffirm institutional integrity by embedding an engaging framework contributing towards good governance practices
- join a dynamic, supportive and fast-growing network of RAP organisations
- gain greater esteem as an employer of choice and build a more dynamic and diverse workforce
- enable your staff to develop greater cultural awareness and professional development practices that will strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- gain access to new markets and better engagement with existing markets

- ensure more effective and relevant service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement. No matter where your organisation is on its reconciliation journey, there is a RAP to suit. Workplaces can be supported to develop one of four types of RAP - Reflect, Innovate, Stretch or Elevate.

See this link - <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/>

Reflect	<p>– <i>Scoping reconciliation</i></p> <p>A Reflect RAP clearly sets out the steps you should take to prepare your organisation for reconciliation initiatives in successive RAPs. Committing to a Reflect RAP allows your organisation to spend time scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, deciding on your vision for reconciliation and exploring your sphere of influence, before committing to specific actions or initiatives. This process will help to produce future RAPs that are meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable.</p>
Innovate	<p>– <i>Implementing reconciliation</i></p> <p>An Innovate RAP outlines actions that work towards achieving your organisation’s unique vision for reconciliation. Commitments within this RAP allow your organisation to be aspirational and innovative in order to help your organisation to gain a deeper understanding of its sphere of influence, and establish the best approach to advance reconciliation. An Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>
Stretch	<p>– <i>Embedding reconciliation</i></p> <p>A Stretch RAP is best suited to organisations that have developed strategies, and established a strong approach towards advancing reconciliation internally and within the organisation’s sphere of influence. This type of RAP is focused on implementing longer-term strategies, and working towards defined measurable targets and goals. The Stretch RAP requires organisations to embed reconciliation initiatives into business strategies to become ‘business as usual’.</p>
Elevate	<p>– <i>Leadership in reconciliation</i></p> <p>An Elevate RAP is for organisations that have a proven track record of embedding effective RAP initiatives in their organisation through their Stretch RAPs and are ready to take on a leadership position to advance national reconciliation. Elevate RAP organisations have a strong strategic relationship with Reconciliation Australia and actively champion initiatives to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and create societal change. Elevate RAP organisations also require greater transparency and accountability through independent assessment of their activities.</p>

