



# Terms of Reference

## Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group (RAPAG)

Adopted by Council at its meeting on 21 June 2023

*An advisory group to support Rous in realising its  
vision for reconciliation as contained within its  
Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan*

## Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the objectives, authority, composition and tenure, administrative matters, and reporting of the RAPAG.

## Strategic links

Ref	Strategic objectives	Strategies to get there	What is being measured	Target
2.3	Our working relationships with political, regulatory and industry stakeholders are effective and achieve results			
2.3.4	We respect our local Aboriginal history and culture, and work positively to engage our First Nations community.	Implement current Reconciliation Action Plan and engage First Nations people to inform the new Reconciliation Action Plan including exploring and identifying new and innovative opportunities for reconciliation.	% of Reconciliation Action Plan actions completed.	90% by 2024.

## Document owner

Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager.

## Document review frequency

Every two (2) years.

## Document control and approval of revisions

All amendments to this document, other than minor administrative amendments, must be approved by Council and a summary recorded in the table below.

Minor administrative amendments (i.e. typographical errors, and updating hyperlinks) may be made at any time with approval from the Document Owner.

## Publication

This document is considered appropriate for proactive public release under section 7 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* and may be published to Council's website.

Version	Purpose and description of amendment	Person responsible	Reviewed	Date Council approved
0.1	RAPAG	PM-RP	04-11-2022	
0.2	RAPAG	PM-RP	28-04-2023	
0.3	Council	PM-RP		21-06-2023

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We acknowledge the importance of tradition, history and culture to Aboriginal people including the existence of unknown stories held by First Nations Peoples. As an organisation that works with water and land, we acknowledge and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sustainability practices in land and culture and acknowledge our responsibility to work together with the Traditional Custodians of land and waterway areas managed by Rous County Council.*

*We acknowledge this relationship and deeply value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional laws, knowledge and lessons about places and sustainability. Through our reconciliation activities, we aim to restore ecological, cultural, and social values that are unique to our region.*

### 1. Objectives

- a) To support the strategic direction of Rous with respect to local Aboriginal history and culture and enhancing engagement with the First Nations community across the operational footprint of Rous.
- b) The RAPAG will support this strategic objective by providing advice and recommendations to Rous on the three (3) key focus areas of its Reconciliation Action Plan ('RAP'):

1. Respectful Community Involvement underpinned by shared understandings through cultural awareness and learning about our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, lands, history and cultures.

2. Real Work on Land through understanding not only environmental aspects, but also cultural and historical aspects in the areas that Rous operates.

3. Strengthening the Tone of our relationship and building on our past successes through employment, training and commercial opportunities.

- c) This may include:
  - Assisting Rous identify Aboriginal stakeholders with knowledge of the cultural and historical aspects of land within its capital works program and other land or water-based activities and advising on appropriate consultation protocols.
  - Identifying opportunities to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ('ATSI') training and employment opportunities.
  - Recommending ways to improve procurement practices to promote greater engagement of ATSI suppliers.

### 2. Authority

The RAPAG:

- a) May make recommendations and provide advice to Rous on matters within the remit of the group.
- b) Will have no delegated financial responsibility or any other management or decision-making functions.
- c) Is not intended as an authority for advising on cultural heritage assessments.

### 3. Membership and term

- a) The RAPAG will consist of up to fifteen (15) members as follows:
  - One (1) Rous councillor; and
  - Fourteen (14) community members
- b) The community members will consist of up to:
  - Two (2) Traditional Custodians of Widjabal/Wia-bal catchment areas
  - i) Six (6) representatives in total – 1 from each of the following Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) in the RCC operational footprint: Ngulingah, Jali, Tweed-Byron, Bogal, Casino-Boolangle, and Gugin Gudduba;
  - ii) Three (3) representatives in total: One (1) from Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) of each of the following Native Title Holder groups in the RCC operational footprint: Widjabul Wia-bal (or interim body); Bundjalung Aboriginal Corporation, Bundjalung of Byron Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal). *Note* An alternate (male/female) representative can be nominated. If there are issues identified on the agenda that can only be spoken to by the alternate representative, then the alternate (male/female) representative shall be invited and welcome to attend.
  - iii) Three (3) additional community representatives.
- c) The term of each member will be two (2) years with the possibility of extension upon application to the Chair. The term of the Councillor member may only be extended by the governing body of Rous.
- d) The Rous Councillor will Chair the RAPAG meetings.
- e) Where a member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may send an alternate member (proxy) in their place. When doing so, the member must advise the RAPAG Chair or secretariat of the alternate member's attendance prior to the meeting.

### 4. Code of Conduct

- a) Members must:
  - i) Adhere to Council's Code of Conduct (available on website)
  - ii) Declare any conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of the relevant agenda item.
  - iii) Make positive and constructive contributions during meetings.
  - iv) Treat others with respect at all times.
  - v) Provide advice that is in the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the operational footprint of Rous.

## **5. Meeting procedures**

- a) The RAPAG will meet quarterly (four (4) times) each year with the possibility of additional meetings when necessary, as determined by the Chair.
- b) Meetings will be held at Council premises, unless otherwise determined and notified by the Chair. Attendance at meetings may be in-person or by audio-visual link.
- c) A quorum of seven (7) committee members including the Chair, must be present for a meeting to be held or proceed. The meeting's duration will be approximately 3 hours.
- d) Rous's Catchment and Cultural Awareness team will provide secretariat services to the RAPAG including preparing and issuing the agenda to members 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
- e) Members must provide a notice of apology when unable to attend meetings. The apology must be provided prior to the start of the meeting through the secretariat of the RAPAG.
- f) Where specialist advice is required on a specific RAP action and the expertise is not available within the RAPAG, suitable stakeholder representatives may be invited to attend meetings on an as-needs basis.
- g) Council staff with responsibility for actions in the RAP will present progress reports at meetings as required.
- h) Other councillors, Rous staff, or community members may attend meetings as observers.

## **6. Sitting fees**

- a) The following arrangements will apply upon attendance at meetings:
  - i) RAPAG members, excluding the councillor member, will be paid \$200 sitting fee to attend each meeting; transport be provided if necessary. Travel expenses to attend meetings will be reimbursed at the appropriate kilometer rate in accordance with the Local Government (State) Award.
  - ii) In line with local government policy, the councillor member will not be entitled to a sitting fee with respect to RAPAG meetings.
- b) All sitting fees and travel payments will only be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the individual member or the nominated proxy if the member is unavailable.

## **7. Reporting and accountability**

- a) The advice of the RAPAG will be reported back to Council to inform planning and decision making.
- b) Notices, agendas and minutes of the meetings will be posted on Council's website.

