

Examples of Working Together in South Australia

November 2000



The cover illustration by Violet Buckskin of Pt Victoria, SA depicts Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people coming together to work with each other to create paths for a better future. It is reproduced with permission of the Australian Local Government Association.

Photo (middle) represents the Ceduna District. From left to right; Mitch Dunnett, Council Officer, ATSIC Regional Council Chair Harry Miller and Ceduna Council staff member Joe Miller.

Photo (bottom right) represents the commitment of the City of Salisbury. Aboriginal advisory representatives Pat Buckskin (left) and Heather Agius (right), pictured with Salisbury Aboriginal Development Officer Vince Buckskin, Mayor Tony Zappia (back right) and CEO Stephen Hains (front centre).

The District of Ceduna and The City of Salisbury are two of a number of Councils which feature strongly in this document.

Contents

Preface	i
FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE	1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in South Australia	2
1. UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY - LAND AND SEA	3
The Tokuremoar Reserve Management Plan	3
The Breakaways Reserve	4
Warriparinga Wetlands	5
Nepabunna	5
2. IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS	7
Reconciliation Initiatives	7
Colebrook Memorial	7
City of Adelaide	8
City of Port Adelaide Enfield	8
City of Tea Tree Gully	8
City of Salisbury	9
Australian Local Government Association	9
District Council of Yorke Peninsula	9
The City of Onkaparinga's Approach	10
3. VALUING CULTURES	11
The City of Adelaide	11
City of Port Adelaide Enfield	11
A Community Model for Cross-cultural Reconciliation	12
Yungoriapendi Exhibition	12
4. SHARING HISTORY	13
City of Unley	13
City of Salisbury	13
Wodliparri Trail Project	14
Rural City of Murray Bridge	14
5. DISADVANTAGE AND CUSTODY LEVELS	15
Employment Opportunities in Local Government	15
Aboriginal Employment Strategy	15
Nainmorendi Project	16
City of Playford	17
Health and Housing	17
City of Port Augusta	18
6. CONTROLLING DESTINY	19
Port Adelaide Enfield Aboriginal Advisory Panel	19
Aboriginal Community Centre Steering Committee	19
Local Government Election Workshop for Nungas	20
Tjilbruke Dreaming Forum	20
7. DOCUMENTING AGREEMENTS	21
Martirendi Agreement	21
District Council of Ceduna	21
A. APPENDIX	23
Key Considerations	23

Preface

This document has been prepared as an important adjunct to the 2000 review of Local Government's Aboriginal Strategy document developed in 1994. Both the 1994 and the 2000 strategies acknowledge that Local Government has important service responsibilities in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians but perhaps more importantly can play a crucial leadership role in the community on reconciliation and other issues.

The 2000 strategy review report "Local Councils Belong to Aboriginal People 2" identified that SA Councils had made significant advances since 1994 and highlighted percentages from surveys and other data designed to provide an overview. This booklet goes behind the overview to describe the real projects and activities in which Local Government and Aboriginal communities have worked together to build relationships, understanding and tangible outcomes for communities.

The project has been a joint initiative between the Local Government Association of South Australia and the State Government through the Office of Local Government and the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs. It is designed to do two things: to celebrate what Councils and their Aboriginal communities have achieved in recent years; and to provide a resource to all Councils and others to stimulate new initiatives or reinvigorate old ones.

Using seven themes, practical examples of interaction between communities and Local Government Councils across South Australia are identified. The text is designed to provide enough information for readers to decide whether finding out more information about one or more of the projects might benefit their local approaches. Contact details are then provided for each example.

It does not pretend to be complete, although all Councils were given the opportunity to put forward suggestions. However it does try to provide as wide a range of examples as possible.

We thank the Councils for agreeing to be listed and to be prepared to talk to other Councils about their initiatives.

We hope this recognition for their initiative provides a spur to maintain their efforts in this important responsibility of governments. We also share a hope that Aboriginal communities will also take heart that Local Government is making a difference and that it is worth making the effort to be involved.



Hon Dorothy Kotz
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



Mr Brian Hurn
President
Local Government Association of South Australia



FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

The role of Local Government Councils in fostering an environment of community tolerance and promoting harmonious relationships should not be underestimated.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Local Government Council initiatives aimed at improving relationships send a powerful message to the broader community. By incorporating policies in Council strategic plans, these initiatives demonstrate the commitment to a planned approach to improving services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Locally, the opportunity exists to respond to many inter-related community issues - ranging from native title, service provision, cultural awareness, and employment.

The booklet has not been titled "best practice" nor are any of the examples labelled in such terms. If there is such a thing as "best practice" it is best judged locally in the communities affected.

Often, the sorts of initiatives outlined in this document are not far out of reach, nor do most of them involve a high level of resources. They are achieved by a combination of understanding and goodwill and a willingness to "have a go". They are presented here as acknowledgement of efforts made and as encouragement to others.

This document is a record of the successes of Aboriginal people and the Local Government Councils in promoting reconciliation and positive community relations between the parties. If it had not been for their generosity and willingness to be part of this project, the document would not have been published.

The positive and encouraging examples illustrate just what can be achieved when Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work together towards reaching their shared goal of improving relationships. They also demonstrate that there are many entry points to reconciliation for Local Government. Some of the examples refer to providing services or involving local communities in "culturally appropriate" ways. While this is best interpreted through local understanding and communication, some tips about what "culturally appropriate" might mean are included in an appendix, at the back of this publication.

The examples are highlighted under reconciliation themes that have been extracted from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation documentation, and the Council is acknowledged and thanked for this contribution. In most cases the examples presented could relate to several of the following themes:

- Understanding Country – Land and Sea
- Improving Relationships
- Valuing Cultures
- Sharing History
- Disadvantage and Custody Levels
- Controlling Destinies
- Document Agreements

The examples were gathered and documented by Janet Gould, Margaret Heylen and Fred Graham of Janet Gould + Associates (Fred Graham participating with the support of the City of Playford) in conjunction with the review "Local Councils Belong to Aboriginal People 2". The Steering Committee of the review project provided input and advice. Project Management was provided by the Local Government Association of South Australia and funding was provided by the State Government.

"A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all"

- Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Vision Statement
- Adopted by the SA House of Assembly, 1994
- Adopted as LGA Policy, 1995



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in South Australia¹

In 1998, it was estimated that the population of South Australia was 1,487,414, with 1.22% of the total South Australian population, or about 18,150 people, identified as being from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

Local Government Council Incorporated Areas

About 80% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lives in the 68 Local Government Council areas incorporated under the Local Government Act 1999. Within these areas, which geographically comprise about 15% of the State,

- about 54% live in the Adelaide metropolitan area; and
- about 46% live in country areas.

In the metropolitan area, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is dispersed, with particular population concentrations in the north west and northern Local Government Council areas of the Cities of Port Adelaide Enfield, Playford and Salisbury. High population concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also located in the southern area of the City of Onkaparinga. In addition, statistics reveal a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visit The City of Adelaide.

In the country areas, there are five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities living on Aboriginal Lands Trust land located within a Local Government Council area. These are:

Communities	Local Government Council
Point Pearce	District Council of Yorke Peninsula
Raukkan/Point McLeay	The Coorong District Council
Koonibba	District Council of Ceduna
Davenport	City of Port Augusta
Umoona	District Council of Coober Pedy

A larger number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live outside of these communities in country areas and townships.

Out of Local Government Council areas

About 20% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in remote and rural parts of South Australia. Statistically, the most populated area is the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, with smaller communities residing in the Maralinga Tjarutja lands, Nepabunna (near Leigh Creek), Gerard (near Berri Barmera), Yalata (near Ceduna) and in the townships of Oodnadatta, Maree and Copley.

¹ Information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in South Australia is contained in the report, "Local Councils Belong to Aboriginal People 2 - A New Strategy, June 2000"

UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY - LAND AND SEA

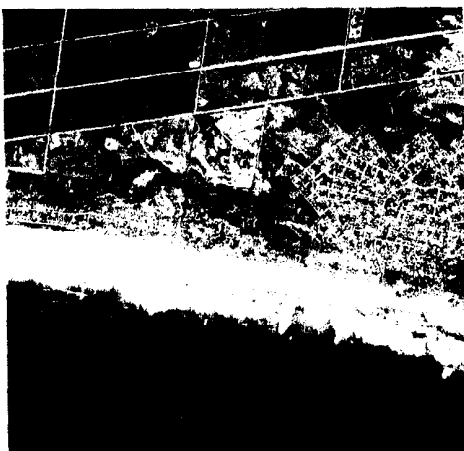
Local Government Councils are reaping the benefits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' views of the land. Working together with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Local Government Councils have tapped into a unique understanding of our fragile environment, and of indigenous cultural and heritage issues. In the longer term, these partnerships will support ecologically sustainable and economic benefits for the whole community. Along the way, important educational resources and business enterprises are emerging.

The Tokuremoar Reserve Management Plan - Alexandrina Council

The Tokuremoar Reserve is within the Alexandrina Council area, located in the southern portion of the Fleurieu Peninsula. The Tokuremoar Reserve Management Plan covers the Goolwa Reserve and the adjoining Alexandrina Council reserve land, encompassing the River Murray Mouth.

The area was home country to the Watiindjeri clan of the Ramindjeri people. The clan had summer "cockle camps" all along the Murray River shore from the Murray Mouth west to Goolwa and Middleton and to the southern shores of the Currency Creek Estuary, migrating in winter to wooded country north and west of Goolwa.

Tokuremoar Reserve is of special cultural significance to the Ramindjeri/Ngarrindjeri people and contains significant archaeological and anthropological sites including ceremonial and burial grounds. The Reserve contains some of the last and least disturbed indigenous cultural heritage sites and remaining foreshore dune habitat of its type on the Fleurieu Peninsula and in South Australia.



Aerial view of Tokuremoar Reserve

The management plan for Tokuremoar Reserve was a joint initiative in 1996 by the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee, Alexandrina Council and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs. The Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee was supported by the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, Native Title Unit, and Papta Warra Yunti ATSIC Regional Council. Everyone involved was concerned about the increasing desecration of indigenous burial and ceremonial grounds, dune and wetland systems in the reserve, and the need to protect and preserve the area to avoid increasing negative environmental impacts. The proposed routing of a bike and walking trail through the area added urgency to these issues. Pro-active involvement resulted in securing Natural Heritage Trust funding to develop and assist in the implementation of a management plan for the area.

The result is a community resource for all to enjoy. In particular, the management plan for Tokuremoar Reserve provides for:

- continuing consultation with the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee.

- ongoing protection of cultural and ecologically significant areas; and

- nature based tourism experiences, such as an interpretive walking trail through Tokuremoar Reserve to the Goolwa township, and an education facility.

Contact: Des Commerford, Alexandrina Council,
Telephone 8555 7000

"Whilst the land and sea are important to every Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special, unique relationship. It's hard in the wider community to understand this relationship. It centres on ceremonies and The Dreaming, a time beyond when great spirit beings created the world, people and animals. Their tracks and spirits live on in this land and sea."

"Indigenous Australians must care for their country - it's sacred. This is done through rituals, ceremonies, respect for the law and looking after the environment."²



The Breakaways Reserve - District Council of Coober Pedy

The Breakaways Reserve is about 30 kilometres north of Coober Pedy, in the Outback of South Australia, about 850 kilometres north of Adelaide. It is home to the Muntuntjara and Antakirinja people.

The Breakaways Reserve is becoming a popular tourist destination, attracting local, national and international tourists, who visit the area to see some of the most spectacular desert scenery in Australia. An estimated 150,000 to 200,000 tourists visit the area each year. These visits have been boosted as a result of the Breakaways popularity as a film location, in particular for Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, and Priscilla: Queen of the Desert.

However, the increase in visitors to the area, led to concern about the protection of the scenic beauty, Aboriginal heritage and other interesting natural features of the Breakaways Reserve. As a result, the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Antakirinja Land Council, following consultation with local communities, business and tourism interests, have developed a Management Plan for the Breakaways Reserve. The Northern Regional Development Board also provided support for the development of the Management Plan.

Subsequently, the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Antakirinja Land Council have entered into an agreement to jointly manage the Breakaways Reserve. The Agreement provides for the protection of the Breakaways Reserve, and for new employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people in eco-tourism ventures.

The area is very rich in Aboriginal and European history. Interpretive and directional signs enable self-guided tours along the 70 kilometre round trip from Coober Pedy. Aboriginal rangers are also available to take visitors on walking trails, and to tell the story of the region's Aboriginal history, culture and heritage.

The Management Plan and Joint Management Agreement, will assure the ecologically sustainable management and appropriate use of the sites of significance at the Breakaways Reserve, and the enjoyment of the area for generations to come.

Contact Trevor Mc Leod, Chief Executive Officer
District Council of Coober Pedy
Telephone 8672 5298

"The Breakaways are a striking and unique example of arid scenery. From the flat-topped mesas to the stony gibber desert, remnants of millions of years provide a wealth of geological interests and breathtaking views. Looking out over the Breakaways it is hard to believe that over 70 million years ago, this area was covered by an inland sea."³



Warriparinga Site Tour. Members of the Kaurna Elders Council with Paul Green, Botanist on site tour of Warriparinga Wetlands.

Warriparinga Wetlands - City of Marion

The City of Marion is in the southern metropolitan area of Adelaide. Marion Council, the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board and the Land Management Corporation developed a partnership alliance to create a wetland environment on a 2 hectare site at Science Park, bounded by Marion Road, Sturt Road and South Road. The area is within the Patawalonga water catchment, with the major waterway being the Sturt River which downstream flows into the Patawalonga. Together with the river, water flowing into the area is urban and rural run off polluted by a range of contaminants washed in from streets and properties.

The main objective of the project is to improve water quality through wetland processes and to create an enhanced landscaped and visually attractive area for residents, workers at Science Park and visitors.

It was recognised that no thorough Archaeological Study of the actual wetland site had been completed, even though Warriparinga environs was considered an important cultural site for Aboriginal people. Following negotiations with the Kaurna Aboriginal Community and Heritage Association (KACHA), two representatives, one female and one male, were invited onto the Reference Group to oversee the design of the wetlands. An Archaeological Study of the site was undertaken and Kaurna people were involved from the outset. An aboriginal specific workshop was conducted at the concept design stage and this included an extensive walk over the site with a botanist, ecologist and engineer.

Indigenous plants, food sources, and particular reed species were recommended for wetland planting and discussed with Aboriginal people involved in the consultations. Over 9000 trees and shrubs have now been planted in the area around the wetlands to create a natural landscape, and nurture a habitat for birds and wildlife.

Warriparinga is now a special place to visit and enjoy, and is an important community educational resource about indigenous culture and the special relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land.

Contact: Don Donaldson, Director of Policy
City of Marion
Telephone 8375 6664
Email don.donaldson@marion.sa.gov.au

Nepabunna - Indigenous Protected Area

Nepabunna, which is a local governing body, is situated on Adnyamathanha land in the remote north east area of South Australia.

In August 1998, the Adnyamathanha people of Nepabunna set an Australian and international precedent by being the first indigenous community to voluntarily declare a large part of its traditional land, Nantawarrina, an Indigenous Protected Area. This initiative won international recognition in June 2000, when the Adnyamathanha people of Nepabunna won a prestigious United Nations Environment Program Award. They were one of only 14 world wide recipients of Global 500 Awards for environmental achievement.

Nantawarrina covers 570 square kilometres between Lake Frome and the Northern Flinders Ranges, and is now managed in accordance with the international rules for protected areas. Since the area was protected in 1998, the community has worked hard to clear feral animals, revegetate with native plants, and prevent destruction of sensitive areas by vehicles.

The Nantawarrina management plan represents a model for other remote and outback communities in Australia for declaring Indigenous Protected Areas.

Contact: Mr Phil Wright, Chief Executive Officer
Nepabunna Community Inc
Telephone 8648 3764
Mobile 0419 853727
Fax 8648 3742