Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Indigenous Participation Plan

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Acknowledgement
The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA’s Regional Indigenous Facilitator position and the development of this Indigenous Participation Plan has been supported by the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme.

Front cover image: PPWCMA staff observe the artefacts within shell middens during a men’s activity with Bununrong Land Council at Bushrangers Bay.

Back cover image: PPWCMA, council and agency staff, Landcare and community members take part in cultural awareness training with the Wurundjeri Council in March 2017.

Port Phillip & Westernport CMA’s Sarah Maclagan in a possum skin cloak at a cultural awareness event with Wadawurrung.
Acknowledgement of country

The Port Phillip and Westernport CMA acknowledges and respects the Traditional Owners of the Boon Wurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Aboriginal communities and organisations of the region.

We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Country - land, water and sea.

We value partnerships with them to improve the health of Indigenous people and Country.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Board and Staff pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owners’ obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their traditional lands, water and sea.
Chair’s foreword

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA is proud to establish this Indigenous Participation Plan. It sets the framework for our continued inclusive and productive engagement with Indigenous people.

Our Board and Staff are very committed to increasing Indigenous participation in the work that we do including in environmental management and sustainable agriculture.

The development of this plan has helped us reflect on how we are engaging with Indigenous organisations and people. We have considered our recent activities and the partnerships we have developed and identified opportunities for more improvement in our practices.

This plan links our everyday work with Indigenous people and identifies measures of success which will be monitored and reported to the Board.

We particularly thank our Indigenous partners from the Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri and Bunurong for their enthusiasm and willingness to work together, and we also look forward to working with other Indigenous people of our region to increase participation.

Our Board will work alongside our Chief Executive Officer and staff to ensure strong support from all levels in our organisation for the implementation of this plan. We aim to make a strong contribution to ‘closing the gap’ in this region.

Neville Goodwin
Chair, Port Phillip & Westernport CMA
Purpose

This Indigenous Participation Plan will guide the Board and staff of the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA to collaborate with and support Indigenous organisations and communities when planning and implementing natural resource management programs in this region.

It sets a framework to improve the knowledge and understanding by our Board and staff of Indigenous cultural values, and to enable us to extend this to others that we work with including government agencies, community groups, landholders and the broader public.

By doing so, this plan aims to support and increase the participation of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people in natural resource management.

This plan also identifies measures of success which will be monitored and reported against.

Indigenous land ownership and management in this region

There are three recognised Traditional Owner groups in the area we refer to as the Port Phillip & Westernport catchment management region - the Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri and Bunurong.

All three Traditional Owner groups have Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) status for areas determined by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council as shown on the map.

There are co-claimants for a large section of the region as shown on the map.

Less than 1,000 hectares of the 1,300,000 hectares of land in this region is now under Aboriginal community ownership and/or management. The Wathaurong Cooperative owns and manages the Wurdi Youang property at Little River. The Wurundjeri Council’s Narrap team manages several parcels of land including sites at the Mt William Stone Axe Quarry, Sunbury Rings, Coranderrk Cemetery and Keilor which each have significant cultural values, and the Army School of Health in Healesville which is an important residential and training site.

The recognition of Indigenous cultural heritage and the involvement and influence of Indigenous people in natural resource management is improving in recent times. Places of Indigenous cultural significance are progressively being identified and sometimes protected. Various partnerships and projects are developing for Indigenous Elders and communities to re-learn, practice and pass on traditional Indigenous knowledge including for waterway management, food harvesting, tool production, fibre gathering and the use of traditional fire practices. Governments now better acknowledge the Indigenous history and are improving the engagement of Indigenous people in the development of new policies and strategies.

There remains a long journey ahead to achieve adequate Indigenous participation in natural resource management and other aspects of our modern society, but these are steps in the right direction.
Traditional Owners of the PPWCMA region-
Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)

Key to map

- PPWCMA Boundary
- Wurundjeri
- Wadawurrung
- Bunurong
- Area under application – both Bunurong & Wurundjeri
Key principles for this plan

This Indigenous Participation Plan is guided by the following eight principles (in line with the Pathways to Participation guideline and implementation plan developed by Victorian CMAs in 2016):

1. Protocols are important
   Collaboratively develop and follow agreed protocols for participation, making sure they include ways to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners before undertaking projects that affect their rights and obligations to lands and waters.

2. Good engagement takes time and support
   Allocate adequate time and resources to engage, allow for contingencies and provide opportunities to meet on Country.

3. Aboriginal leaders have many demands on their time
   Aboriginal leaders have interests and responsibilities across all sectors and levels of society - they need to engage with other agencies and organisations as well as ours. Think about engaging from a whole of government perspective, and foster partnerships with other agencies.
4. The health and wellbeing of country and people are all one
Promote connections with Country through different pathways. Consider how environmental activities can be designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of people.

5. Aboriginal culture, knowledge and obligations to country are diverse
Explore innovative management approaches that embrace different knowledge, knowledge systems and cultures.

6. Meaningful participation is based on fairness, equity and mutual respect
Build mutual respect by valuing Aboriginal culture, knowledge, obligations, connections and diversity; build relationships through cross-cultural exchanges.

7. Trust depends on shared understanding and clear communication
Build trust through creating common experiences and nurturing long-term partnerships. Listen and learn together to evolve information sharing and communication strategies.

8. Passing on traditional knowledge is important
Create opportunities to facilitate the transfer of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge.

1. Applying the Key Principles
The Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian CMA’s identifies the following key principles as the foundations for working with Aboriginal people, key ensuring their participation in CMA projects and programs.

This section provides an overview of what the principles mean and how they may be applied.

**GOOD ENGAGEMENT TAKES TIME AND SUPPORT**
Allocate adequate time and resources to engage, allow for contingencies and provide opportunities to meet on Country.

**THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF COUNTRY AND PEOPLE ARE ALL ONE**
Promote connections with Country through different pathways; consider how environmental activities can be designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of people.

**PROTOCOLS ARE IMPORTANT**
Collaboratively develop and follow agreed protocols for participation, making sure they include ways to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners before undertaking projects that affect their rights and obligations to lands and waters.

**ABORIGINAL LEADERS HAVE MANY DEMANDS ON THEIR TIME**
Aboriginal leaders have interests and responsibilities across many sectors and levels of society; they need to engage with other governments and organisations as well as years. Think about engaging from a whole of government perspective, and foster partnerships with other agencies.

**MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IS BASED ON FAIRNESS, EQUITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT**
Build mutual respect by valuing Aboriginal culture, knowledge, obligations, connections and diversity; build relationships through cross-cultural exchanges.

**PASSING ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IS IMPORTANT**
Create opportunities to facilitate the transfer of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge.

**TRUST DEPENDS ON SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION**
Build trust through creating common experiences and nurturing long-term partnerships. Listen and learn together to evolve information sharing and communication strategies.

**ABORIGINAL CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE AND OBLIGATIONS TO COUNTRY ARE DIVERSE**
Explore innovative management approaches that embrace different knowledge, knowledge systems and cultures.

**1. Applying the Key Principles**
Key principles outlined in the Pathways to Participation Implementation Plan.
Our commitment

The Traditional Owners of this region have an ancient and continuing connection to Country and retain traditional knowledge about caring for land and water. The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA is committed to supporting Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities, organisations and individuals to retain and enhance their connection to Country. The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA will acknowledge, value and draw on this traditional knowledge when considering, planning and implementing programs for this region.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA will:

- Communicate and interact regularly with the Indigenous organisations of the region
- Support Indigenous people to document and protect their rights to traditional knowledge
- Embed targets and actions for Indigenous participation into its Corporate Plan
- Enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities to conserve and protect land, water and biodiversity
- Support Indigenous people to re-learn, practice and pass on their traditional knowledge
- Encourage and support various partners that we work with, including government agencies and community groups, to assist Aboriginal people to maintain and increase their connections to Country
- Involve other partners in our Indigenous partnership activities and communicate to them the significance and mutual benefit of engaging Indigenous organisations in planning, decision making and action.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA is also developing the following formal links with individual Indigenous organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal links being established between the Port Phillip &amp; Westernport CMA and Indigenous organisations</th>
<th>Wadawurrung</th>
<th>Wathaurong Coop</th>
<th>Wurundjeri</th>
<th>Boon Wurrung Foundation</th>
<th>Bunurong Land Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of an agreed ‘Goal and Aspiration Statement’ for the Indigenous organisation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of a statement from the Indigenous organisation in the Regional Catchment Strategy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Under consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a ‘Partnership Agreement’ with the Indigenous organisation</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>To be pursued</td>
<td>To be pursued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of grants to, and/or contracting of services from, the Indigenous organisation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsement of this Indigenous Participation Plan by the Indigenous organisation</td>
<td>To be pursued</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>To be pursued</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures of success

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA will strive to advance Indigenous participation in the following 11 areas (in line with the statewide *Pathways to Participation* guide and implementation plan).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provide induction and training for Board members, staff and contractors in ways that help build cultural competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase the awareness and recognition of Aboriginal people’s knowledge and aspirations within our workplace and within our work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meet our legal obligations regarding Aboriginal participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish and follow protocols to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities for projects that affect their rights and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide supportive workplace arrangements for staff and contractors as they engage with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities, including appropriate resourcing and time for project and program delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Achieve meaningful engagement and building of trust and mutual respect with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ensure respect for Aboriginal people’s culture, knowledge and obligations to Country through our work</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Provide for Aboriginal people to be actively represented in our relevant decision-making processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Achieve participation of Aboriginal communities and organisations in our natural resource management projects and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Support Aboriginal groups in their pursuit of economic opportunities and employment in land and water management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Support initiatives that contribute to health and wellbeing and to closing the gap of disadvantage</td>
</tr>
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Implementation

To achieve the measures of success for this Indigenous Participation Plan, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA will embed Indigenous participation into all relevant areas of our work so it becomes our “business as usual” approach.

This will include the following actions and activities:

1. **Provide induction and training for Board members and staff in ways that help build cultural competency**
   - Include Indigenous cultural awareness in the induction process for new Board members and staff
   - Include ongoing Indigenous cultural awareness training for all Board members and staff as a prominent part of the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's corporate learning and development program
   - Provide opportunities in work time for all staff to take part in Indigenous cultural awareness activities

2. **Increase the awareness and recognition of Aboriginal people’s knowledge and aspirations within our workplace and within our work**
   - Develop a Port Phillip & Westernport CMA ‘reconciliation statement’
   - Develop and display representations of local Indigenous culture within the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA office(s)
   - Develop documents outlining Indigenous people’s goals and aspirations for participation in natural resource management, agreed to by the Indigenous organisations of this region
   - Include targets within the annual work performance plans of Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Staff outlining their contributions to the Indigenous goals and aspirations
   - Promote and advocate the agreed Indigenous aspirations to other organisations in relevant forums and meetings
   - Include statements from the region’s Indigenous organisations in the Regional Catchment Strategy

3. **Meet our legal obligations regarding Aboriginal participation**
   - Include processes to meet legal obligations within the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA’s project management framework
   - Provide training for relevant staff regarding the legal obligations of working in culturally-sensitive places
   - Include clauses within Port Phillip & Westernport CMA grant guidelines and contracts that respond to relevant legal obligations of the CMA and grant recipients
   - Share and promote information regarding cultural heritage and legal obligations with organisations, Landcare networks and groups, landholders and others that may be involved in natural resource management in this region
   - Ensure Port Phillip & Westernport CMA employment processes address legal obligations
4. Establish and follow protocols to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities for projects that affect their rights and interests

- Develop an Indigenous Protocol Policy to ensure the acknowledgement of Traditional Owners is expected practice at relevant Port Phillip & Westernport CMA events
- Include protocols and steps for the engagement of Indigenous organisations in the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's project management framework
- Ensure that Indigenous organisations are appropriately informed, consulted and/or involved in the planning and implementation of relevant Port Phillip & Westernport CMA projects

5. Provide supportive workplace arrangements for staff and contractors as they engage with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities, including appropriate resourcing and time for project and program delivery

- Include the provision of adequate time for Indigenous engagement as a requirement in the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's project management framework
- Ensure that Staff reserve adequate time and budget for Indigenous engagement within the planning and delivery of their projects

6. Achieve meaningful engagement and building of trust and mutual respect with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities

- Develop formal partnership agreements between the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA and each of the Indigenous organisations in the region
- Establish and foster strong personal relationships between Port Phillip & Westernport CMA personnel and Indigenous Elders/leaders
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous people to be involved in relevant Port Phillip & Westernport CMA activities
7. **Ensure respect for Aboriginal people’s culture, knowledge and obligations to Country through our work**

- Conduct respectful acknowledgements at relevant Port Phillip & Westernport CMA events
- Arrange for formal welcomes at relevant events (with financial support for these services)
- Include acknowledgements and relevant Indigenous information in Port Phillip & Westernport CMA documents including the Corporate Plan and Annual Report
- Promote Indigenous culture, values and aspirations through Port Phillip & Westernport CMA communications channels including newsletters, websites and social media

8. **Provide for Aboriginal people to be actively represented in our relevant decision-making processes**

- Seek Indigenous representation in grants assessment committees (with financial and technical support where possible)
- Promote opportunities for Board and staff positions to Indigenous organisations and communities

9. **Achieve participation of Aboriginal communities and organisations in our projects and programs**

- Seek Traditional Owner representation in project steering groups/committees (with financial and technical support where possible)
- Ensure Port Phillip & Westernport CMA-led projects such as Yarra4Life, Ramsar Protection Program, Living Links, etc. each include at least one target regarding their relationship with Indigenous organisations of the region
- Provide Indigenous organisations with annual updates on relevant Port Phillip & Westernport CMA-led projects
- Promote and facilitate the participation of Indigenous people from this region in broad policy and project development processes such as those for the Victorian Water Plan, Victorian Cultural Water networks, development of Indigenous fire protocols and practices, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), bush foods, etc.

10. **Support Aboriginal groups in their pursuit of economic opportunities and employment in land and water management**

- Develop an Indigenous Procurement Policy that enables efficient engagement of Indigenous organisations and people in the provision of relevant services
- Develop opportunities for Indigenous employment as a priority where possible
- Communicate funding and employment opportunities to Indigenous organisations and assist them to pursue relevant opportunities
- Advocate to other organisations for the inclusion of Indigenous employment opportunities within their programs
- Support the development of skills by Indigenous people that will increase their prospects for employment

11. **Support initiatives that contribute to health and wellbeing and to closing the gap of disadvantage**

- Support and participate in ‘Close the Gap Day’ events
- Promote programs that benefit Indigenous education, social participation, health, wellbeing and safety
Monitoring and reporting

The implementation and success of this Indigenous Participation Plan will be monitored and a report will be provided to the Board annually for consideration and approval.

The report will list the 11 measures of success and provide the following against each:

- A list of actions and activities undertaken by the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA that are relevant to that measure
- An estimation of the extent to which success has been achieved
- A discussion of emerging opportunities and any barriers/constraints to achieving success
- Recommendations for future action.

Evaluation and review

This Indigenous Participation Plan will be reviewed at least every five years and re-approved by the Board of the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA.

Each review will include significant consultation with the Indigenous organisations of this region and the endorsement of the Indigenous organisations for the new plan will be sought.