

Country, Culture, People 2025–28

Building cultural safety
within the City of Hobart
with Aboriginal people



City of **HOBART**





Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Muwinina people as the traditional owners of Nipaluna (Hobart). The Muwinina people were part of the Southeast nation and lived on the land and cultural landscapes on and around what is now called Hobart. They lived on and cared for the skies, land, and waterways for thousands of generations and had a deep understanding and connection with their country. They had access to both freshwater and saltwater resources and used fire to manage their Country. The stories of the Muwinina people can be read around Hobart in many ways. Significant cultural living sites (middens) are still found all along Tintumili Minanya (River Derwent).

As a direct result of invasion and war there are no Muwinina people left alive today. Therefore we aren't able to pay respect to their present Elders or community. Today's Aboriginal people are the survivors of colonisation and dispossession. They continue the culture and stories of their old people. In the absence of the Muwinina, we acknowledge the Palawa as the ongoing custodians of Lutruwita (Tasmania), and extend this acknowledgement to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on the country of the Palawa.



Statement from the Lord Mayor

From the shores of Timtumili Minanya (River Derwent), to the peaks of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington, residents and visitors to Nipaluna (Hobart) move through the same country, treading the same earth that the Palawa and their ancestors have done for thousands of years.

Our community has a great appreciation, and respect, for this history and expects the City of Hobart to lead in the recognition and celebration of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, culture and heritage in Nipaluna (Hobart).

In doing so, the City has a responsibility to work ethically, including through participatory consultation, to ensure Palawa feel safe, respected and validated.

This document embodies this expectation and responsibility. It is the mechanism through which the City ensures that the culture and insight of Palawa informs our understanding of our landscape and our City as we manage it for the present and the future.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the development of this important plan. The high levels of engagement throughout the creation of this plan demonstrates the importance of our commitment to partnership with Aboriginal people in Nipaluna (Hobart). I am sure we will see the benefits to the City and the community for many years to come from our work together.



Cr. Anna Reynolds
Lord Mayor of Hobart



Statement from the CEO

Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the Palawa, represent the southernmost, oldest continuous culture in the world. Hobart is known by many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as Nipaluna (Hobart).

It is essential that our Capital City is responsive to the wisdom and culture of our first people and ensure that, as an organisation, we are culturally safe, responsive and engaged with Palawa identified needs and priorities.

This document has been led by Palawa and utilises ethical and participatory community engagement to ensure we have heard these needs and priorities.

A culturally safe City will cultivate relationships which reflect on power and privilege, challenge assumptions and recognise the injustices and systemic issues that have and continue to impact Aboriginal people.

The City of Hobart is committed to the strategies within this document to embed cultural safety within our organisation.



Michael Stretton
CEO



Definitions

Country

Aboriginal people's cultural definition of Country goes beyond the Australian dictionary definition of the word and a place on a map. Country is a living kin and cultural landscape encompassing people with a strong sense of interdependence with all living things and all aspects of the environment. Country includes but is more than the sky, land, waterways and seas. For Aboriginal people, the meaning of the word Country is a complex cultural governance system of kingship lore, Cultural values, traditions and customs that builds an eco-centric culture that considers the health of Country and the quality of our connection to that Country. Country is a spirit that connects our values and belonging to a place as a people, that we must be welcomed into.

Cultural Safety

The concept of cultural safety originated in New Zealand, primarily in response to the negative impacts of colonization on the Māori people. It emphasizes that cultural safety is defined by the individuals from the culture in question, rather than by external providers or institutions. "Culturally safe practice means providing an environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people. There should be no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. Culturally safe practice is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together." Australian Government Disability Services and Inclusion Bill 2023

Culture

Culture refers to our shared beliefs, values, practices, customs and traditions that define us as Palawa.

Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal person/people)

It recognises and identifies Aboriginal people who are the cultural and original custodians through ancestry, cultural lore of Lutruwita (Tasmania).

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose ancestors, cultural Lore, and song lines are from mainland Australia (with some being born in Lutruwita, Tasmania) but live on Palawa Country and contribute to Palawa ways of knowing as providers of knowledge and stories within the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community. of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Community

It is a collective term for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Palawa Country and who participate in Community life.

Lutruwita

Lutruwita refers to all the islands known as Tasmania. It is the Country of the Palawa, whose cultural obligations and responsibilities are to care for all of this Country.

Introduction

A commitment was made in the City of Hobart Annual Plan for 2024-2025 to Review the City of Hobart's Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan 2020-2022. Feedback from the Aboriginal community was that The City of Hobart Commitment and Action Plan 2020-2022 focused on the Reconciliation Action Plan process. This was seen as inappropriate in Lutruwita, lacking tangible actions and not providing direct pathways to cultural safety. Truth Telling and Treaty had a greater focus on community feedback.

This strategy is the review's outcome and provides a responsive learning framework to build cultural safety and improve relationships and opportunities with Palawa over time, providing authentic opportunities for truth-telling. It identifies priorities across three areas discussed in consultations with Palawa across Lutruwita (Tasmania): Country, Culture and People.

Why cultural safety?

By Dewayne Everettsmith and Sarah Wilcox

Before explaining why building cultural safety is essential, we must understand and appreciate how Aboriginal knowledge will benefit our future.

A unified relationship, formed through deep time, exists between Palawa and the Country. Our shared knowledge, which respects and values All Life, has nourished Country, people, and culture for thousands of generations. We have a cultural obligation to protect and care for this Country, along with our heritage, culture and people.

These generational living knowledge systems include the ecological, medicinal, astronomical, and agricultural understanding of Country. They have enabled the sustainable and environmental management of the lands, seas and waterways.

This knowledge also provides valuable insights into addressing and adapting to climate challenges, improving our connection to our environment, and paving the way to embrace the holistic health and well-being practices that have sustained Aboriginal people throughout the ages.

The invasion and colonisation of Lutruwita (Tasmania) continue to threaten our relationship with Country. However, like the strength of the string woven from the grasses of Country, this connection cannot and will not be broken. This Country retains its significance across the islands, retaining its story and culture. It continues to live and breathe through the new structures and environments colonisation has created.



Accepting the dark truth of our history is vital to building an inclusive community that can celebrate this place we call home. Understanding the ongoing marginalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is essential to removing barriers and developing meaningful relationships through empathy and dignity. Recognising trauma and celebrating cultural differences can only deepen and enrich our knowledge for future generations. This generational thinking is how we future-proof the lives of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Cultural safety practices within the City of Hobart must be developed to create a generational planning approach and improve relationships with the Palawa Community.

A culturally safe organisation means there is no assault, challenge, or denial of identity or experience. Cultural safety is crucial to the social, emotional, physical, and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal (Indigenous) Peoples (UNDRIP) outlines the principles of cultural safety that better commit systems and organisations to equality and non-discriminative practices. These principles lead to respect for and protection of Aboriginal culture, collaboration in decision-making, and self-determination.

A commitment to cultural safety enables the City of Hobart to prioritise and value Palawa's cultural context, experiences, aspirations and needs in Nipaluna (Hobart).

This cultural safety strategy was developed with the Palawa Community and City of Hobart staff. This locally led process better considers Palawa's needs through authentic and robust relationships with various cultural knowledge keepers, practitioners, and professionals.

A shared journey based on the understanding and acceptance of truth will provide safer spaces for truth-telling and enable a more meaningful approach to conciliation.

Palawa Community Engagement

Elder Statement

By **Aunty Cheryl Mundy trimanya**

We Palawa have a holistic view of health, comprising mental, physical, cultural and spiritual health. Our well-being is intrinsically linked to Country. When these interrelations are disrupted, our health is affected.

Muwinina Country suffers - scarred by history and the built environments in Nipaluna. We are culturally responsible and compelled to heal and protect the health of lands, waterways and skies. Our cultural values, steeped in deep time, must be understood and respected.

We have put energy and time into many plans across governments over the years, with few being fully carried through. This strategy has to be different.

Actions to prevent cultural harm have a wide span. I have seen Cultural Awareness Training break down invisible walls and open communication pathways. Continuing Cultural Safety training shall in the long term impact services access and appropriateness, but we also need action on priorities identified in consultations. A social justice approach is needed.

I am asked what a culturally safe nipaluna means to me.

“It is having places to just be, to hear and see birds and animals and touch native grasses and trees. It is night skies and nocturnes protected from more city white light. It is the smell of salt water from a healthy timtumili minanya. It is Kunanyi protected from being a commodity in the world of developers. It is walking around nipaluna seeing palawa art, and authentic palawa history tours of the city. It is not being confronted by advertising by institutions promoting lutruwita as ‘their’ island. It is Australia Day celebrations held on a different date than Invasion Day. It is Truth telling and Treaty as pathways to healing and ultimate cultural safety.”

Youth Statement

By Tyenna Hogan

The City of Hobart's Cultural Safety Commitment marks an important step forward in fostering meaningful engagement with the Aboriginal community by embedding cultural safety practices within the organisation. I value the commitment to increasing the awareness of Palawa history, and look forward to seeing how this will shape and transform the landscape of Nipaluna. The creation of a cultural map and calendar is important in ensuring that Aboriginal people and cultures are celebrated beyond NAIDOC Week. I am particularly excited to see how these efforts will offer young Aboriginal people a sense of pride, belonging, and visibility in the wider community, while also creating pathways for growth and leadership.

Engagement

A culturally appropriate and safe engagement methodology was developed to guide the engagement for the City of Hobart's cultural safety strategy, which was applied alongside the International Association of Public Participation Australasia (IAP2A) engagement approach.

To develop an achievable strategy that focused on meaningful priorities and opportunities, it was critical for staff at the City of Hobart to develop the deliverables based on Palawa's priorities.

As an operational document, the collective ownership and accountability of the strategy sits with all staff at the City of Hobart, led by the CEO and executive leadership team.

Palawa Engagement

Initial conversations were held with Palawa cultural knowledge keepers and community members, who provided the founding priorities for this strategy.

Following staff workshops, the outcomes were shared with the Palawa Community for final feedback.

- 57 recommendations and suggestions
- Overall support for the process and strategy

Staff Engagement

- 8 Workshops
- 55 participants
- 23 cultural safety audits - demonstrating the organisation has good intentions and has started to improve cultural safety for Aboriginal people.

 PALAWA CONCERNS

The intent and promise of engagement being too late, confusing and not meaningful. Protection of Country and heritage. Culturally inappropriate terminology. Lack of understanding of our story and today's Community. Difficult procurement policies. Lack of cultural safety for staff. Lack of understanding and respect of Palawa creatives, artists, speakers and cultural protocols. Lack of accountability to the Community. Lack of understanding and application of UNDRIP and ICIP.

 PALAWA OPPORTUNITIES/SUPPORT

Meaningful advocacy supporting truth telling and Treaty. Genuine and widespread support for the approach and opportunities identified by staff. Celebrate and use placenames in language. Healthy Country planning and returning land to Palawa for cultural management. Honouring and reflection place to heal. Provide opportunities for Community to hire places and support events by reducing barriers to accessing supports. Environmental reconciliation and protection/preservation of native species. More Palawa interpretation and arts.

 STAFF CONCERNS

Doing harm, creating offence. Getting language right. Difficulties in finding the right consultant. Not understanding context of what's relevant and what's not. Not sure who to engage with or how to engage. Lack of cultural safety when managing work expectations. Lack of confidence in understanding Palawa culture. Lack of resourcing and time to progress meaningful engagement and outcomes.

 STAFF OPPORTUNITIES

Create better systems for consultations. Developing a culture map to understand history and culture within Hobart. Use dual names to promote language use Working collaboratively to incorporate cultural land and water management techniques to care for Country. Developing culturally appropriate ways to help share truth and stories. Providing cultural safety training across all organisation. Celebrate and use placenames in language.

Country

Cultural direction statement

Aboriginal people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual and physical relationship with their skies, land and waters.

Community Priority	Strategic Alignment
Healing and caring for Country through cultural fire and protecting sacred landscapes and heritage.	Pillar 1: Sense of Place Pillar 2: Inclusion, participation and belonging Pillar 6: Natural Environment Pillar 7: Built Environment Pillar 8: Governance and civic involvement

City of Hobart Commitment

Priority	Deliverable	Measure
Understand healthy country planning to develop partnerships and policy enabling cultural burning.	• Establish a partnership with Pakana Rangers. • Develop a Healthy Country Cultural Principle Guide, Nipaluna (Hobart).	• Support cultural burning by funding at least three cultural burns by Aboriginal fire practitioners, which provides the opportunity for Tasmanian Aboriginal Community to attend. • Research and understand the concept of Healthy Country Management Planning of the natural areas within Nipaluna (Hobart) by partnering with Aboriginal rangers and cultural landscape knowledge keepers. • Contract a Palawa consultant to create a Healthy Country Cultural Principle Guide.
Understand the importance of cultural landscapes and Aboriginal heritage in developing appropriate protection policies.	• Develop a Cultural landscape and Aboriginal Heritage Protection Policy, Nipaluna (Hobart).	• Appropriate staff complete cultural immersion activities to understand the significance of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington and Timtumili Minanya (River Derwent), cultural landscapes and Aboriginal Heritage. • Engage a Palawa cultural advisor to develop a Cultural landscape and Aboriginal Heritage Protection Policy.

Culture

Cultural direction statement

Aboriginal culture, stories and language are strong, supported and flourishing.

Community Priority

We are the owners of our story and language and our placenames are recognised and celebrated.

Strategic Alignment

Pillar 1: Sense of Place
Pillar 3: Creativity and culture
Pillar 5: Movement and connectivity

City of Hobart Commitment

Priority

Understand palawa kani language

Deliverable

- Organise a palawa kani Language Program presentation to understand language revitalisation.
- Develop a palawa kani usage guide.

Measure

- Attend palawa kani presentation by the palawa kani Language Program.
- palawa kani usage guide.

City of Hobart Commitment

Priority	Deliverable	Measure
Initiate a cultural curation project in collaboration with Palawa.	• Establish partnerships with cultural knowledge keepers to develop an internal cultural map for staff that includes placenames, stories and significant cultural areas across Nipaluna (Hobart). • Plan an interpretation project to share the story and significance of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington and Timtumili Minanya (River Derwent). • Collaborate with the Palawa to explore interpretation opportunities to celebrate Palawa history, culture and people.	• Cultural map designed and published internally, noting that sacred places will not be shared outside of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Engage a Palawa consultant for cultural direction. • Engage Aboriginal interpretation curators and artists to develop design interpretation and storytelling opportunities for Kunanyi/Mount Wellington and Timtumili Minanya (River Derwent) (timeline to be determined considering funding and availability).
Understand and respect protocols for cultural knowledge keepers and creatives.	• Develop Cultural Knowledge Protocols.	• Research and implement Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Rights (ICIP) into all Aboriginal contracts, including Terri Janke's report True Tracks, February 2019. • Organise a workshop to learn from Palawa cultural knowledge keepers and creatives to understand challenges and appropriate cultural protocols.
Understand existing memorials that trigger trauma across Nipaluna (Hobart).	• Review existing memorials by researching who has been celebrated and if they have caused harm to Aboriginal people. • Explore creating a place that honours truth-telling and Aboriginal people who have fought in wars and provides a place of reflection and healing.	• Report published and shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Engage a Palawa consultant to complete a feasibility study for a truth, reflection and healing place in Nipaluna (Hobart).

People

Cultural direction statement

Aboriginal people are strong in identity, are empowered and enjoy economic independence and civic involvement.

Community Priority

We are acknowledged as sovereign people and feel safe and respected for our cultural authority and knowledge.

Strategic Alignment

Pillar 2: Community inclusion, participation and belonging
Pillar 4: City economics
Pillar 8: Governance and civic involvement

City of Hobart Commitment

Priority	Deliverable	Measure
Understand cultural safety and increase cultural awareness of Palawa, history and the challenges and opportunities today.	• Introduce cultural safety awareness training for all City of Hobart elected members and staff. • Deliver cultural awareness training for staff during induction. • Advocate for Director of Local Government to mandate cultural awareness training for Elected Members in the Local Government Act, and activate cultural awareness training for Hobart City Council Elected Members during induction processes. • Develop an internal communications plan to inform people about current issues, events and opportunities to connect with Palawa, and report on the organisation's progress.	• At least 150 staff to complete cultural safety awareness training within the term of this commitment. • Complete a Cultural Safety Health Check and reporting framework for mentoring and progress (to be included in employee success planning). • Cultural awareness is included in the induction policy. • Deliver a Palawa news update every quarter to all staff.
Understand and embed culturally safe and trauma-informed practices in communications and engagement.	• Develop an Aboriginal Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy. • Develop a cultural calendar to understand significant cultural events and support opportunities for ally involvement. • Establish a Palawa Network to advise City of Hobart staff on the progress of this plan and other initiatives impacting the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community.	• Aboriginal Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy. • Invite Elders and Palawa cultural practitioners to the Palawa Network to build relationships and receive guidance and be accountable. • Understand the challenges facing Aboriginal procurement to increase the number of authentic Aboriginal suppliers.
Understand the challenges facing Aboriginal procurement to increase the number of authentic Aboriginal suppliers.	• Develop an Aboriginal Procurement Policy and Register in collaboration with Palawa Business Hub and Aboriginal businesses.	• Aboriginal Procurement Policy and Register.



Deliverables Schedule

1. Introduce cultural safety awareness training for all City of Hobart elected members and staff.
2. Develop an internal communications plan to inform people about current issues, events and opportunities to connect with Palawa, and report on the organisation's progress.
3. Develop an Aboriginal Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy.
4. Deliver cultural awareness training for staff during induction.
5. Advocate for Director of Local Government to mandate cultural awareness training for Elected Members in the Local Government Act, and activate cultural awareness training for Hobart City Council Elected Members during induction processes.
6. Develop a cultural calendar to understand significant cultural events and support opportunities for ally involvement.
7. Develop an Aboriginal Procurement Policy and Register in collaboration with Palawa Business Hub and Aboriginal businesses.
8. Establish a Palawa Network to advise City of Hobart staff on the progress of this plan and other initiatives impacting the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community.
9. Establish a partnership with Pakana Rangers.
10. Develop Cultural Knowledge Protocols.
11. Organise a palawa kani Language Program presentation to understand language revitalisation.
12. Develop a palawa kani usage guide.
13. Develop a Cultural landscape and Aboriginal Heritage Protection Policy, Nipaluna (Hobart).
14. Develop a Healthy Country Cultural Principle Guide, Nipaluna (Hobart).
15. Establish partnerships with cultural knowledge keepers to develop an internal cultural map for staff that includes placenames, stories and significant cultural areas across Nipaluna (Hobart).
16. Plan an interpretation project to share the story and significance of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington and Timtumili Minanya (River Derwent).
17. Collaborate with the Palawa Community to explore interpretation opportunities to celebrate Aboriginal history, culture and people.
18. Explore creating a place that honours truth-telling and Aboriginal people who have fought in wars and provides a place of reflection and healing.
19. Review existing memorials by researching who has been celebrated and if they have caused harm to Aboriginal people.



Artist Statement

Artworks Created by Emma Robertson.

Art work Collection: Transformation.

"Transformation" is a multimedia artwork that explores the intricate relationship between nature, history, and renewal. This artwork delves into the sites along the banks of the timtumili minanya, River Derwent, specifically focusing on coals, fire, plants, and smoke. Each element serves a specific purpose, representing different aspects of the transformative process.

The coals symbolize the remnants of the past, of a living culture that is still thriving today. They serve as a reminder of the community and stories that have been shared in circles for millennia. The flames, on the other hand, represent the cleansing power of fire, a symbol of renewal and rebirth. They represent the burning of old, stagnant energies, paving the way for the emergence of new life.

The white flag iris and gum leaves, nestled between the coals, represent the birth of new plants. The iris, with its delicate petals, signifies purity and innocence, and as a fibre plant for women's weaving, while the gum leaves, with their vibrant green colour, symbolize growth and vitality. These plants symbolize the resilience and adaptability of nature, its ability to reclaim and rejuvenate the land.

A layer of smoke hovers above the scene, representing the clearance of space and the new beginnings that arise from transformation. It serves as a visual reminder of the transformative power of cleansing and renewal. The smoke also serves as a symbol of the passage of time, as it slowly dissipates, leaving behind a clean slate for new possibilities.

Overall, *"Transformation"* is a powerful artwork that explores the intricate relationship between nature, history, and renewal. By incorporating symbols like the coals, fire, plants, and smoke, it invites viewers to contemplate the transformative process and the possibilities for their own new beginnings.

Hobart Town Hall,
Macquarie Street,
Hobart,
Tasmania 7000 Australia
t (03) 6238 2711
f (03) 6238 2186
e coh@hobartcity.com.au
w hobartcity.com.au