

## Minutes

### Yana Ngargna Advisory Committee



<b>Date</b>	18 May 2026
<b>Time</b>	1:00 pm-3 pm
<b>Location</b>	Wurundjeri room, Collingwood Town Hall
<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Sharon Harrison and Aunty Annette Xiberras
<b>Minute taker</b>	Cristina Del Frate
<b>Content Manager Reference</b>	D26/223486

### Statement of Recognition of Wurundjeri Land

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

### Attendees

<b>Councillor/s</b>	Councillor Sharon Harrison
<b>Committee members</b>	Mark Jones, Annette Xiberras, Tiana Koehrer and Andrew Gardiner
<b>Council Officers</b>	Malcolm McCall, Cristina Del Frate, Catherine Tranter, Ariel Blum, Rafaella McDonald.
<b>Guests</b>	
<b>Apologies</b>	Cr Sophie Wade,

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country	Aunty Annette Xiberras gave a Welcome to Country. Aunty Annette Xiberras also noted that the Council report concerning black deaths in custody remains unresolved.
2.	Staffing update	An update was provided that a member of the Aboriginal Partnerships team had tendered their resignation and that Council was progressing arrangements for continuity of work associated with the First Peoples portfolio.
3.	Pilot project- Proposed First Peoples-led live music programming for Leaps and Bounds 2027 – Ariel Blum and Rafaella McDonald	An overview of the item was provided by Council officers, outlining the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A proposed First Peoples-led pilot project is being developed to support improved First Peoples inclusion in Yarra’s live music sector</li><li>The project is intended to respond to opportunities and barriers relating to First Peoples programming, venue practice, cultural safety and audience experience</li><li>Funding is available to engage a First Peoples organisation or consultant to work with selected venues</li><li>The project is proposed to commence in 2026 and lead into Leaps and Bounds 2027.</li></ul> Matters raised by the Committee

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee discussed the importance of respect, cultural safety and appropriate venue practice for First Peoples performers, audiences and Elders.</li> <li>• Suggestions included First Nations procurement, cultural awareness training, working with experienced First Peoples organisations, and practical supports for Elders.</li> <li>• Members noted the importance of clear scope, timeframes and expectations before engaging external partners.</li> </ul> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers to send the project scope to Committee members for review.</li> <li>• Committee members to provide suggestions for First Peoples consultants, organisations or delivery partners.</li> </ul>
4.	Yana Ngargna Policy	<p>An overview of the item was provided by Council officers, outlining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The latest draft of the Yana Ngargna Policy had been circulated to members</li> <li>• Feedback was sought on the draft policy and on final engagement with First Peoples stakeholders</li> <li>• The draft policy is scheduled for Council consideration.</li> <li>• Members were asked to identify any additional stakeholders who should be consulted before the report proceeds to Council.</li> </ul> <p>Matters raised by the Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee discussed the draft policy and the importance of ensuring the document reflects appropriate language, cultural authority and Council’s commitments to First Peoples.</li> <li>• Feedback included ensuring consistent spelling of “Woi-wurrung” throughout the document.</li> <li>• A suggestion was made that the policy include stronger wording regarding Council’s position on 26 January / changing the date of Australia Day.</li> <li>• Members raised the issue of the retention of First Peoples Staff at Council and discussed cultural safety, organisational trust, and support for First Peoples staff.</li> <li>• An officer provided a limited staffing update in response to questions raised and noted that individual employment circumstances could not be discussed in the Committee setting. It was further noted that staffing arrangements and operational management are outside the Committee’s remit and must be managed through appropriate internal processes. The officer also noted that Councillors are subject to statutory governance obligations relating to confidential information and the limits of their role in relation to staffing and operational matters.</li> </ul> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee members to advise officers of any additional stakeholders to be consulted on the draft Yana Ngargna Policy.</li> <li>• The Deputy Mayor noted the broader themes raised regarding First Peoples staff experience and advised that she would seek</li> </ul>

		guidance from the Mayor and CEO on the appropriate governance pathway.
5.	Sorry Day	<p>An update was provided on the upcoming Sorry Day event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event will be held on Tuesday 26 May 2026, from 11:00am to 12:30pm, at the Stolen Generations Marker in Fitzroy.</li> <li>The program will include a Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country, a speaker and a musical performance.</li> <li>A First Peoples MC was still being sought.</li> </ul> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers to re-send the Sorry Day invitation to Committee members.</li> </ul>
6.	NAIDOC march	<p>The Committee was advised that Council will assist with traffic management for the NAIDOC march.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers to send information regarding the NAIDOC march to Committee members.</li> </ul>
7.	Community Grants	<p>An overview of the upcoming Community Grants Program was provided by a Council officer, outlining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The grants round will open around mid-year.</li> <li>The program includes a dedicated First Peoples funding stream of approximately \$70,000.</li> <li>Initiatives funded through the First Peoples stream must be First Peoples-led.</li> <li>Additional First Peoples assessors are being sought through an Expression of Interest process.</li> <li>Assessment work is expected to occur across August and September 2026.</li> <li>Members were encouraged to share the assessor Expression of Interest opportunity through their networks.</li> </ul> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officer to circulate Community Grants information to Committee members.</li> </ul>
8.	Other Business	<p>Matters raised by the Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised about whether the organisation provides a culturally safe environment for First Peoples to raise issues.</li> <li>The risk of isolation for First Peoples staff and the need to strengthen attraction, retention, and support was discussed.</li> <li>The importance of Council learning from staff experience over time and applying continuous improvement to strengthen cultural safety and support for First Peoples staff was discussed.</li> <li>Also discussed, was the importance of organisational arrangements that enable First Peoples advice, cultural authority and partnership work to have appropriate influence across Council.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers advised that arrangements were being progressed to support continuity of work associated with the First Peoples portfolio, and the transition to a future appointment.</li> <li>• An update was provided on interim arrangements and ongoing recruitment.</li> <li>• Appropriate forums for addressing these matters were considered.</li> </ul> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers to provide updates on continuity of work associated with the First Peoples portfolio and the transition to a future appointment.</li> <li>• The Deputy Mayor advised that she would seek guidance from the Mayor and CEO on the appropriate governance pathway to consider matters of First Peoples employment.</li> </ul>
	<b>Next Meeting</b>	<b>17 August 2026</b>