

Want to learn more?

Get active...

There are many sites and features in Wanneroo important to the local Whadjuk Noongar people, history and culture and some of these are described along the route of the Yaberoo Budjara Heritage Trail. This trail based on the movements of Yellagonga's group can be walked in sections. Brochures can be obtained from wanneroo.wa.gov.au/Lifestyle/Heritage/Heritage_and_Museum_Information or from the Wanneroo Regional Museum.

Get learning...

The Community History Centre (attached to the Wanneroo Museum, 3 Rocca Way, Wanneroo) has a collection of relevant research material. You can also see your local City of Wanneroo Library for a list of books, visit our website wanneroo.wa.gov.au and search for Reconciliation Action Plan, or phone 9405 5900 for more information.

Get connected...

The City of Wanneroo annually celebrates Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June and NAIDOC Week (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day Observance Committee) at the start of July with activities that all of community can be involved in. See the City's website for more information.



"KAYA"

Welcome to Noongar land and people in the City of Wanneroo

This brochure was created as an outcome of the City of Wanneroo 2012-2014 Reconciliation Action Plan, with the support of the RAP Working Group and local community members.

Available in alternative formats upon request for ease of reading. Call 9405 5900.



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NOONGAR ELDER ORIEL GREEN AND MAYOR TRACEY ROBERTS

Mayor's Message

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group Chair, Oriel Green and I are delighted to introduce a brief history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture in Wanneroo.



We congratulate the members of the RAP Working Group for their hard work, commitment and success. This document is a result of many hours of research and knowledge by many groups and we are proud to commend it to you.

Tracey Roberts JP, Mayor

The first people of Wanneroo

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived in Australia for more than 60,000 years and operated within 270 different language groups.

The City of Wanneroo is within 'Noongar Country'. Noongar Country is the South West of Western Australia and contains 14 different language groups with the area extending from just north of Jurien Bay across to Esperance.

Two Noongar language groups, the Whadjuk and Yued people, lived and shared cultural areas in the northern parts of the City of Wanneroo for traditions and customs. This region was part of Mooro Country, the district of an important Whadjuk Noongar Elder and leader Yellagonga.

Water was vital for Yellagonga's group for their survival and spiritual connections. This made Wanneroo, with the abundant food sources on the shores of its lakes, an important environment for local Whadjuk Noongar families.

Noongar family groups had complex social and family structures and spiritual beliefs, which determined



their way of life and interactions with each other. They moved around the coastal sandplain according to the six Noongar seasons hunting and gathering as they went. Their deep understanding of the land and climate allowed them to live well on animals, fish, insects and plants. They needed few possessions and clothing, shelter and implements were simply crafted and skilfully adapted for their use.

First connection with the “new arrivals”

The local Whadjuk and Yued Noongar groups had contact with European explorers including George Grey who travelled through the Wanneroo region several times in the 1830s.

Grey’s diaries show his admiration for Noongar bushcraft skills and patterns of life, perfectly in balance with the natural environment and producing a generous livelihood. On one occasion, Grey was saved from starvation by the Noongar people of Wanneroo.

The arrival of the settlers started the destruction of the Noongar way of life. First contacts between the groups were cautious, curious and often friendly, but once the newcomers began taking over the fertile areas conflict between the two groups was often the result. The new settlers believed in private ownership and did not understand the way Noongar people shared possessions and their association to the land. Skirmishes resulted in killings on both sides, with the Noongar people finally being overwhelmed by the settlers.

Removed from their land, Noongar families did not have access to their traditional foods and materials. Too often they ended up living in basic camps on the edges of the colonial settlements.

Many died from introduced diseases and their sacred sites were destroyed. Church missions were set up and one of these, the Wesleyan Mission Farm was located in Wanneroo near Lake Goollelal from 1844 to 1851.

This mission was set up to promote Christian values. They taught farming skills which helped to reduce mission costs and to create links with other Noongar groups. This mission failed because they lost any trust previously gained with Aboriginal families after their children died from TB from the cow’s milk they were fed; and also due to the lack of success in farming.

While these missions provided food and basic necessities, they were harsh in their treatment of Noongar people and resulted in the breaking down of traditional language, customs and law, and family kinship networks.

Government intervention

1886 saw the start of race-based laws which the government believed were to provide for the care and

protection of Aboriginal people. In reality they controlled all aspects of Aboriginal life.

This was particularly true of The Aborigines Act of 1905 which further confined people to missions, reserves and settlements, restricted freedom of movement, and introduced curfews. Marriage and employment were controlled, but the most distressing result of the 1905 Act was placing Aboriginal children under the guardianship of the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

This led to the widespread forced removal of children by the government from their families to institutions or to adoptive white families. The 1936 Native Administration Act was enacted to further control the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia up until the late 1960’s and early 1970’s.

Steps towards recognition of traditional owners

After the 1967 Federal Referendum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were given the rights of all Australian citizens to be counted in the National census and to be recognized as Australian citizens. The Commonwealth Government was given the power to make laws on behalf of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It was not until after the Mabo Decision and the introduction of the Native Title Act in 1993, that Western Australia recognized the land rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On 13 February 2008 the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd formally apologised to the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal people. He acknowledged and took ownership for the legislation of previous governments which caused



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be removed from their families.

The impact of such laws continues to be felt within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities across Australia.

The City of Wanneroo and community walking together towards Reconciliation

In June 2010 the City of Wanneroo Council endorsed the creation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This plan details Council’s commitment to work alongside the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the City of Wanneroo, to show respect, build positive and lasting relationships and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The City’s first RAP (2012-2014) was created through a sincere and intensive process of engaging and working alongside the community.

