

Shared Work – the City of Fremantle's Indigenous Employment Story



Presented by Cr Josh Wilson,
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Introduction

Fremantle/Walyalup is a place with a distinctive character and strong sense of history & identity.

The foundation of that identity is the role of Fremantle/Walyalup as a meeting place on Whadjuk Noongar land.

But Fremantle/Walyalup is a place where the full participation of Indigenous people in the social and economic life of our City is yet to be achieved.

2009: Time for Change

- In 2009, the Council underwent some generational change with the election of a new Mayor, Brad Pettitt, and five new Councillors – most of whom were younger than 40.
- In 2009, the **National Indigenous Reform Agreement** came into effect, outlining six key objectives for closing the gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians.
- This included halving the gap in employment participation within a decade – and called on government to take positive action to lead this change.

2010 – City of Fremantle’s ‘Employment Values’

- In December 2010, a motion brought by Cr Sam Wainwright proposed a set of five employment values to guide the City of Fremantle.
- A sixth principle was added, creating an Indigenous employment target of 4% to be achieved by 2015/16, with annual reporting to Council.
- At that stage, Indigenous staff made up only 0.5% of the City’s workforce.



2011: The Shared Work Begins

- Developed the City's first **Indigenous Employment Policy** and **Indigenous Employment Action Plan**
- Signed-up to the **Australian Employment Covenant** and received grant funding.
- Identified positions across the organisation for growing Indigenous employment.
- Appointed part-time Human Resources Officer for Indigenous employment.



2013/14: Organisational Change & Progress

- The City has now delivered Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training for all directors, managers, and staff.
- We have developed local partnerships with SMYL, Notre Dame University and the Fremantle Senior High School.
- We have established processes to specifically recruit and engage Indigenous staff and trainees.
- In 2013/14 we reached 3.4% Indigenous employees – or 13 FTEs across the City.

Wider Indigenous Engagement & Recognition

- 2014: Created **Aboriginal Cultural Centre**
 - Located at Manjaree/Arthur's Head, the Centre was opened in March with an event to launch the WA Journey to Recognition as part of the **Recognise** campaign.
 - Provides opportunities to showcase, learn about and interact with Noongar craft, art, language and culture
 - Presents seasonal Aboriginal cultural programs, run by local Aboriginal people.
 - Founded on a 'community model' to build local capacity and self-governance.



Wider Indigenous Engagement & Recognition (continued)

- 2011 – present: Engagement with Traditional Owners on issues including consultation in decision-making.
- Focus on opportunities for greater use of Noongar language and names in Fremantle/Walyalup.
- E.g. the new street connection to Bathers Beach, created for the ISAF World Sailing Championship was called Wardan Lane, using the Noongar word for ocean.



2014 and Beyond – Consolidation, Celebration, and the *Fremantle Indigenous & Reconciliation Employment Compact*

- June 2014: Council endorses ***Fremantle Indigenous Employment & Reconciliation Compact***.
- Lead the creation of a Compact between relevant Fremantle organisations around an agreed set of objectives in terms of indigenous workforce participation & training.
- **Local government reform:** work to achieve 4% Indigenous employees within the new ‘greater’ Fremantle.
- Fine-tuning our mentoring and training programs, and increasing the focus on retention and career development.

“It’s a long road we have come and it’s a long road we can go. We have to walk together and talk together. If you never listen to me, I will never listen to you. I will not follow you. Walk side by side and let’s get there.”

Conrad Ratarara, Arrernte leader & Tjuwanpa elder from
Central Australia