

## City of Parramatta launches groundbreaking First Nations Strategy

Dechlan Brennan - May 3, 2024

The City of Parramatta launched a First Nations Strategy at the Parramatta Town Hall on Thursday, hitting a new milestone in the city's relationship with the Dharug and broader Indigenous community.

The 'First Nations Strategy 2024-2029' will help drive understanding, recognition, and respect for the Dharug people, as well as all other Indigenous communities across Parramatta. It is the first for a Greater Western Sydney council beyond a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Baramadagal woman and City of Parramatta First Nations Committee chair, Jayne Christian, key to the strategy was consultation with the Dharug and Parramatta First Nations community.

"The First Nations Strategy is the result of a process informed by the Aboriginal Community that distills what's important to the Aboriginal Community connected to Parramatta," Ms Christian said.

"It allows for the cohesive functioning of the whole Community, and it embeds these principles and objectives into how the City of Parramatta measures success."

There are 672 Indigenous households in Parramatta, for a total of 2079 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. 602 are students.





City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Pierre Esber (left), Jayne Christian and Aunty Julie Jones both received flowers as a show of gratitude for the extensive work they've put into the First Nations Strategy (Image: Supplied)

In the introduction to the Strategy, Ms Christian said "Culturally, it is our responsibility to think of future generations and ask ourselves what is needed in this moment to ensure our people (iyora) and country (ngurra) have what is needed to survive and thrive in seven generations time".

She said integral to the success of the Strategy were five key elements by which to measure outcomes: social justice, cultural leadership, social cohesion, celebration, and accountability goals.

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Lord Mayor Councillor Pierre Esber said the Strategy is about putting words and sentiments into action.

"We want to centre Dharug and all First Nations people at the heart of what Council does," Cr Esber said, noting he was proud the council was "stepping up" to deliver the Strategy.

"We are moving past a reconciliation plan and taking the next step towards practical outcomes."

The strategy is built on the legacy of the Council's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, which they argue increased procurement from Indigenous businesses, as well as delivering "greater incorporation" of First Nations culture into programming at local theatres.

"Our goals and actions must also reflect the needs and aspirations of Dharug and other First Nations people who have a connection to this Country," Cr Esber said.

"Parramatta has always been an important gathering place for Dharug and other First Nations people, and we want to ensure it continues to be."

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