



Moreland
City Council

SPECIAL COUNCIL AGENDA

Monday 13 December 2021

Commencing 7 pm

The meeting will be held via video conference and livestreamed

Language Link

This is the Agenda for the Council meeting.
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Đây là Nghị Trình cuộc họp của Ủy Ban Quy Hoạch Đô Thị. Nếu muốn biết thêm chi tiết về đề tài thảo luận, xin gọi điện thoại cho Language Link qua số 9280 1915.

यह काँसिल की बैठक का कार्यक्रम है। कार्यक्रम के किसी भी विषय के बारे में सहायता के लिए कृपया 9280 1918 पर फोन कीजिए।

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ਇਹ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਹੈ।
ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਈਟਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ,
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 9280 0751 ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

1. **WELCOME**
2. **APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS**
4. **COUNCIL REPORTS**
 - 4.1 PROPOSED RENAMING OF MORELAND CITY COUNCIL 3

4. COUNCIL REPORTS

4.1 PROPOSED RENAMING OF MORELAND CITY COUNCIL

Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Henderson

Director Community Development, Eamonn Fennessy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Supports in principle changing the name of the municipality.
2. Partners with stakeholders, including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, to co-design a process to select a new name during 2022 including arrangements for community engagement.
3. Plans and commences in 2022 a community information and education program that acknowledges the impacts and consequences of dispossession and racism and encourages respectful understanding through truth telling and reconciliation.
4. Receives a report in February 2022 detailing the proposed community information and education campaign, recommendations from the name selection process co-design activity, including plans for community engagement.
5. Following community and stakeholder engagement, selects a preferred suitable name for the municipality to present to the Minister for Local Government for consideration in 2022.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In November 2021, information was presented to Council by Elders from the Traditional Owner community and other community representatives, showing that Moreland City Council was named after land, between Moonee Ponds Creek and Sydney Road, that Farquhar McCrae acquired in 1839. He named the land 'Moreland' after a Jamaican slave estate his forebears had operated.

The land which forms part of the Moreland local government area was sold to Farquhar McCrae without the permission of the Traditional Owners, who were suddenly dispossessed from their land.

In 1994 the local government areas of the City of Brunswick, the City of Coburg and part of Broadmeadows were amalgamated and the Victorian Government named the new council Moreland. The name Moreland City Council is therefore 27 years old.

Council has a long history of proactive leadership on issues of racism, inclusion and reconciliation and has for many years used the description of 'one community, proudly diverse'. In 2021 Council signed a Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. Council also supports a process towards self-determination and local, regional, or national Treaty or Treaties that enshrine the rights of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

In the light of this, retaining the name Moreland City Council conflicts with the Council's history and aspirations.

This report recommends that Council support in principle changing the name of the municipality, that is, changing Moreland City Council's corporate name.

It's recommended this be supported by a name selection and community engagement process in 2022 that will be co-designed with stakeholders, including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The timing for such education, engagement and truth telling at a local level aligns well with Treaty and truth telling activities underway across Victoria.

Ultimately the decision to change Council's corporate name rests with the Victorian Government who can choose to make an Order in Council under s 235(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). Once a suitable name has been selected following community engagement a preferred name will be presented to the Minister for Local Government for consideration in 2022.

The Minister for Local Government has encouraged Council to work closely with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation throughout the proposed renaming process. The Minister also confirms his support and has offered to facilitate renaming of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Act if the proposal is supported by Council and the local community.

Previous Council Decisions

Council has previously adopted Statements of Commitment, most recently the Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung People and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland, resolved on 12 May 2021 as follows:

That Council:

1. *Endorses the Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland as approved by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Board of Management on 4 March 2021.*
2. *Supports a public signing ceremony that will be livestreamed from Council Chambers at an appropriate time hosted by the Mayor, Councillors, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and members of the Moreland Reconciliation Working Group.*

1. Policy Context

This report is consistent with the following Council plans and policies:

Council Plan 2021-2025

Theme 3: A healthy and caring Moreland

Council will:

- *Strengthen the relationship with Traditional Custodians and First Nations communities to support a process towards self-determination and local, regional or national Treaty or Treaties.*

The Moreland Human Rights Policy 2016 – 2026

Extract from Theme 4: Advocacy and Leadership:

Council will:

- *In collaboration with people from identified priority groups, Council will advocate to other spheres of government, business, partner organisation and the community to promote human rights and address issues of discrimination and marginalisation at the local, regional, national and international level.*

Outcomes:

- *Advocacy and leadership initiatives to promote human rights and address discrimination.*

Social Cohesion Plan (2020–2025)

Extract from Theme 4: Diversity and Discrimination

Council will:

- *Continue to celebrate the diversity of Moreland and upholding human rights. We will ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of our community and will fight against racism and discrimination in all forms.*

Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland (Attachment 1)

Extract:

Council recognises that:

- *The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of these lands and waterways in Moreland.*

Council supports:

- *A process towards self-determination and local, regional, or national Treaty or Treaties that enshrine the rights of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*

Council commits itself to:

- *Undertake cultural consultations with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and seek to include Woi-wurrung names in the process of naming and renaming spaces, places, roads and parks in the City of Moreland.*

2. Background

Formation of Moreland City Council

The Moreland City Council local government area was formed on 22 June 1994, by the amalgamation of the City of Brunswick and the City of Coburg. On 15 December 1994 it was expanded by the addition of the southern parts of the City of Broadmeadows - Glenroy, Oak Park, Fawkner and Hadfield. Moreland is a locality situated either side of the boundary between the former municipalities of Brunswick and Coburg, around the Moreland train station and Moreland Road. The Victorian Government named the newly amalgamated local government area Moreland in 1994. Commentary from the time suggested the name Moreland was selected as it reflected the approximate middle of the newly formed municipality and was a local place name.

Naming of “Moreland” in 1839

Use of the name “Moreland” in Melbourne stems from land, between Moonee Ponds Creek and Sydney Road, acquired in 1839 by Farquhar McCrae. McCrae named his property Moreland after a family plantation in Jamaica, an estate which traded in slaves, sugar and rum. Various reports suggest his grandfather operated the estate and his father was raised there. Records are available online via the University College London academic website which set out history and statistics around slave trading of the estate from 1783-1887, at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/2145>.

The numbers of enslaved people at the estate peaked in 1827 with 700 slaves. After slavery was outlawed in British colonies, in November 1835, Moreland’s slave-owners received significant compensation for 585 slaves from the British Government. Despite this, these slaves were then required to endure an extended period of indenture and would still have been in bondage when McCrae first used the name Moreland in Victoria.

At the time when Farquhar McCrae purchased land in what is now known as the Moreland local government area in 1839, the traditional owners had not given permission for the sale. This was part of the devastating dispossession of the Aboriginal community in Victoria. Council’s Statement of Commitment adopted in May 2021 includes recognition that “*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have*

never ceded sovereignty of their lands”.

Recent approach by Elders from Traditional Owner Community and Community Representatives

On 15 October 2021, a community member contacted the office of Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of a group including Elders of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung. He requested a meeting with the CEO and Mayor to:

“alert them to a matter of significant concern involving the City... a confronting example of ingrained racism of historic origin relating to the City that involves ongoing insensitivity... As it would be highly preferable to convey and address such sensitive matters face-to-face, an appointment toward late November is sought in anticipation that eased restrictions may make a personal meeting possible by that time.”

The CEO discussed the request with the then Mayor Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan and scheduled the meeting for late November as requested. After the Mayoral election, the incoming Mayor Cr Mark Riley was briefed and invited.

Advice and request to Council on 19 November 2021

The meeting took place on 19 November 2021 including three Elders from the Traditional Owner Community and other community representatives. From Council, the Mayor Cr Mark Riley, CEO Cathy Henderson and Director Community Development Eamonn Fennessy attended.

A letter was presented to the Mayor and CEO (see **Attachment 2**).

At the meeting, Elders acknowledged Moreland City Council’s strong efforts in relation to reconciliation, including the recent signing of the renewed Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland.

At the meeting, information was provided showing the origins of the name “Moreland”, including details of the slave trading at the Moreland estate in Jamaica. Information included that Farquhar McCrae named the land that he acquired in 1839 after a Jamaican slave estate his forebears had operated. The Moreland plantation estate operated in Southern Jamaica and was active between 1783-1887. Its business included sugar, rum and slave trading, with 500–700 slaves there in any one year.

There was also information presented in relation to the rapid rate, extensive scale and catastrophic impacts of land dispossession on Aboriginal people from the 1830’s and 1840’s land sales in the locale now known as the Moreland local government area. During the years 1838 to 1840 approximately 85% of the current Moreland local government area was granted into exclusive private ownership. This occurred swiftly, without the permission of Traditional Owners, who were suddenly dispossessed from their land with catastrophic consequences.

Elders and other representatives at the meeting advised that, as Moreland City Council was named after the slave estate, the name was racist and offensive.

The group’s request of Council is to make commitments to:

- *“Partner with stakeholders in a respectful process to select a suitable new name during 2022.*
- *Initiate and implement actions that acknowledge the impacts and consequences of dispossession, encourage respectful understanding through truth-telling, redress injustice and heal racist hurt.”*

The group did not suggest an alternative name, but proposed a co-design process with stakeholders, including Traditional Owners, to determine a suitable and respectful process for renaming. The request was solely to change the name of the municipality. No changes to other established place names or features were proposed or requested.

3. Issues

Moreland City Council has long been known as 'one community, proudly diverse'. Council has a strong track record over decades as a leader championing just and fair outcomes for Moreland's diverse community on issues of racism, reconciliation and inclusion.

A number of issues are set out below.

Racism

Councillors and staff now know the slave trading origins of the name Moreland.

Councillors and staff have been advised the name is racist and offensive to many, including to the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

Moreland City Council has been directly named after a slave trading estate. This fact from the past cannot now be changed. Council can however proactively address harm caused by racism, through truth telling and reconciliation, and through a proposed future renaming.

In its 27 years, Moreland City Council has historically stood against racism and for diversity. Having a name which is considered racist and offensive conflicts with this history and with Council's commitment to social justice, diversity and community inclusion.

Having a name which is considered racist and offensive conflicts with Council's commitment to promoting equality and inclusion in the workplace.

For these reasons, officers recommend Council support in principle renaming of the municipality and embarking on co-designing a process with stakeholders – including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation - to select a new name during 2022, including arrangements for community engagement.

There are no proposals from Council to rename roads, train stations or schools in the municipality.

Council's Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland

Council unanimously resolved in May 2021 to adopt the Statement of Commitment, and the Statement was signed in October 2021.

Among many things, the Statement commits Council to:

"[A]ddressing dispossession and dislocation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their traditional lands by establishing and maintaining into the future, respectful partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community".

"[Supporting] process towards self-determination and local, regional or national Treaty or Treaties that enshrine the rights of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians."

"[Supporting] The right of all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City of Moreland to respect and equality and to live free from discrimination based on age, sex, gender identity, race, disability and any type of disadvantage."

"Undertake cultural consultations with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and seek to include Woi-wurrung names in the process of naming and renaming spaces, places, roads and parks in the City of Moreland."

These commitments mean that Council must very seriously consider the request that has been received. It is difficult to see how retaining the name "Moreland City Council" is in alignment with these commitments.

Previous knowledge

After this issue was publicised in mid-November 2021, a number of community members have said that they have long known that Moreland was named after a slave estate. Some community members have advised that this was known in 1994 when Moreland City Council was named by the Victorian Government. People have said that this was communicated to the Victorian Government around the time of amalgamations in 1994.

References in official Moreland communications, including an interpretative street sign, refer to a Jamaican estate without specifying its status as a slave estate.

The slave trading origins of the name 'Moreland' were clearly understood by some people over decades. But it was not previously widely known among Moreland community, Councillors or staff. This is underlined by the widespread media coverage in late November 2021 when large numbers of people were surprised to learn of the name's origins.

Regardless of how many people previously understood that Moreland City Council was named after a slave estate, this does not affect the decision before the Council now.

Whether this sets a precedent

The requests from the representatives of Traditional Owners and the community are only to change the name of Moreland City Council.

Moreland City Council's name is quite new - only 27 years old. The Council is named after a place, and not directly after a person. It is proposed to remove the name of the place and substitute another name with suitable community support. This does not necessarily set a precedent.

Nonetheless, there has been some momentum in reconsidering names of geographic places and references in Australia, for instance the renaming of the federal electorate Batman to Cooper, or the planned renaming of Ben Boyd National Park in NSW.

Of course, the public debate about Moreland City Council's name in November 2021 has seen some community members wonder about other names as well, for instance names of roads and schools. This would be a matter for the relevant agencies and communities – it is not Moreland City Council's responsibility.

If the renaming of Moreland occurs, it may form a part of some momentum of the community re-examining names. But it does not automatically set a precedent for other municipalities or geographic names.

Moreland City Council needs to make the decision in the light of what's right for Moreland City Council and the Moreland community.

Process

Ultimately the decision to change Council's corporate name rests with the Victorian Government who can choose to make an Order in Council under s 235(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). Following community and stakeholder engagement in 2022, it is recommended that Council select a preferred suitable name for the municipality to present to the Minister for Local Government for consideration in 2022.

The Minister for Local Government, The Hon Shaun Leane MP, wrote to the Mayor Cr Mark Riley on 30 November 2021, in response to an earlier letter from the Mayor (see **Attachment 3**). The Minister encourages Council to work closely with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation throughout the process. The Minister also confirms his support and has offered to facilitate renaming of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Act if the proposal is supported by Council and the local community.

Options

Option 1 (recommended)

The officer recommendation is to support in principle changing the name of Moreland

City Council, and co-design a community consultation process to take place in 2022 to support truth telling and reconciliation, and to choose a new name.

This would be informed by advice from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in designing a process for identifying options for a suitable name that reflect local Indigenous place names and language.

It is also proposed to open a conversation with the community on the impacts and consequences of dispossession and racism and encourage respectful understanding through a program of education, truth telling and reconciliation. The timing for such education, engagement and truth telling at a local level aligns well with Treaty activities underway across Victoria.

The Victorian Government are working toward a treaty or treaties with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians and efforts to create a better future for all Victorians and enable true self-determination for Victoria's First Peoples. In addition to this, the Aboriginal led Yoo-rook Justice Commission has recently been formed as the country's first truth telling processes. Its intention is to formally reckon with past and ongoing injustices and lay the foundations for healing with all First Peoples in Victoria.

Option 2 (not recommended): Council could choose to conduct a community engagement process on whether Moreland City Council's name should be changed.

A process of engagement around possible new names, and around truth telling, sharing stories and reconciliation would be a positive step. However, some questions should not be consulted on. Asking the community whether Moreland City Council should be renamed is akin to asking the community to debate whether naming something after a slave plantation is racist or not. This is considered divisive, hurtful and unnecessary.

Option 3 (not recommended)

Council could choose not to take action on the name and to retain the name Moreland City Council.

Not changing a known racist name with origins in slave trading does not align with Council or the organisation's values. Retaining the name now, with this knowledge, could cause considerable reputational damage to Moreland as a progressive and responsive local government service provider to a diverse multicultural community. It also causes reputational damage as a current and potential employer and as an accomplished leader in matters of anti-racism, social cohesion and human rights.

Retaining the name would contradict Council's strong commitment to reconciliation, and to the Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Communities of the City of Moreland.

Community impact

The proposal to change the name of the municipality is a matter of significant interest for the Moreland community and beyond. The recommendation is to change the name from what is a name with racist and offensive associations and to engage the community widely to enable them to have their say on the deliberation and selection of a new name for the municipality.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There are no direct climate emergency or environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Legal and risk considerations

Legal advice has been sought to inform this report on whether Council's name can be changed and what process needs to be followed in order for any change in the corporate name to take place.

Council was constituted by an Order of Council made on 21 June 1994, and published in the *Victorian Government Gazette* the following day. That Order in Council – which was made under the *Local Government Act 1989* – provided for the constitution of a body corporate as a City Council ‘by of the name of Moreland City Council’. Council has continued to exist pursuant to the Order in Council.

Only the Victorian Government can change Council’s corporate name. It can do so by making an Order in Council under s 235(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the LGA), which would occur on the recommendation of the Minister for Local Government. There are no procedural prerequisites to the making of such an Order in Council. Before requesting the Minister for Local Government to facilitate the making of such an Order in Council, Council is free to engage with its community about new corporate name options.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirement of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The report supports Charter Section 19 (2) Aboriginal Cultural Rights and Responsibilities which say that Aboriginal People hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right to:

- Enjoy their identity and culture.
- Maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

4. Community consultation and engagement

A comprehensive community engagement plan regarding selecting a new name for the municipality in 2022 will be guided by Council’s Engagement Policy, including co-design with Traditional Owners and other stakeholders. This plan will be presented for Councils consideration in February 2022.

It is not proposed to engage the community on whether the name should be changed from Moreland or not. This would effectively ask the community to decide if the name Moreland is racist or not, which is considered divisive, hurtful, and unnecessary.

Communications

A comprehensive community information and education program that acknowledges the impacts and consequences of dispossession and racism and encourages respectful understanding through truth telling and reconciliation is proposed for 2022. Details of this plan will be presented to Council for consideration at its February 2022 meeting.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Resources required to support the resolution, including the renaming process and associated community engagement, information and education campaign can be met within current budget allocations.

In the current economic climate, it is recommended to take a prudent and phased approach to introducing any name change, drawing on existing budget allocations.

In addition, an additional estimated \$250,000 per year for two financial years (\$500,000 total) is required to update Council’s digital platforms, signs at significant Council buildings and facilities and municipal entry signs.

Updating Council assets such as street and park signs, smaller facilities signage, staff uniforms and vehicles will be addressed incrementally within existing budget


allocations and asset renewal programs over a 10-year timeframe. This includes significant replacement of residential bins which are required anyway in future years, due to Victorian Government recycling reforms. It is anticipated updates would commence in the 2022-2023 financial year.

7. Implementation


A further report will be presented to Council at its February 2022 meeting detailing the proposed community information and education campaign, naming process and community engagement plan.

Attachment/s

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|----------|--|------------|
| 1 | Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland | D21/508085 |
| 2 | Letter of request from Elders from the Traditional Owner community (the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung) and other community representatives to Council, 19 November 2021 | D21/508090 |
| 3 | Letter to Mayor Cr Mark Riley from The Hon Shaun Leane MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding the proposed renaming of Moreland City Council, 30 November 2021 | D21/509378 |



Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland



In May 1998, Moreland City Council endorsed the 'Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians'. The Moreland City Council has now renewed this statement to strengthen and formalise its commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Moreland.

Vision for reconciliation

Moreland City Council's vision for reconciliation is respectful and inclusive recognition of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Moreland. Council commits to addressing dispossession and dislocation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their traditional lands by establishing and maintaining into the future, respectful partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community.

Council recognises, that:

- The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of these lands and waterways in Moreland.
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First People of the lands and waterways and are intrinsic to Australia's national identity.
- City of Moreland is home to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from diverse family and community groups from across Australia, and therefore peoples of many moiety, kinship and language groups.
- Living Elders and knowledge holders, as well as their ancestors, are central to the social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of their communities. They continue to play a pivotal role in sharing, and keeping alive, heritage, history, songs, dances, and languages.
- Diversity, inclusive of culturally varied views and opinions within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and community groups requires respect and consideration when making decisions related to Moreland.
- Past government policies and acts were responsible for injustices including forcible

removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their homes, families and traditional lands and the ongoing effects of these injustices continue to this day.


- Such injustices while leaving a devastating impact on the traditional life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, have not erased their connection to country, culture or community, their resilience and their strength.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have never ceded sovereignty of their lands and have continuously cared for their country for over 60,000 years and continue to carry forth the legacy of being the world's oldest living culture.
- January 26 commemorates the British invasion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and oppression of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is therefore an inappropriate date for an inclusive national celebration.


Council supports

- A process towards self-determination and local, regional or national Treaty or Treaties that enshrine the rights of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
- The right for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enjoy their identity and culture, maintain and use their language, maintain their kinship ties and maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters as defined in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.
- Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights, especially to land and waterways.
- The call contained in the Uluru Statement from the heart and its aspirations for justice, truth-telling, Makarrata (agreement-making) and a voice.
- The right of all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City of Moreland to respect and equality and to live free from discrimination based on age, sex, gender identity, race, disability and any type of disadvantage.

Council commits itself to:

- Build trust, collaborate and support partnerships with the Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and individuals and seek their guidance, and respect their leadership towards, self-determination as per the recommendations of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Guide staff and Councilors to meaningfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and engage Traditional Owners in delivering Welcome to Country and other traditional ceremonies.
- Engage Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people in providing Aboriginal cultural competence and diversity inclusion learning and training initiatives for Council staff so that Council can deliver culturally sensitive and inclusive and accessible services that provide equity and access for all members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Undertake cultural consultations with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and seek to include Woi-wurrung names in the process of naming and renaming spaces, places, roads and parks in the City of Moreland.
- Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage through ongoing connection and engagement with Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and continue to protect the Aboriginal history of Moreland.
- Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people in developing strategies and projects that protect our waterways, communicating Aboriginal water values and interpreting landscapes.
- Engage the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap Team to bring cultural values and cultural practices to natural resource management projects in managing parks across the City of Moreland.


Julieanne Axford
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural
Heritage Aboriginal Corporation


Mayor
Moreland City Council



Members
Moreland Reconciliation Working Group

Image above of manna gum leaves, used in Welcome to Country ceremonies, by Wurundjeri artist Mandy Nicholson with design by Dixon Patten of Bayla Creative

19 Nov. 2021

The Mayor and Councillors
City of Moreland

Letter of Request to Council

There are some uncomfortable facts ingrained in the City of Moreland's current identity.

Recognising Council's strong support for respect and reconciliation, we wish to assist the City to use addressing this regrettable inheritance as an opportunity to enhance awareness, acknowledgement and healing.

The name 'Moreland' contains disrespectful insensitivity through direct association with both slavery and dispossession. It was introduced locally in 1839 by speculator Farquhar McCrae who participated in the catastrophic early land privatisation that swept the Indigenous occupants of millennia from most the present municipal area in less than two years. McCrae then named this tract 'Moreland' to commemorate the large Jamaican slave plantation that his family had helped operate.

In June 1994 the state government amalgamated the former Cities of Coburg and Brunswick to form a new municipality under appointed commissioners. The name 'Moreland' was decreed for the new entity, despite its racist associations being raised at the time. The municipal area then expanded in December 1994.

Robust evidence now readily available clearly confirms the details and magnitude of these connections with brutal enslavement globally and mass dispossession locally. Retention of this name for the principal civic body for a diverse community of 200,000 citizens is untenable.

The undersigned, representing the traditional owners of the land - the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, and citizens of the municipality, offer support and encouragement to Council to utilise re-naming of the Council as an opportunity to complement the current spirit of truth-telling and reconciliation, embracing this change as a timely platform for awareness-raising, acknowledgement and healing.

No changes to established place names or features are being proposed, solely the name used to identify our municipal Council. An alternative name is not being suggested, enabling its selection to be part of a respectful process devised in partnership with all stakeholders.

We request Council to make the following commitments at its next meeting:

- Partner with stakeholders in a respectful process to select a suitable new name during 2022*.
- Initiate and implement actions that acknowledge the impacts and consequences of dispossession, encourage respectful understanding through truth-telling, redress injustice, and heal racist hurt.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Gardiner	Deputy Chair, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Julianne Axford	Board member, WWCHAC
Gail Smith	Naming Researcher, WWCHAC
Tony Garvey	Cultural Values Representative, WWCHAC
Dr. Klara Hansen	Acting Manager Research Unit, WWCHAC
Rev. Alistair Macrae	past National President, Uniting Church in Australia; former Moderator, Uniting Church Vic. & Tas.
Phil Cleary	former MHR for Wills, 1992-96
Jo Connellan	former Councillor 2004-12
Rod Duncan	research coordinator
Beci Orpin	Freelance designer, illustrator and maker
Rafael Rashid	Brunswick entrepreneur, founder Beatbox Kitchen

Other citizens are also being invited to add their names to this letter of request.

** The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has indicated its expertise and capacity to advise Council in designing a process for identifying options for a suitable name that reflect local Indigenous place names and language.*

BRIEF BACKGROUND FACTS

The Moreland estate plantation in southern Jamaica is well-documented in historic records now assembled by University College London, showing that it was active from at least 1783 to 1887. Moreland's business was recorded as "sugar, rum and hire of enslaved people" (slave trading). Over many decades it held between 500 and 700 slaves in any year, the majority being female. In November 1835 Moreland's slave-owners received £11,437 3s 3d 'compensation' from the British government for 585 slaves (about \$A2.65 million current value). But these abducted workers were then required to endure a mandatory unpaid 'apprenticeship' for four years, so would still have been in bondage when the name 'Moreland' was first used near Melbourne by McCrae.

Source: University College London 'Legacies of British Slave-ownership' project www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/2145

Mass dispossession, 1838-40

From 1838 to 1841 (soon after John Batman's unlawful arrival in 1835) the colonial government allocated 210,000 acres (850 square kilometres) of land surrounding Melbourne for private occupation - although there were only 1,264 non-Indigenous people in Victoria at the start of 1838. This process 'granted' exclusive private ownership rights to the highest bidders at auctions, making Indigenous occupants trespassers on their homelands of millennia, liable to removal by official force. In four tranches over 20 months, most of the land now in the Moreland municipal area was converted to personal property of just 29 men by mid-1840 (occupying 86% of the current Council area, and rising to 97% by 1850). In 1839 there were official reports of malnutrition and begging "in the absence of traditional food". The catastrophic impact of the rapid pace and extent of this dispossession could reasonably be described as genocide.

The accompanying map shows how early land privatisation rapidly swept across the current municipal area.

Sources: Crown Land records & maps; Victorian Year Book 1882-3; Moreland Thematic History, Historica for M.C.C., 2010

Farquhar McCrae arrived in the newly named Melbourne in June 1839 at the height of this land frenzy, and with borrowed funds promptly started acquiring 'grants' of large parcels of open land. Adding to other properties, in October 1839 he acquired a square mile extending from Moonee Ponds Creek to Sydney Road, and named it 'Moreland' to commemorate the Jamaican estate his father and grandfather had helped operate, where workers were still in bondage at the time. In late 1839 he became a Director of the Port Phillip Bank, described as "simply a 'mutual accommodation' pie" for Directors, who "kept their own fingers in it". In 1841 he acquired adjacent land, and built a house named 'La Rose' on an elevated outlook. In 1843, McCrae was in debt, the bank had collapsed, and being pursued by those claiming he'd swindled them. He moved to Sydney, where he encountered other disputes about his reputation before dying there in 1850, aged 43.

Sources: Sydney Morning Herald 21 March, 1846 (Trove); A. Marsden, Melbourne Athenaeum, 'First Committee, 1839', August 2011 http://www.mahistory.org.au/images/Website/pdf/earlyyears/firstcommittee_mccrae.pdf; and more.]

A further close link between slavery in the Caribbean and the occupation of Victoria in the 1830s was the shift of investment from the sugar/slave trade to the newest 'easy money' from wool growing and brokering. Reduced profitability with the cessation of slavery from 1834 and the huge flood of capital from the 'compensation' payments to former slave owners both fuelled a frenzied quest for alternative investment opportunities across the Empire. The initial invasion of what is now Victoria and the ensuing 'grassland grab' funded by private consortia (including public officials undermining official policies), which has been described as "state-sanctioned private conquest". [James Boyce, '1835: the founding of Melbourne and the conquest of Australia' (2011).]

The rush to establish pastoral runs - commonly referred to as 'squattling' - largely occurred beyond the 'limits of settlement', and differed significantly from the systematic alienation of Crown (public) land that occurred surrounding Melbourne in 1838-41. Squatters did not have any ownership of the land initially (only a 'depasturing' licence), and in theory they were supposed to co-exist with Indigenous occupants. But the 210,000 acres privatised around Melbourne in just four years gave exclusive private ownership, with the right to re-sell, subdivide and speculate. This immediately (in law) dispossessed the Indigenous occupants through the exclusive occupancy of others, who could call on authorities to enforce their right to exclude 'trespassers'.

Further details, sources and links are available at [\[website not yet activated\]](#)

KEY POINTS

Moreland estate, Jamaica

- Moreland Estate was located in southern Jamaica, operating from at least 1783 to 1887.
- University College London has assembled historic records of *'Legacies of British Slave-ownership'* in an easily accessible format, with detailed records of 'Moreland'. www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/2145
- These show Moreland's business was sugar and rum production and "hire of enslaved persons" (slave trading), holding between 500 and 700 slaves (half or more female) in any year.
- In November 1835 Moreland's slave-owners received £11,437 3s 3d "compensation" from the British government for 585 slaves (\$A2.65 million current value - about \$4,500 per person).
- But abducted workers continued in bondage as mandatory unpaid "apprentices" for four years, so would not have gained their liberty when McCrae chose to use the name 'Moreland' locally.

Farquhar McCrae

- Born 1807 into a Scottish family with colonial and military links across the British Empire, Farquhar trained in medicine, joined the Army, but left in 1835 ill with "a dissecting injury".
 - Grandfather Alexander Macrae was a 'planter' (administrator) at Moreland Estate 1770 to 1796.
 - Farquhar's father William Gordon Macrae (who later changed spelling to 'McCrae') was born in Scotland in 1768, living at Moreland estate Jamaica from babyhood until he was almost 30.
 - Five of William's children including brothers Alexander, Andrew and Farquhar each moved to 'Port Phillip' with their families from 1839, just four years after Batman's unauthorised arrival.
 - In just 3½ months, as colonial authorities began to survey and auction off large rural parcels, Farquhar speculated over £3,000 (\$A600,000+), including borrowed funds, at land auctions.
 - On 3 October 1839 he secured a square mile stretching from Moonee Ponds Creek to Sydney Road which he named 'Moreland', soon adding adjacent land to build a house ('La Rose').
 - Helped establish institutions; gained public appointments; co-founded a bank (that failed).
 - In 1843, facing debts and duels he moved to Sydney, where he died in April 1850, aged 43.
- [Georgiana McCrae, wife of Farquhar's brother Andrew, kept diaries and letters from which much of the above detail derives: supplemented by Crown Land records and other sources listed with accompanying material.]

The mass dispossession (particularly within the current City of Moreland municipal area)

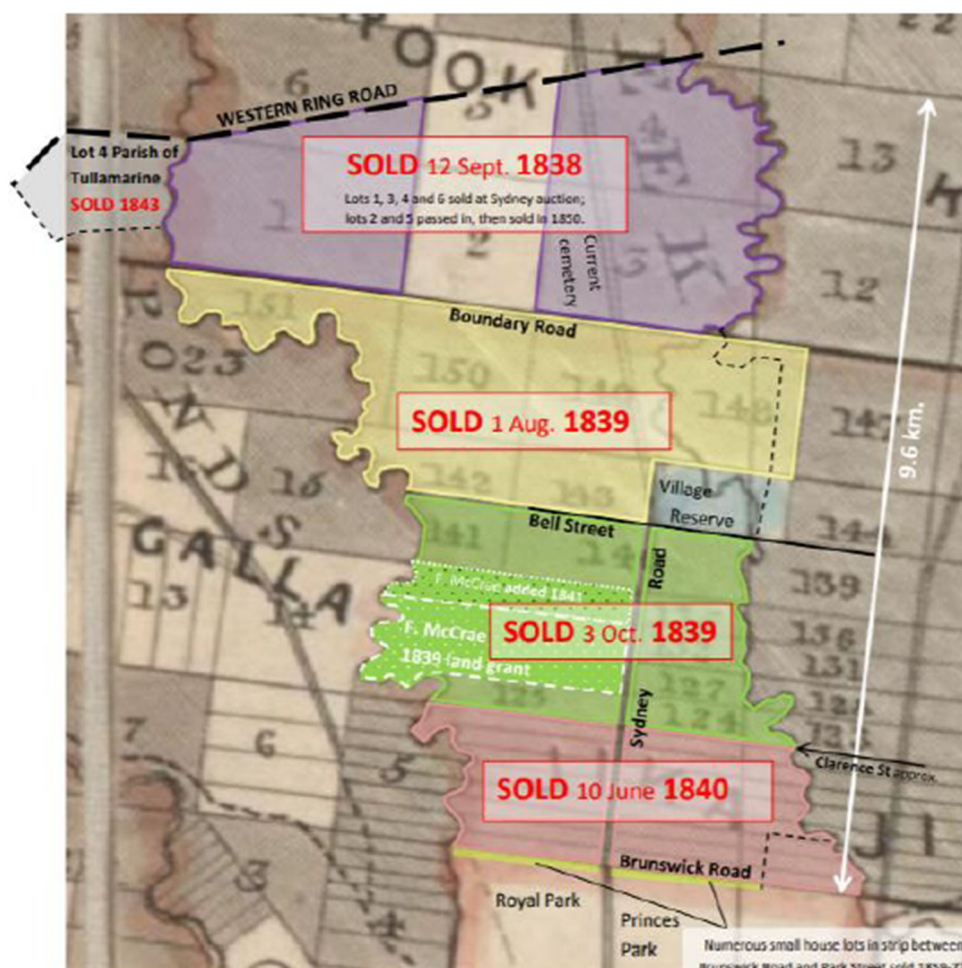
- Mid-1830s flood of slave "compensation" capital and declining profitability of Caribbean sugar trade helps stimulate imperial speculation to access wool-grazing lands of 'Port Phillip District'.
- April 1835: Batman (agent for land speculators) uses a "treaty" to attempt private settlement.
- Aug. 1835: Gov. Bourke issues a stern proclamation they would be "dealt with ... as intruders".
- But no enforcement; stalling until political shift in London enabled support for settlement.
- 1836: colonial authorities survey Hoddle grid and begin auctions of small town lots.
- 210,000 acres (850 sq. km.) of rural land privatised 1838-41: mass dispossession of Indigenous.
- Grants give 'freehold' right to exclusive occupancy (and obligation upon authorities to enforce), so formalise the dispossession of Indigenous custodians from their homelands of millennia.

Within the current Moreland municipal area:

- Sept. 1838: large rural lots (north of Boundary Road) surveyed, with 'grants' to highest bidders.
- Three auctions (August & October 1839, June 1840) alienate most land from Boundary Road to Brunswick Road. [see map] By 1840, 86% of current municipal area alienated (43.8 of 50.9 km²).
- Farquhar McCrae buys Lots 126 & 133 (638 acres), naming this 'Moreland' after slave estate.
- McCrae acquires adjacent Lot 134 (~300 acres) in 1841; builds house on prominent hilltop.
- Catastrophic displacement of Indigenous population; reports of begging for food & malnutrition.
- Across current municipal area, all lots allocated by 1840 were controlled by just 29 men.

The following map shows the extent and rapid pace of privatisation/dispossession across the current municipal area.

**Land granted into exclusive private ownerships, displacing Indigenous occupants
during 1838-40, within the current municipal area of the City of Moreland.**



At just four auctions over 20 months, by 1840 most of the land in the current municipal area was alienated to become the private property of just 29 men, primarily speculators. (Land shaded purple, yellow, green & pink.)

This saw 43 km² (86% of present municipal area) allocated as 'grants' for exclusive private ownership (rising to over 97% by 1850), rendering Indigenous occupants to be trespassers in their homelands of millennia. The extensive scale and rapid pace of this dispossession was catastrophic. By 1839 there were official reports of begging & malnutrition *"in the absence of traditional food"*.

Sources: Crown Land records, Public Records Office Victoria; *Moreland Thematic History* (Historica for M.C.C. 2010).

Base map: Thomas Ham 1849, State Library of Vic. (pale grey: private land by 1849; blue: reserve for future village).



The Hon Shaun Leane MP

Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans

121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 8392 2240
DX 210074

Ref: CMIN-2-21-13210

Cr Mark Riley
Mayor
Moreland City Council
90 Bell Street
COBURG VIC 3058
mriley@moreland.vic.gov.au

Dear Cr Riley

Thank you for your letter of 24 November 2021 regarding the proposed renaming of Moreland City Council. I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me on this matter.

As you will be aware, the *Local Government Act 2020*, enables the Governor in Council, on my recommendation, to make an Order in Council to alter the name of a council.

I note the proposal for the renaming of the Council has come at the request of the Elders from the Wurundjeri community and other community representatives.

I understand a report on the proposal will be considered by the Council, and if supported, a comprehensive community engagement process will be conducted in 2022 to consider community suggestions for a new name. I encourage the Council to work closely with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Culture Heritage Aboriginal Corporation throughout this process.

I confirm my support and will be pleased to facilitate renaming of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Act if the proposal is supported by Council and the local community.

I look forward to hearing from Council on the outcome of the community engagement.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Shaun Leane MP
Minister for Local Government

Date: 30 / 11 / 2021

