

February 2024 to
February 2025
(RAP ID: 044911)



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Reflect



Acknowledgement of Country

Douglas Partners (including Ground Test) acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Land and Sea on which we operate.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the many communities in which we live, visit and work. We recognise and respect their ongoing cultural and spiritual connection to Country.

Contents



04	Statement from Reconciliation Australia CEO
05	Statement from Douglas Partners MD
07	Our Business
08	Our RAP
10	About the Artwork
11	About the Artist
12	Our Partnerships/Current Activities
14	Relationship
16	Respect
18	Opportunities
19	Governance

Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Inaugural Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Douglas Partners to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Douglas Partners joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Douglas Partners to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Douglas Partners, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Statement from the Managing Director of Douglas Partners

Inaugural Reflect RAP

I am pleased to announce our commitment to advancing reconciliation and fostering positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). As a leading professional services firm specialising in ground expertise across Australia, we recognise the importance of acknowledging and respecting the rich cultural heritage of the traditional owners of the land on which we conduct our business.

Our RAP reflects our dedication to creating a workplace that values diversity, promotes inclusivity, and contributes to the broader goal of reconciliation. We understand that meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is essential, and we are committed to building genuine partnerships that extend beyond business transactions.

Through the implementation of our RAP, we aim to:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Increase cultural competency among our staff through education and awareness programs.
- Contribute to community initiatives that support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Create opportunities for meaningful employment and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our organisation.
- Establish partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses to enhance economic opportunities and promote sustainability.

By embedding reconciliation into our corporate strategy, we are not only aligning with our values but also contributing to the broader national reconciliation agenda. I encourage every member of our team to actively participate in and support the initiatives outlined in our RAP. Together, we can make a positive impact and contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious Australia.



Will Wright
Managing Director
Douglas Partners



Australia's choice
for **ground**
expertise



Our Business

Douglas Partners is an Australian employee-owned professional engineering consulting firm specialising in the fields of Geotechnics, Environment, Groundwater, Rock Mechanics, Geophysics, Materials testing and Ground Test a specialist geotechnical drilling company.

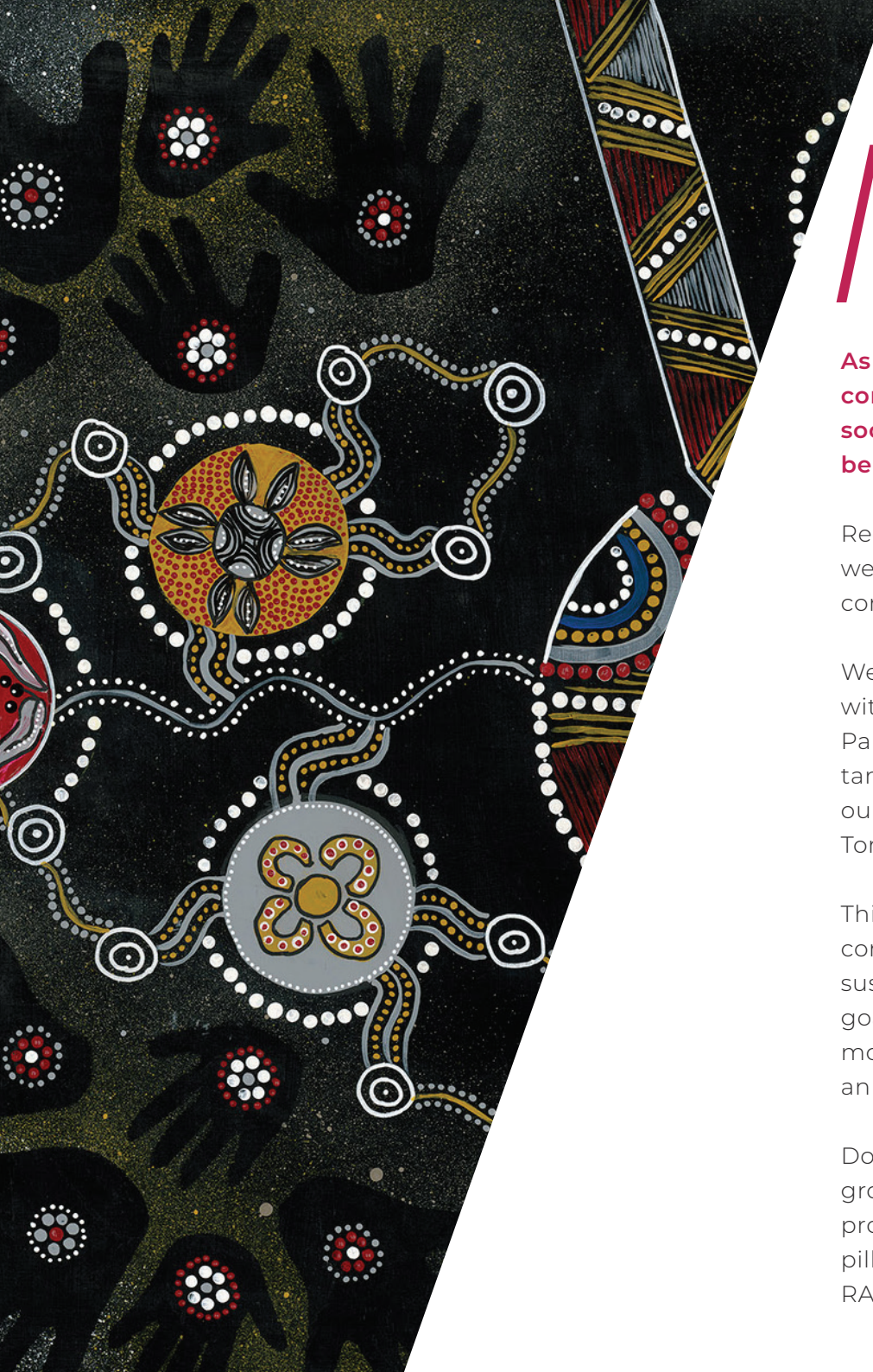
Our goal is to be Australia's choice for ground expertise in the earth sciences. We utilise over 60 years of experience using local knowledge to collect high quality ground data and use our technical expertise to deliver practical solutions for projects where the built environment interacts with the ground. Our expertise helps manage and mitigate risks and our solutions are tailored to enhance outcomes for our clients, community, and environment.

We are a national company with offices across Australia, including Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Central Coast, Coffs Harbour, Darwin, Geelong, Gold Coast, Goulburn, Macarthur, Melbourne, Newcastle, North West Sydney, Perth, Port Macquarie, Sunshine Coast, Sydney, Townsville and

Wollongong. We have over 600 staff (as of January 2024) across our offices to support our business, of which four identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

We have experienced and knowledgeable ground experts across many regions of Australia, supported by industry-leading resources and an unparalleled 60 years of retained knowledge, integrity, and experience. Across our offices, training and ongoing staff development supports our team to work closely with our clients to deliver practical integrated solutions.

We offer local
capability **with**
world class talent



Our RAP

As Douglas Partners has grown from a small business in the 1960s with a narrow commercial interest, we now find ourselves as a large business that recognises the social context in which it operates. As a business we strive to promote inclusion and believe a RAP will help to support this commitment.

Recognising that First Nations peoples never ceded the sovereignty of the country we call Australia, Douglas Partners seeks to understand how our business activity can contribute to reconciliation by providing awareness and effective action.

We aspire to implement a culture of recognition and respect for First Nations peoples within our workplace and seek to utilise a RAP as a vehicle to provide this. Douglas Partners acknowledges that our business practice needs to evolve to demonstrate tangible reconciliation outcomes that we can be proud of and that enable us to promote our business as socially responsible to ensure substantive benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This RAP provides an important part of the Douglas Partners journey of social and corporate responsibility to the community of which we are a part and allows for sustainable and strategic action to advance reconciliation. By working towards stated goals and allowing for self-reflection, Douglas Partners can contribute to the growing movement of reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and create an environment that fosters respect, understanding and responsibility.

Douglas Partners intends to approach implementing our RAP with a dedicated core group that promotes our commitment to the ideas and goals of reconciliation and promotes these ideals internally, as well as ensuring our company embodies the core pillars of reconciliation within our sphere of influence. Our RAP Working Group & our RAP Champion are supported by the Douglas Partners board.

Our RAP (cont)

To date, Douglas Partners has had a mixed reconciliation journey.

In the past, Douglas Partners has engaged with National Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC week, communicating the ideas and themes across the company, however, we have had limited company-wide events and have not been consistent with this messaging. In recent years, Douglas Partners has ensured most major events include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country performed by a local First Nations community member, or an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member. Further, Douglas Partners has begun the process of including an Acknowledgement of Country on our website and report footers.

We recognise there is much room for improvement on our reconciliation journey. We therefore commit to the development and implementation of this RAP to help guide our company through this journey and ensure meaningful change is made.



About the Artwork



'Connection' Acrylic on plywood

"Connection" - of self, family, employment to community. Incorporating Douglas Partners branding colours and core values: People, Integrity, Improvement & Excellence. Symmetry in the artwork on both sides and ends, represent equality, integrity, adaptability, and flexibility.

Communities: All in a circular pattern to depict unity and harmony.



Handprints

People: Family (my DP5), Staff and Community.



Location points

Douglas Partners branches throughout Australia.



Travel lines

Pathways that connect the branches to the communities in which we operate.



Tribute to the Douglas Partners symbol

Centralisation: strength, unity, respect.



Coastline – Water, sand and rockpool symbols.



Cities – Grey concrete and steel, gathering/meeting places symbol for the people.



Bush/Rainforest – gum leaves for foliage.



Outback/deserts – spinifex and red rock on the sandy brown earth.

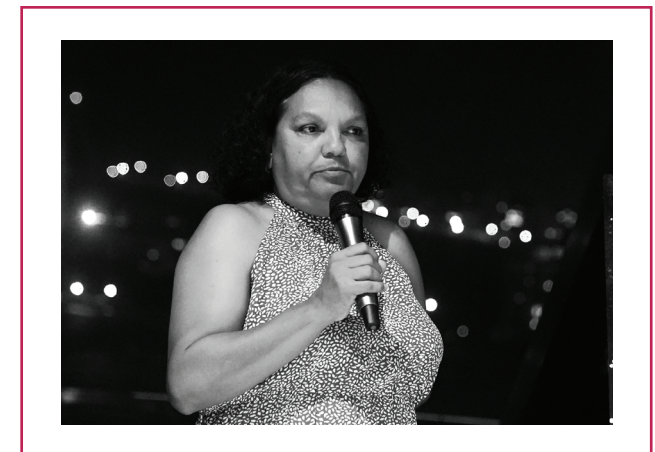
About the Artist

Peta Maree McDonnell originates from Townsville, situated on Wulgurukaba and Bindal land, steeped in cultural history. She proudly traces her roots to the Kunjen people of Cape York in Far North QLD through her mother, and to the Wathaurong (Geelong) & Gunditjmara (Warrnambool) people of Victoria through her father's side, resulting in a diverse heritage. Her paternal grandfather, hailing from Ennis County Claire, Ireland, this is the origin of her surname. Family and community bonds play a pivotal role in shaping her life.

In September 2021, Peta embarked on her professional journey at the Douglas Partners Townsville Branch. Actively involved in the RAP Working Group, her goal is to contribute to the establishment of unity and diversity within Douglas Partners. This endeavour underscores her commitment to community connections and reconciliation.

Growing up Peta was taught that local artwork in the North Queensland region served 3 purposes:

1. Map: to guide local people and those passing through of the trails, site and dangers of the area.
2. Menu: of the local food sources (plants and animals), freshwater and saltwater locations.
3. Story telling: of the dreamtime legends of creation, the Land and waterways, the people, animals and plants.



Our Partnerships / Current Activities

Douglas Partners currently has some partnerships and participates in a range of activities that work towards reconciliation goals.

Internal partnerships include the formation of the RAP Working Group to start the reconciliation journey before evolving into a smaller, more active team to improve collaboration and promote progress.



Welcome to Country

During Douglas Partners' Annual National Technical Seminar that is held in Sydney, the Sydney Metropolitan LALC is engaged to perform a Welcome to Country. This seminar is a key Douglas Partners in-person event for technical staff from all offices around Australia, allowing the Welcome to Country to be prominent and visible. The Support@Douglas Partners event, a key event for support and shared services staff, similarly holds an Acknowledgement of Country to ensure the traditional custodians are recognised and respected. Further similar partnerships and activities include holding Smoking Ceremonies or a Welcome to Country across office locations at major events and celebrations such as the recent 60th anniversary celebrations.

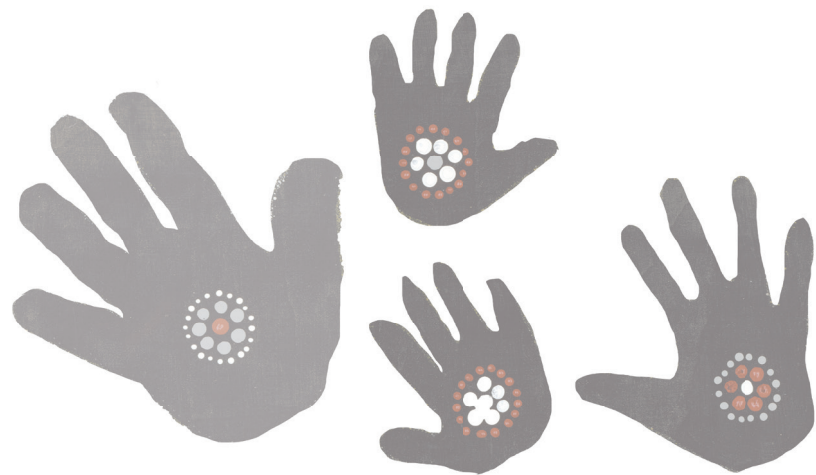




Newsletter

Through the RAP Working Group, Douglas Partners has begun to publish an internal RAP newsletter. This has included information surrounding the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the recent Voice to Parliament Referendum. Future newsletters will be used to keep staff informed of the progress of the RAP, as well as identifying external events that may be relevant and of interest to staff such as technical presentations with perspectives from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and other important reconciliation information.

These newsletters will link to the newly implemented RAP section of Douglas Partners' intranet to allow information to be easily accessed by staff and provide information on training, links to further information and our progress.



Relationships



Action

1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable

- Continue to Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.
- Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.
- Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.
- RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.
- Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.

Timeline

July 2024

August 2024

May 2024

27 May- 3 Jun 2024

May 2024

Responsibility

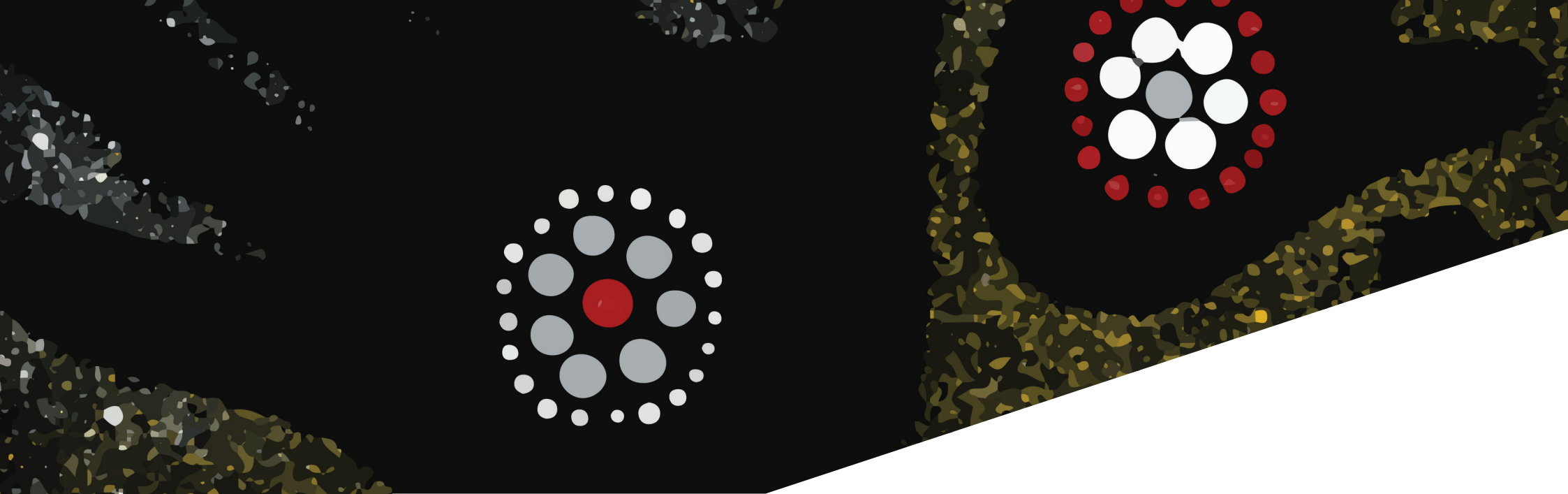
RAP Stakeholder Owner

RAP Stakeholder Owner

RAP Coordinator

RAP Coordinator

RAP Champion



 **Action**

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable

- Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.
- Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.
- Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. Local Council's Aboriginal Liaison Department.
- Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.
- Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.

Timeline

- March 2024**
- March 2024**
- July 2024**
- September 2024**
- September 2024**

Responsibility

- RAP Champion
- RAP Stakeholder Owner
- HR Manager/ HR Business Partner
- HR Manager/ HR Business Partner
- HR Manager



Respect



Action

5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverable

- Maintain/Update business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.
- Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.
- Continue to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.
- Continue to increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.

Timeline

- June 2024**
- March 2024**
- October 2024**
- October 2024**

Responsibility

- HR Manager / HR Business Partner
- HR Manager / HR Business Partner
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion



Action

7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverable

- Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.
- Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.
- RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.

Timeline

- June 2024**
- June 2024**
- July 2024**

Responsibility

- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion

Opportunities



Action

8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverable

- Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.
- Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.
- Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.
- Investigate Supply Nation membership.

Timeline

July 2024

July 2024

July 2024

July 2024

Responsibility

HR Manager

HR Manager

Procurement Manager

Procurement Manager



Governance



Action

10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable

- Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.
- Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.
- Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.
- Define resource needs for RAP implementation.
- Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments
- Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.
- Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.
- Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.
- Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey
- Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.
- Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.

Timeline

- April 2024
- April 2024
- April 2024
- April 2024
- April 2024
- April 2024
- April 2024
- June annually
- August annually
- 30 September, annually
- January 2025

Responsibility

- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion & HR Manager
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion
- RAP Champion



CONTACT DETAILS

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