



Youth Focus

**INNOVATE
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**



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INNOVATE

September 2025 - September 2027

Reconciliation Australia commends Youth Focus on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

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

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Youth Focus to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Youth Focus will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and

opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to three million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Youth Focus is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Youth Focus's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Youth Focus on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Acknowledgement of Country

Youth Focus acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Western Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“ WE’VE GOT
YOUNG PEOPLE
WHO CAN DO
EXTRAORDINARY
THINGS ”

AUNTY CHERYL PHILLIPS



Photo: Young people at the Meekatharra Walk for Suicide Awareness.



“The Youth Focus Reconciliation Action Plan artwork is based on four pillars of support. The blue circle is representative of the community, the green resembles country, the red resembles family and the purple represents culture. These four elements are integral to creating strong young people. The bigger yellow circle illustrates youth itself. This symbolisation of youth is central as it is focused on their development and connection to the pillars of support. These elements need to work together to create a single network that allows for the holistic progress of young people.” - Tyrown Waigana

The Youth Focus Reconciliation Action Plan artwork was created by Tyrown Waigana in 2020 for the Youth Focus Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Tyrown is a proud Noongar and Saibai Islander man, Tyrown’s mother’s heritage can be traced to the Wadandi people of the Noongar nation and his father’s side is Torres Strait Islander from Saibai Island. Tyrown won the prestigious National NAIDOC poster competition in 2020 with his entry Shape of Land (2020), which was fitting for that year’s NAIDOC theme “Always Was, Always Will Be”.

The artwork is an important symbol of Youth Focus’s purpose and commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is a proud focal point across our sites in Western Australia and will continue throughout our Innovate RAP and beyond.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ELDERS



Young people are the future and can achieve anything they want to. They can be happy, strong and build the lives they want for themselves, their families, and their communities.

To support them, we need truth-telling, listening, and relationships. By doing these things consistently you can build trust, which creates a better future for all young people. This will take commitment, courage, and being guided by our unique journeys, life experiences, knowledge, and stories.

Actions speak louder than words. We must work together, to empower young people to make decisions and choices to build their strength and future. Youth Focus must advocate for change, and challenge the systems that hold young people back, to create communities where all young people can reach their goals and dreams.

We see that Youth Focus wants to make that change, but there is a lot of work still to do to make sure the roots are so strong that they become part of everything Youth Focus does.

We are committed, ready, and want to continue walking with you. Going backwards is not an option.

OUR STATEMENT

At Youth Focus we believe that all young people, across Western Australia, deserve access to culturally secure, high-quality mental health services that are designed to meet their needs. To achieve this requires listening - listening to young people, their families and communities - building their trust in us and in our commitment to ensuring that mental health doesn't get in the way of young people being who they want to be.

Over the past three years, we've been on a journey of listening and learning, working with Elders and communities to understand how we can collectively achieve this. We know we don't have all the answers, but by listening and being open and willing to act on what we hear, we'll continue to take the right steps, together.

As we embark on our first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we'll be led by our vision for reconciliation, which is that **all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and communities are empowered to make decisions that impact their ability to build strength and capacity, to shape a shared national identity of equity, respect and partnership.**

To guide us in this process, we've established an Aboriginal Governance Group, led by Elders, and supported by key staff members who are champions of the skills needed to build our collective cultural capacity.

Through our Innovate RAP, we will build on the learnings we've had in our journey so far. We will listen with open hearts and continue to build relationships that are based on trust and shared values. We will seek the advice and guidance of Elders to shape our actions, and we will continue to find ways to show respect, provide opportunities, build relationships, and maintain strong, transparent governance.

Our Innovate RAP will truly come to life if each of our people takes the principles of reconciliation to heart and translates them into action at both an individual and collective level.

As an organisation we want to be trusted to champion the mental health needs of all young people in Western Australia, supporting them to thrive in their community. Our Innovate RAP is one important step towards building this trust and connection.

We thank the members of our Youth Focus Reconciliation Working Group for their commitment to the journey, and to the evolution of our approach. We also thank the Elders who have been on this journey with us, for their wisdom and generosity of spirit, and our partners and community for walking with us on this journey.

Derry Simpson
Chief Executive Officer, Youth Focus

Rod Jones
Chair, Board of Directors, Youth Focus

Photo: Board Chair, Rod Jones and CEO Derry Simpson



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION



Our ambition for reconciliation is that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and communities, are empowered to make decisions that impact their ability to build strength and capacity, to shape a shared national identity of equity, respect and partnership.

Driven by our Values and Guiding Principles, we will listen, connect, and walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to deliver culturally appropriate mental health services, specific to the needs of local communities. This enables our vision for a world where a young person's mental health does not get in the way of them being who they want to be.

The Youth Focus Vision for Reconciliation has been developed through review of our Reflect RAP, inspiration from RAPs of like-minded organisations, and is based on our Guiding Principles, organisational values and Youth Focus vision.

Our Vision for Reconciliation will guide Youth Focus' delivery of the Innovate RAP in a way which is uniquely connected to our organisation and services.

WHAT WE DO & WHY WE DO IT

At Youth Focus we aim to create a community in which young people feel safe reaching for support, and that high-quality services are available when they do. We want this to be the reality for all young people, everywhere in Western Australia.

Youth Focus works to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young Western Australians aged between 12 and 25, to achieve our vision of a world where a young person's mental health does not get in the way of them being who they want to be.

Our purpose is to be trusted to champion the mental health needs of young people in WA, supporting them to thrive in their community. We are led by young people and what they need in their mental health journey, based on what they want to achieve in their lives, in that moment.

We help shape and enable communities that promote mental wellbeing and support young people in all aspects of their lives.

Youth Focus provides services from eight metropolitan and regional offices, in Burswood, Bunbury, Peel, Albany and Meekatharra and as the lead agency at headspace sites in Albany, Midland, Geraldton and Northam. We also deliver services in schools, and in other locations in partnership with the communities in which we work.

Our services include counselling, vocational support for work and study goals, education and community engagement, and support for communities impacted by suicide and crises.



Photo: Our Albany team participating in an On Country experience on Menang country.

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS



Photo: Connecting with community in Geraldton.

Youth Focus is committed to ensuring every individual that interacts with us feels safe and can bring their whole selves, being welcomed with equity, dignity and respect. In doing so, we understand that we must first include, listen, and reflect to build trust, connect, and partner. We celebrate individuality and are guided by the stories and journeys of the communities in which we live and work. Everyone is welcome at Youth Focus.

We currently employ 150 staff with a current percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at 3.5%. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of young people within our services. All young people have the right to feel safe, well, valued and listened to; no matter who they are, where they're from, what they do, or who they love. At Youth Focus, we value the strength and potential of all young people and recognise that their safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.

Youth Focus works collaboratively across our sphere of influence to achieve positive outcomes with our communities. At the individual level, we consult with young people, their carers, and staff with the knowledge that outcomes are improved by self-determination. We partner with government and non-government agencies to improve collaboration and remove barriers across service design and delivery. We also understand that to stand by young people, we must actively champion their right to decide about the support they want and need. This extends to challenging funders and the government to design services that young people and their local communities need.

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY SO FAR

Since the launch of our Reflect RAP, we've taken meaningful steps as an organisation towards cultural safety and security.

The cornerstone of improvement has come from our development of key relationships with Elders and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This has guided our approach and provided credibility in the work done to achieve meaningful change.

Our relationships were highlighted by our participation in *Allawah! Burdiyas! Elders Community Conference: A Call to Action*, and at both the 2021 and 2023 Youth Focus staff forum. The 2023 forum included the coming together of Elders from different organisational areas to guide our future direction. Relationships with Elders have now been formalised through Boodiya agreements (boss-to-boss), to support respectful partnership and effective collaboration.

For our staff, Acknowledgement of Country training has been widespread and consistently increased confidence and meaning of acknowledgements. Dates of significance have resulted in greater engagement and reflection, as supported by organisational policies. Improved cultural awareness has also supported an increased use of Aboriginal language in communication.

Our membership with Reconciliation WA has led to meaningful opportunities to listen, learn and collaborate with organisations on similar reconciliation journeys. While successes have been common, there have been lessons learnt which will inform the delivery of this Innovate RAP.

We are committed to a review of the function of the Reconciliation Working Group to maximise opportunities for meaningful input for Aboriginal staff and Elders. Currently the group is made up of six Elders from Yamatji to Noongar country, two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and allies in roles important to our reconciliation journey. Currently chaired by the Service Excellence Manager, the staff directly involved are senior leaders from our Executive, Operations, Corporate Services, as well as any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with a motivation to be involved. We will work to include representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, to better align with our vision for reconciliation.

Where cultural safety projects are conducted within specific organisational areas, such as the *Our Journey, Our Story* project with Curtin University, we'll explore how the learnings can be better shared across the organisation to support integration with the broader Youth Focus vision for reconciliation.

Monitoring the achievement of objectives will be supported by better use of systems by all contributors. Our actions will also be articulated as objectives which can be more easily measured, monitored, and reported.

Championed by the Chief Executive Officer, our Innovate RAP will embed changes in practice, improve consistency of cultural considerations across services, and improve cultural governance.

The Youth Focus RAP Artwork continues to be celebrated as a symbol of connection, closely linked to Youth Focus people and services.

Uncle Nick Abraham with Sharon Elizabeth, On Country experience at Karta Koomba

RELATIONSHIPS

To meaningfully achieve our vision, we need to build nurturing and strong relationships with Aboriginal people and leaders, so that we can listen and learn. Relationships are key to everything we do and are built through respect, and the trust created through consistently displaying authentic connection to our vision.

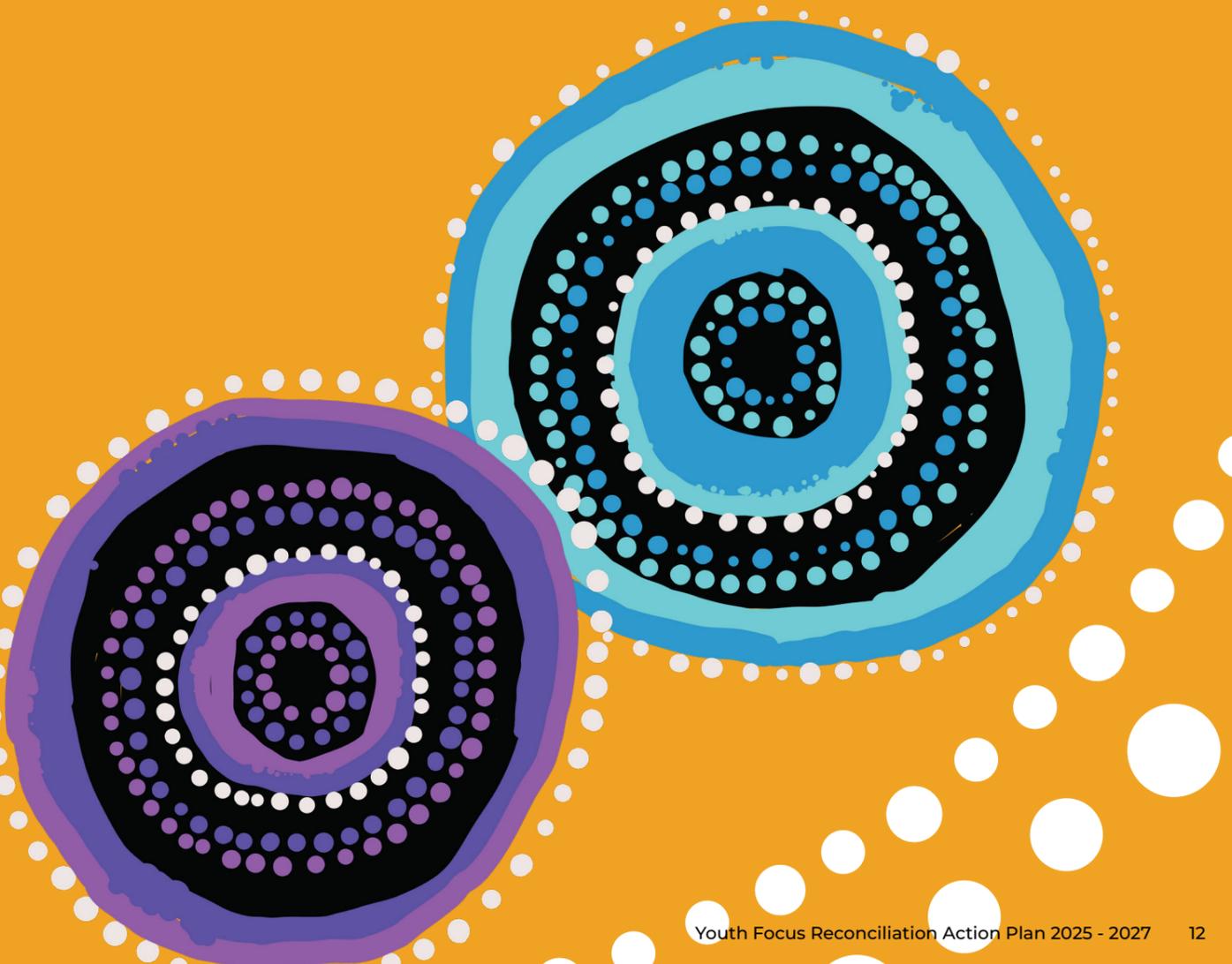
Accessible and impactful services must be informed by authentic understanding and not assumption. We are at risk of reducing trust in agencies, services, and institutions if we presume what is right rather than understand what is needed.

Strong relationships support understanding but also invite accountability. We are open to hearing we need to do better and will remain responsive when that occurs.

Building relationships requires us to meaningfully connect and show up in the community. We should be proactively looking for opportunities to engage, listen and learn, not waiting for opportunities to come to us.

We will develop processes which support deepening and sustainability of the relationships which have been built. This improves the reliability of our connections and creates opportunities for positive outcomes.

Our service locations are diverse and unique. There will be different needs and connections across each area, which require a locally informed response.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	September 2025	Aboriginal Governance Group
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2025	Senior Leadership Team
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May Annually	Corporate Communications Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June annually	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June annually	Service Managers
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June annually	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May Annually	Admin
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	September 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	November 2025	Corporate Communications Manager
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	October 2025	Senior Leadership Team
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	September 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	November 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	September 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	November 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
Strengthen research partnership opportunities focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health.	Review processes for research engagement to ensure identification and prioritisation of benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	November 2025	Service Excellence Manager
	Allocate in-kind resources to research partnerships as opportunities arise	November 2025	Chief Executive Officer
Build relationships that support strong service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Collaborate with headspace National on the First Nations Community Connections (FNCC) pilot	September 2025	headspace Albany
	Assess community connections across all organisational areas	November 2025	Executive Leadership Team
	Within operational planning, celebrate successful partnerships and improve relationships where opportunities are identified	November 2025	Service Managers
	Identify opportunities for formal partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations locally, such as Consortium membership.	March 2026	Service Managers

RESPECT

Respect requires us to do our best to understand and value cultural practices. When services are designed and delivered with these practices in mind, they are more likely to be experienced as safe to people who interact with them.

Respect is the foundation of relationships and the basis of trust. To provide safe and culturally secure services, we must first demonstrate respect.

In this way, we signal a willingness to learn from diverse stories and challenges.

For a young person it indicates they are seen as a whole, they are safe within physical spaces, and they don't have to leave parts of who they are at the door for fear of judgement. This allows the service they receive to be more impactful and relevant to their needs.

We will develop respect through listening, slowing down, being led, and taking the time it takes to support lasting change. We will be vulnerable and open to learning, making mistakes and growing from them.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	September 2025	Senior Leadership Team
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	February 2026	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	Review October 2025, 2026	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2025	Human Resources
	Develop, implement and communicate cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	September 2025	Corporate Communications Manager
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	September 2025	Corporate Communications Manager
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	September 2025	Senior Leadership Team
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, annually	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	September 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July, annually	Corporate Communications Manager
Provide all staff with an opportunity to participate in on-Country immersive learning opportunities.	Ensure adequate budget allocation to the participation in on-Country learning opportunities	November 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Identify preferred providers of on-Country learning in each organisational area	November 2025	Service Managers
	Ensure adequate time is provided and scheduled for engagement on-Country learning	March 2026	Service Managers

OPPORTUNITIES

We will increase the purposefulness of opportunities created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, communities, and staff. We support by giving choices, not making decisions.

We aim to ensure young people and families are empowered and supported to navigate systems that can be difficult to understand and access. This will be achieved through service level partnerships which facilitate referral pathways and joint program development.

We will champion the voices of young people and showcase the achievements and talent of

the young people within communities where we have a presence. We will also connect with communities through intentional engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers, targeted learning, and development experiences for all staff.

Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people requires us to develop a workforce representative of the communities we service. We will work to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through dedicated development pathways, supported recruitment, supervision, and mentoring arrangements.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build an understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2025	Human Resources
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	February 2026	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	February 2026	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	September 2025	Human Resources
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	December 2025	Executive Manager Culture and Capability
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	September 2025	Chief Financial Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2025	Chief Financial Officer
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	March 2026	Chief Financial Officer
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2025	Chief Financial Officer
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	November 2025	Chief Financial Officer
Provide opportunities for Elders and community members to participate in recruitment processes where appropriate.	Provide pathways for Elders and community to participate in creating Position Descriptions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific roles	November 2025	Human Resources / Service Managers
	Provide opportunities for Elders and community to participate in interviews for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific roles	November 2025	Service Managers

GOVERNANCE

Effective cultural governance is key to making sure we don't lose sight of what's important. Our Reconciliation Action Plan forms a key part of cultural governance, in combination with connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices which guide and inform us.

Internally, we will build opportunities for Aboriginal Elders, community members and staff to direct the work done to improve cultural security across the organisation. The Aboriginal Governance Group will be established and embedded as a central point of consultation to provide a pathway for meaningful input.

Effective governance also relies on local connections. In our communities, we're supported by Consortiums of like-minded organisations, which support us to remain connected to the needs of local people. We will continue to deepen our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Controlled Organisations.

We are further supported by Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation WA membership, to guide us and support connections with other like-minded organisations.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Bi-monthly 2025, 2026, 2027	Chair of RAP Working Group
Provide appropriate support for the effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	October 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	January 2026	CEO
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	November 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	October 2025	Chief Executive Officer
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	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.	June annually	Admin
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Admin
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, September, December Annually	Corporate Communications Manager
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	December Annually	Corporate Communications Manager
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	February 2026	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia after this RAP.	April 2026	Chair of RAP Working Group
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	March 2026	Admin
Establish an Aboriginal Governance Group, comprised of Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, to provide meaningful guidance to the organisation's reconciliation activity.	Recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to be members of the Aboriginal Governance Group.	January 2026	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Establish a work plan for the Aboriginal Governance Group to align with needs identified by members, and the organisation's strategy	November 2025	Chair of RAP Working Group
	Review the Aboriginal Governance Group functioning and Terms of Reference	April Annually	Chair of RAP Working Group



Youth Focus



Public enquiries about
the Youth Focus
Innovate Reconciliation
Action Plan can be
directed to

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