



# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

SEPTEMBER 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2025



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

**INNOVATE**



# Acknowledgement of Country

WaterNSW would like to acknowledge all First Nations people throughout NSW. Their connection and legacy to this country is continually shown through their ongoing spiritual, physical and cultural knowledge and practices of the lands and waters.

We pay our respects to all Elders past and present and acknowledge their ongoing connection and commitment to the waters and lands on which we operate.

We acknowledge their vast cultural knowledge and management of country, especially the lands and waters which we are fortunate to manage.

Together we walk as one.





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# Artist bio

## Kheely Lynch

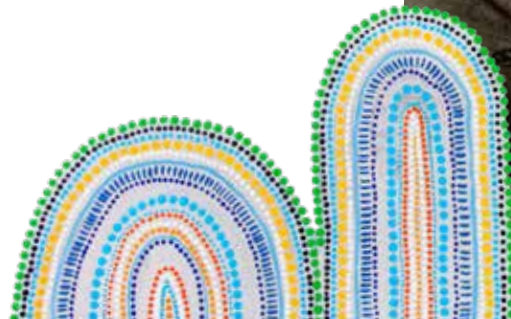


Kheely Lynch is a proud woman of the Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri peoples. She has a connection to West Wyalong and areas of Ivanhoe, Lake Cargelligo and Cobar as a direct descendant of the Keewong Hampton mob. She lives in West Wyalong and is a busy mum to two young boys.

Kheely first experimented with art at a young age, completing a traditional styled sculpture for her major HSC artwork. Since then, she has completed many commissioned pieces for major companies including Evolution Mining, Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Local Land Services.

Kheely utilises her art to maintain her connection to country and culture. It is her way of expressing and combining, education and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and history.

She has a unique way of telling stories through her art. Each piece is individual and deeply personal to the client and artist.





## Story of the artwork



Water is a core aspect of the culture of Aboriginal people. It had many purposes in our lifestyle and many stories are derived from the importance of water to our Ancestors and contemporary Aboriginal people today.

This artwork represents the continued connection we have to our waterways and how they still play an important role in the ever changing, but always dependable, landscape of our beautiful country.

The flora and fauna are nourished by its flows as are the people of each and every nation across our country. It is healing, it is connecting, it is being...

- Kheely Lynch



# A message from Reconciliation Australia

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Reconciliation Australia commends WaterNSW 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 WaterNSW 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, WaterNSW 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 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. WaterNSW is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals WaterNSW'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 WaterNSW on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





# A message from our CEO

Andrew George

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As operators of the States Dams and regulated waterways, WaterNSW has an immense responsibility to operate these assets, which includes more than 40 dams across the state, to meet the needs of our customers and local communities.

The water we supply supports more than 8 million people across NSW and we are also required to respond to the challenges of drought, floods and climate change.

Advancing First Nations engagement within WaterNSW has provided us with the opportunity to look, listen and learn about our operations from the perspectives of First Nations people.

It has been a privilege to gain a deeper understanding of how First Nations people continue their custodianship toward the ongoing management and health of waterways.

We recognise and acknowledge that First Nations people have a deep cultural, physical, and spiritual connection to water and land. Through our Reflect RAP, we have gained a greater appreciation and a deepening understanding of that connection. Our Innovate RAP will now guide us to embed and strengthen the impact of the reconciliation work we've started.

I am proud of what we have achieved in our first RAP – Reflect, and believe we can continue to strengthen our relationship and partnerships with First Nations communities. We are also committed to further developing employment and procurement pathways to support the improvement of cultural, social and economic outcomes within First Nations communities.

The Reflect RAP provided us with the necessary cultural competency and understanding through cultural training, storytelling, celebrating cultural events and building long-term partnerships with First Nations communities, organisations and suppliers.

The implementation of our Innovate RAP will now reinforce our achievements, continuing to build on the cultural competency of our employees and create a culturally safe environment for all First Nations people. We will continue to ensure that reconciliation is embedded in our business frameworks and delivered as part of our core business.





I want to recognise our First Nations Programs and Engagement team, whose leadership has ensured that Reconciliation remains at the forefront of our organisation's work with First Nations communities.

And, we would like to thank Reconciliation Australia, our RAP Working Group members and the First Nations communities of NSW for their time and commitment in supporting WaterNSW's delivery of our first Reflect RAP. We look forward to continuing our relationships and partnerships, on our reconciliation journey.



# Our business

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We currently have 1,157 people employed across the state spread throughout our organisation, working in many fields including assets and maintenance, land management, water quality and science, engineering and project management, customer service and human resources.

Inclusion and diversity is promoted and supported as part of our work culture and at the end of 2022 we had 1.1 per cent of our people identify as First Nations peoples.

We are aiming to increase this to 3.3 per cent by 2026 through the work we do in procurement, employment, education and training as part of our Innovate RAP.

Our operations and land management, projects and related activities require varying degrees of consultation and engagement with First Nations communities and stakeholder groups.

As the state's operators of dams and water infrastructure, we fundamentally associate with First Nations communities' cultural connection to the lands and waters. In addition, with continued reform across the water sector and to water rights and entitlements, and cultural water, we need to be appropriately equipped to respond and support Aboriginal communities through these potential changes into the future.





Our corporate values are at the heart of our commitment to make change, both within WaterNSW and for the communities we join with along this journey. We aim to build, support and strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal communities to ensure there is two-way learning, more meaningful participation, and engagement on the management of lands and water.

Our Statement of Intent, agreed to by our Board, commits itself to the development of our second RAP to support and inform the organisation on this path forward.

The purpose of this section is to provide staff and stakeholders with context about our workplace.

## Statement of Intent

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WaterNSW operates the state's rivers and water supply systems and has significant interface with stakeholders, local communities, our customers and all those who interact with our dams, storages and river operations.

We acknowledge the very strong cultural and spiritual connection of Aboriginal communities to lands, waters and rivers and we are committed to improving how we engage with First Nations peoples across all aspects of our operations and projects.



# Our vision for reconciliation

As a business that manages infrastructure that delivers two thirds of the State's raw water, WaterNSW plays an integral role for communities. Our purpose can be summed up in one simple statement that goes to the heart of all that we do and our core business: Water, delivered when and where it matters.

Our vision is to support the resilience of NSW communities through our leadership in delivering water services, for generations to come. This vision recognises the importance of WaterNSW in supporting communities across NSW by providing an essential service that can be relied upon.

Through reconciliation we acknowledge the very strong cultural and spiritual connection of First Nations communities to the lands, waters and rivers that we live and work upon and we are committed to improving how we engage with First Nations people across all aspects of our operations and projects.

For many organisations, the fear of inadvertently engaging in culturally inappropriate ways can hinder progress, for fear of not wanting to unintentionally disrespect anyone. At WaterNSW we have built and integrated a culturally appropriate framework through our RAP and support its recommendations to move forward, at a whole of organisation level; embracing reconciliation in all that we do.

The RAP will better support meaningful and culturally appropriate partnerships and dialogue with Aboriginal communities by allowing us to build on our successes to date, learn from how we could do things better, and move forward together as one.





# Our Values in action

We live Our Values and  
are measured by them

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Our Values are the principles and behaviours that drive us to succeed as both teams and individuals at WaterNSW. They reflect who we are and what we represent.

Our Values support us to achieve a high-performance culture. They support our shared vision and enable us to deliver quality outcomes to our customers, communities and shareholders.

Living by Our Values supports us in our reconciliation action planning.

# Implementing Our Values

Aligning Our Values to our  
Co-design Principles

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## Our Company Values

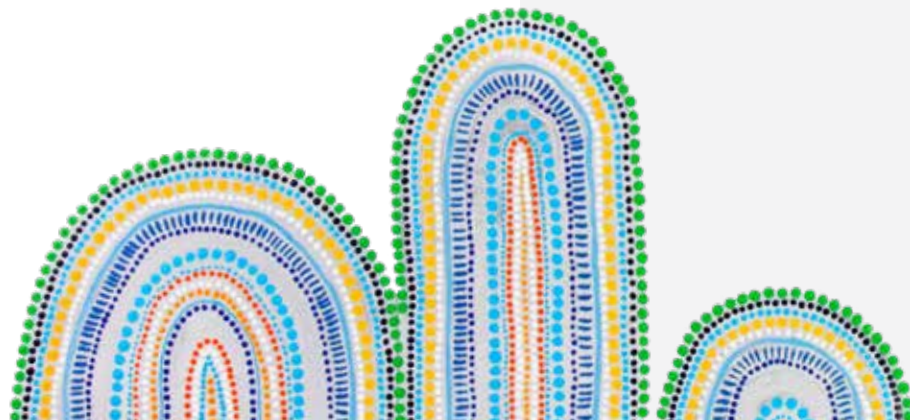
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- Drive change
- Deliver excellence
- Value our people
- Own it
- Achieve together
- Think customer

## Our Co-design Principles

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- Minimise lost time
- Budget savings
- Share knowledge
- Best practice
- Co-design
- Effective engagement





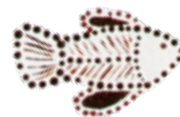
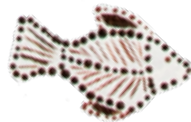
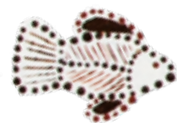
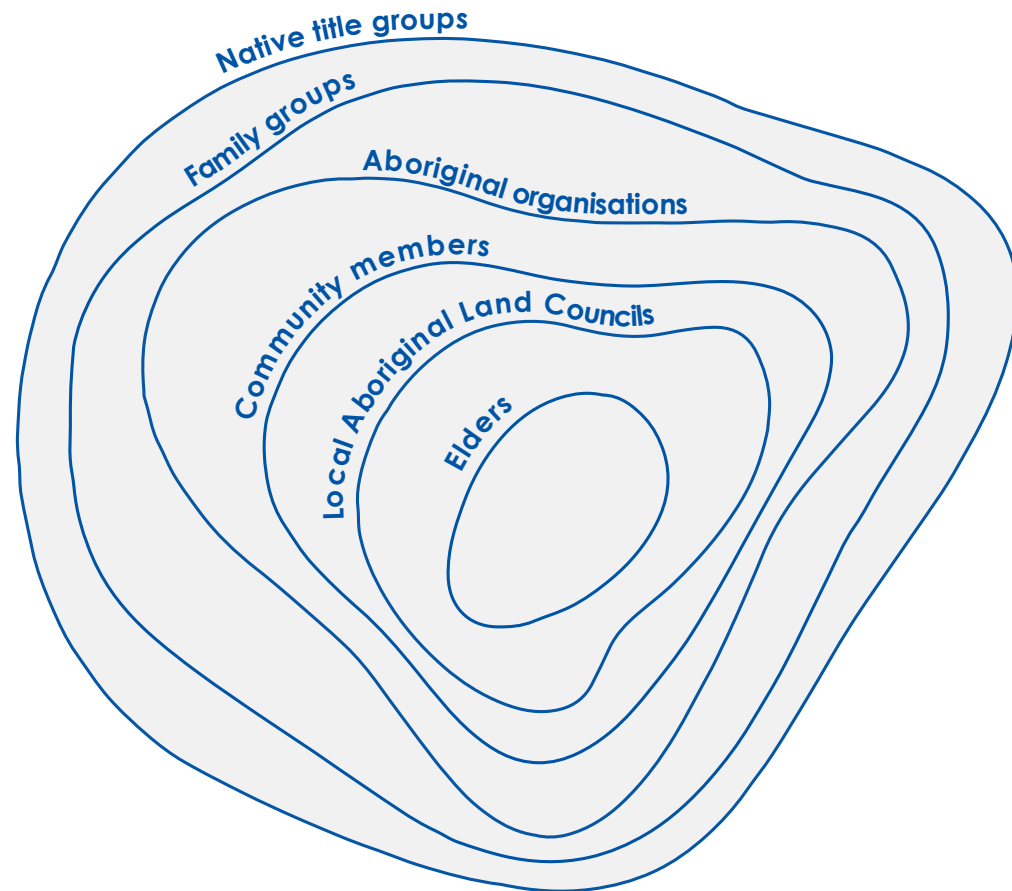




# Our Guiding Principles on Co-design

Our Guiding Principles on Co-design were endorsed in our Reflect RAP and are helping us with our vision for two-way learning and more meaningful participation and engagement. We want 'co-design' to be standard practice to help us meet our responsibilities and deliver our work.

We understand from developing our Reflect RAP that co-designing is an inclusive, dynamic and ongoing process where we listen, learn, yarn, and adapt to make changes, transform structures and co-create better outcomes for First Nations people and communities.



# Designing the principles

‘together as one’

To build and strengthen mechanisms for collaboration with Traditional Owners on water management, one of the deliverables of our Reflect RAP was to create a definition and process for co-design for First Nations engagement by WaterNSW employees.

In 2022 our RAP working party started to develop the co-design principles and quickly realised that past mistakes made by some were being repeated by creating approaches and methodologies for First Nations peoples and communities without the voice and input from all those involved. A decision was made that the development of the co-design must be done together with representatives from across WaterNSW.

This way the document would be authentic and true to itself, both in its development of shared meanings and in the generation of better outcomes.

A team of 26 people, including nine RAP Working Group members and 18 WaterNSW representatives participated in a workshop to deliver the framework for the co-design principles.





At the workshop, participants were deliberately not provided with detailed background information in order to ensure they were working from a blank slate. Instead, conversations were prompted around the what, why, how and where of co-design.

## What emerged was repetition of themes which we embedded as the main elements of our principles:

- Appropriate
- Shared vision
- Effective engagement
- Inclusivity
- Listening

We have responsibilities to meet the WaterNSW Corporate Strategy and the Statement of Expectation for WaterNSW issued by the NSW Government and the co-design principles have taken this into account.

Our co-design principles also align with our commitment to support the federal government obligation towards the National Agreement on Closing the Gap as well as the NSW Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy and Aboriginal Employment Strategy which support the ambitious target of 3 per cent Aboriginal employment at each grade of the public sector by 2025.

### Appropriate

Understand that First Nations communities are unique with different needs and protocols; develop culturally capable staff; engage appropriately and with respect.

### Shared Vision

Listen and learn from First Nations communities to create a shared vision; develop joint stewardship on projects and activities; build better and long-lasting relationships with good outcomes.

### Effective Engagement

Engage early and throughout the process; take a place-based approach and consider cultural protocols and solutions to meet specific social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors; build relationships; be strategic, culturally connected, agile and flexible.

### Inclusivity

Be respectful and understand cultural protocols; make communication accessible to meet the diversity of Nations.

### Listening

Take time, be flexible, give full explanations and keep coming back to build rapport and earn trust; allow time for decisions to be made, as they may need to be made collectively with other family and community members.



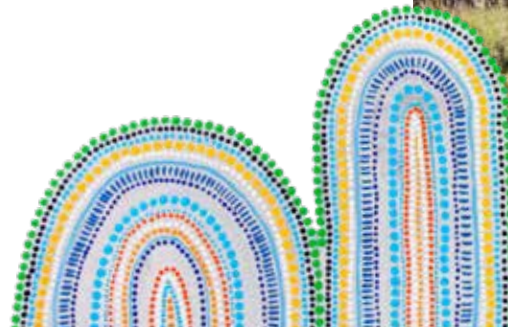
# Why this journey is important to WaterNSW

WaterNSW manages the storage and delivery of water throughout our river systems and we are also one of NSW's biggest landowners, providing us with the unique opportunity to connect with First Nations peoples.

First Nations peoples hold deep and lasting cultural relationships and connections to their traditional lands and waters. This is both a physical and spiritual relationship, as they are custodians who care for and manage their Country.

We know First Nations peoples managed the land and water in NSW for over 60,000 years. By partnering and collaborating we can learn, share and better understand the science and knowledge behind traditional and ongoing practices, and ultimately become more sustainable in our management of water.

“Together we walk as one”





# Our people driving the Innovate RAP

## WaterNSW Board

The WaterNSW Board have been integral to supporting the Reconciliation Action Plans. They continue to champion and ensure the actions and deliverables of the RAP are met and promoted throughout our business.

The Board's continuing commitment to reconciliation keeps our journey on track as we become leaders in First Nations engagement and in our aspirations to be an employer of choice for First Nations peoples.

## Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are driving our reconciliation journey. They are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the RAP actions within their teams.

This includes ensuring early engagement with First Nations communities, generating employment and procurement outcomes, and effectively communicating and co-designing with First Nations peoples as part of programs and projects.

The ELT are committed to transforming the business through the sharing of knowledge and the deepening of cultural understanding of country we work on, so together we walk as one.

## First Nations Program Team

Our First Nations Program and Engagement team comprises of:

- Manger First Nations Program and Engagement
- First Nations Programs and Engagement Specialist
- First Nations Business Support Officer.

They work together to build and strengthen relationships with the First Nations communities we engage through our programs, projects and activities related to our core business of water delivery and management.

## Cultural Heritage Field Supervisor – Operations

Our Cultural Heritage Field Supervisors oversee and implement cultural heritage processes related to the delivery of water infrastructure programs and projects across our areas of operations, while being compliant with state and federal legislation.

They build trust and create meaningful and effective relationships with First Nations people and communities, Traditional Owner groups and their representatives.

## First Nations Yarning Circle

The First Nations Yarning Circle is made up of the community members who worked on our Reflect RAP.

They are continuing to guide and support us in the delivery of the Innovate RAP. They will meet with the internal Ngulaway RAP Working Group to provide feedback and mentoring. They are acting as our peak advisory body towards Aboriginal engagement, participation, and all RAP matters.

## Ngulaway RAP Working Group

The Ngulaway RAP Working Group is an internal working party focused on the delivery and implementation of the Innovate RAP. This will bring WaterNSW people on the reconciliation journey.

They will inform the First Nations Yarning Circle of the progress and monitor the implementation of the Innovate RAP through collaboration, communication, and positive internal and external relationships.

## Aboriginal Support Network

The WaterNSW Aboriginal Support Network is an informal meeting of Aboriginal employees to share knowledge, stories, learn from each other, and discuss work matters for our communities.

The group is a culturally safe space to mentor each other, provide advice towards cultural events and discuss development opportunities.

# Our RAP

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Since launching our inaugural Reflect RAP in March 2022, we have been on a transformative cultural journey. Many changes have been endorsed and adopted by our Board, CEO and leadership team, and these are flowing on to our people as we deliver important work in our areas of influence.

Our Reflect RAP Working Group held its first meeting in June 2021 and the group has been guiding us to look closely at how we can adapt our internal structures, policies, frameworks and strategies and keep on a positive pathway.

We are reminded by our RAP Working Group that this journey will take time, and for our next level RAP, we understand that we need to keep building on what we have achieved so far by:

- changing culture
- building stronger and more trusting relationships with our communities
- being creative with our procurement
- establishing sustainable employment

As we change, we grow, and a new model of governance for our Innovate RAP has been established to encourage two-way learning, ownership, growth,

and resilience both internally and with our external partners. An external First Nations Yarning Circle will act as a peak advisory body to guide and oversee an internal RAP working group, called the RAP Ngulaway Group. 'Together we walk as one' is our commitment to work towards reconciliation, while developing the confidence to rise to the challenges and transformations as part of delivering our Innovate RAP.

The Ngulaway RAP Working Group will consist of an Executive Manager who will be the RAP chair, 3 x First Nations employees, 3 x Non-First Nations employees and 2 x shadow RAP Champions.

The roles of members on the Ngulaway RAP Working Group are:

- Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
- Manager Procurement Corporate Property and Services – Finance, Legal & Risk
- General Manager Regional Operations Sydney – Operations
- Water System Operations Supervisor South – Operations
- Catchment Field Supervisor – Operations
- Maintenance Team Leader Menindee – Operations
- Area Manager Southwest – Operations
- Lead Project Manager – Operations
- Executive Assistant – Digital
- Lead Project Manager – Operations

The First Nations Yarning Circle includes 6 x external First Nations people who were previous members of the WaterNSW Reflect RAP working group. These representatives come from communities throughout NSW and will be available to provide ongoing advice and support to WaterNSW on RAP development and delivery, Native Title, Cultural Heritage and First Nations engagement issue or concerns.

At WaterNSW, we understand that true reconciliation must have tangible outcomes and through our Innovate RAP we aim to increase commitment opportunities as part of our project investment, procurement, and employment delivery. Through this, we aim to improve social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes for First Nations peoples. We want to build relationships with First Nations communities based on inclusion, trust and mutual respect and listening to find solutions together and adapt our plans so together we create a shared vision and methodology.

At WaterNSW, we understand that true reconciliation must have tangible outcomes.



# Together we walk as one

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## Changing culture

- More than 30 per cent of WaterNSW employees have completed our two-day immersion cultural competence and awareness training.
- Established an internal Aboriginal Support Network providing a safe environment for First Nations employees to meet.
- Created frameworks and strategies including Acknowledgement to Country Protocol, Co-design Principles, Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Aboriginal Procurement Strategy and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management System.
- Incorporated local Aboriginal designed artwork and dual naming into our new office refurbishments.

## Building our communities

- Created WaterNSW Co-design Principles for future WaterNSW projects that enables early engagement on projects to manage cultural heritage values and to identify any procurement and employment opportunities.
- Supported First Nations communities as part of early engagement in 18 WaterNSW infrastructure projects.
- Established a First Nations community database and negotiated three access agreements in collaboration with First Nations organisations for access on WaterNSW lands.
- Celebrated cultural events as part of the Reflect launch, NAIDOC Week 2022, Reconciliation Week 2022 as well as commemorating the Appin massacre memorial.



## Creative procurement

- Developed and endorsed WaterNSW First Nations Procurement database.
- Introduced a revised threshold of one quotation up to \$250,000 to make the WaterNSW Procurement Framework more accessible to First Nations businesses and support positive action to increase the diversity of our suppliers and help meet our RAP objectives and outcomes.
- Inclusion of First Nations database into our Tier 1 Contractors scope of works encouraging local First Nations businesses in projects.

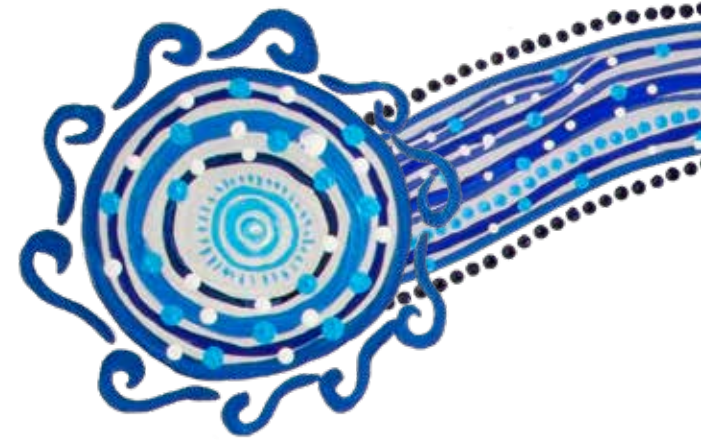
## Sustainable employment

- Changes to how we recruit by modifying positions description, using cultural appropriate artwork, more inclusive language/alternatives to minimum qualifications/requirements encouraging First Nations candidates to apply.
- Supporting First Nations people to gain nationally recognised qualifications which assist the possibility of gaining full-time employment at the completion of traineeships.
- Created opportunity for First Nations employee to work across numerous locations to gain additional skills and experience to accelerate job readiness.
- Building entry employment opportunities for First Nations people through school-based traineeships.
- Implementing new ways of delivering the Certificate III in Water Industry Operations training package to First Nations people.
- Development and implementation of mentoring/coaching programs to enable shared learning and providing a path to skill and knowledge transfer.



# First Nations Yarning Members

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## Mr Fred Hooper

(Murrawarri descendant)

Chair of the Murrawarri Peoples Council.

## Ms Glenda Chalker

(Dharawal descendant from the Cubbitch Barta Clan)

Previous Chair of NSW Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee, Aboriginal rep on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee, member of the Camden Heritage.

## Ms Leeanne Hampton

(Ngiyampaaa/Wiradjuri descendant)

Councillor for Wiradjuri region, NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

## Mr Jason Ford

Cultural Advisor, Ngemba Community Working Party, 2004 – present

Ngemba Delegate, Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations, 2009 – present

vNgemba Delegate, Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Weilwan, Wongaippon Native Title Claim Applicant Group, 2012

Ms Glenda Chalker



Mr Fred Hooper



Mr Jason Ford



Mrs Leeanne Hampton



# Ngulaway RAP Working Group

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Ngulaway RAP Working Group consist of seven member plus two shadow representatives:

## Clair Cameron

Executive Manager, Corporate Affairs

## First Nations representatives

### Duane Byrnes

(Wonnarua descendant)  
Catchment Field Supervisor – Catchment Assets

### Barry Philp

(Ngipeempaa descendant)  
Maintenance Team Leader - Menindee

### Julie Lord

(Gomeri descendant)  
Executive Assistant Digital

## Shadow representative

### Luke Walsh

Lead Project Manager

Clair Cameron



Julie Lord



Duane Byrnes



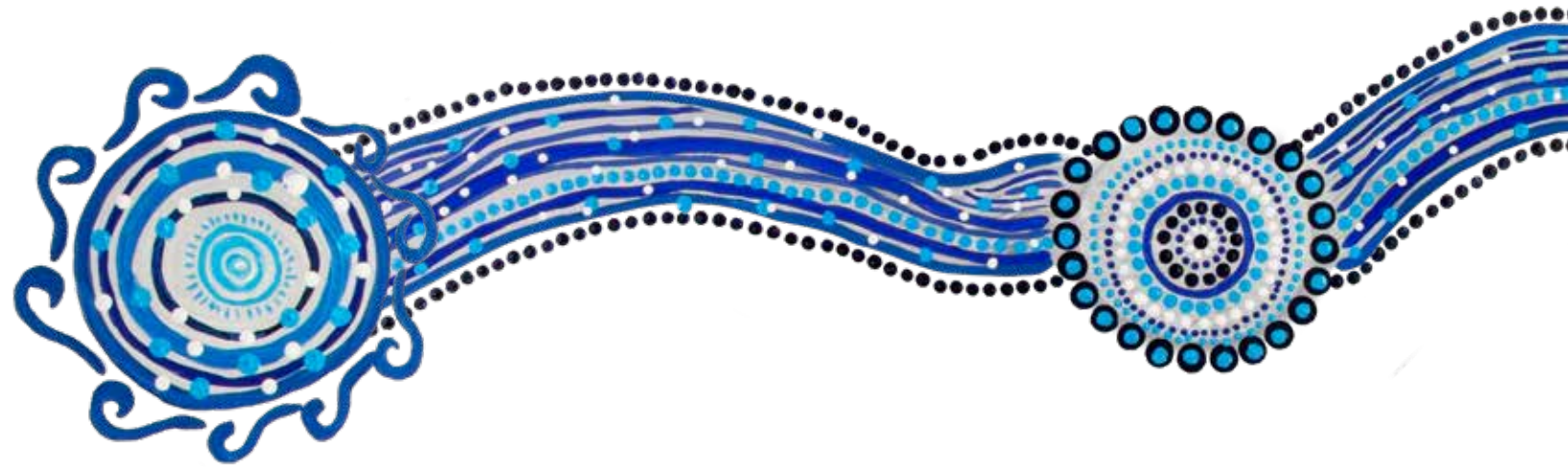
Barry Philp



Luke Walsh







Sam Ebzery



Brian Mayhew



Andrea Patrick



Nachi Nachiappan



## Non First Nations representatives

Sam Ebzery

Manager Employee Experience

Andrea Patrick

Manager Procurement Corporate Property & Service

Brian Mayhew

General Manager Regional Operations Sydney

## Shadow representative

Nachi Nachiappan

Manager Environmental & Cultural Water

## Case Study

Access agreements  
*"Building opportunities"*

We have been developing and implementing Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) for access to Country and collaborating on Indigenous Land Use Agreements with Traditional Owners, Local Area Land Councils (LALCs) and Native Title Groups.

We currently have three MOUs under negotiation and are committed to working collaboratively to develop the processes and mechanisms that support cultural access whilst meeting our legal obligations.

We are collaborating with First Nations communities to support their connection to traditional lands, maintain partnerships based on mutual respect, and acknowledge connection to Country.



## Case Study

NAIDOC Week  
*"Building relationships"*

We have been building relationships and promoting reconciliation by hosting internal and external events and building and promoting our cultural events calendar.

This includes coordinating an event held at Cataract Dam during NAIDOC Week 2022, where the WaterNSW Executive Leadership Team and staff joined the RAP Working Group and the community to celebrate and recognise NAIDOC Week. Executive Manager Fiona Smith said: "Celebrating NAIDOC Week demonstrates the importance of change and why change needs to happen".







## Case Study

Cultural training  
*"Building respect"*

Increasing the cultural competency and awareness of our employees is a key deliverable from our Reflect RAP. This is being achieved through the design and delivery of online and in-person training across the business.

The Cultural Competency and Awareness Training is a two-day course that provides participants an opportunity to learn more about local Aboriginal culture, practices and lore. It also provides an opportunity for immersion in activities to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal communities and cultural connection to Country.

## Case Study

Refurbishing our offices  
*"Building opportunities"*

We officially opened the new Dubbo Office in 2022 and were honored to have Wiradjuri artist Nathan Peckham and the kids from Mian School in attendance so we could thank them for their amazing artwork that sits proudly in the new office.

The artwork reflects and strengthens our focus and commitment to improved engagement with First Nations communities and stakeholders and fosters a deeper understanding and cultural awareness within our business.

By collaborating and providing economic procurement opportunities, we are building relationships and gaining deeper understanding of and connection to the local Wiradjuri culture.





## Case Study

Co-design workshop  
*"Building relationships"*

Co-design should be standard practice at WaterNSW to help us meet our responsibilities to deliver our infrastructure projects.

Putting co-design into practice means we take a cultural journey and are challenged to do things differently to the way they have been done in the past. We have already learnt from experience that when we practice co-design, the benefits and positive outcomes are tangible and meaningful to both our business and our First Nations communities.

There are times when we may not have the lead-time or resources to co-design well - for example, during emergency response - but we can still have a post-emergency awareness process that is co-designed.

## Case Study

Dual naming  
*"Building respect"*

We are moving towards adopting and dual naming our infrastructure areas and offices. This is helping us work directly with First Nations communities, to develop respect and acknowledge their role within our land and water management practices.

By engaging First Nations communities in this way we are making sure that we are using culturally appropriate engagement and language protocols on our signage and/or media publications.

In our new regional offices, First Nations artists have designed walls and dual named our meeting rooms with names of native animals in language. This provides our employees an opportunity to gain knowledge of the local language while obtaining greater respect of the local culture.









# Building Relationships

WaterNSW will build better and long-lasting relationships with First Nations peoples in our areas of operations and influence, that are culturally appropriate and based on two-way learning, with a shared vision. We will embed co-design in our approach with First Nations communities, so we create tangible outcomes and help lift social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes for communities. We will promote and participate in cultural events and ceremonies and be proud to demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation. Through the implementation of innovative strategies and processes we will positively influence others and drive reconciliation.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1.</b> Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Develop a First Nations engagement plan that will be implemented by employees' to encourage best practice and implement the WaterNSW Co-design framework when working together with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	August 2023	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Develop and implement an engagement plan for each project and provide training and governance to project managers, project engineers and construction managers.	August 2023	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Meet with First Nations communities and stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	September 2023	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Engage early in the project lifecycle and embed our WaterNSW Co-design Principles into the project processes and governance.	August 2023	<b>Lead</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist <b>Support</b> - Cultural Heritage Field Supervisors Operations



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1.</b> Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Develop a roadshow to provide opportunities for First Nations communities to input into existing projects and engage early on new projects.	August 2023	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Seek input from First Nations communities in the development and implementation of co-design principles and Aboriginal participation plans (APP).	August 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement
<b>2.</b> Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2024 April 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2024 May 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2024 May 2025	<b>Lead</b> - WaterNSW CEO <b>Support</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement
	Organise and plan NRW external and internal events to make it a meaningful experience for people.	April 2024 April 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	WaterNSW Executive team to promote active participation in NRW events and WaterNSW senior leaders to actively champion NRW events.	May 2024 May 2025	Executive Manager – Corporate Affairs
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024 May 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3.</b> Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	Nov 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Review and update existing WaterNSW Inclusion and Diversity policy to strengthen awareness of reconciliation across the workforce.	June 2024	Manager Inclusion and Diversity
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Promote the First Nations engagement plan and other strategies to the Ngulaway RAP Working Group, Communications and Engagement teams so they can champion these documents throughout the business.	September 2023 September 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	Apr 2024 Apr 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager Communications <b>Support</b> - Manager Stakeholder Engagement
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Continue to collaborate and share best practices with other NSW Government agencies and contractors that are on the RAP journey.	July 2023 July 2024 July 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Invite RAP members to WaterNSW Aboriginal Support Network meetings	Bi monthly Review date: August 2024	First Nations Support Officer



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>4.</b> Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Monitor current HR policies and make recommendations for improvements and culture change within WaterNSW.	Feb 2024 Feb 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Continue to implement and communicate our anti-discrimination policy to employees and contractors.	Jun 2023 Jun 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager Employee Experience <b>Support</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement
	Invite a subject matter expert in anti-discrimination development to review the policy.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Employee Experience
	Engage with First Nations staff and/or advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	Nov 2023 Nov 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	Apr 2024 Apr 2025	Manager Employee Experience



# Building Respect

WaterNSW recognise and acknowledge that First Nations peoples have a deep cultural, physical and spiritual connection to land and water. We will increase our understanding of this connection through provision of Aboriginal cultural competency and awareness training so that our staff are culturally capable, agile and can lead by example in the work they do on lands and waters. We will support and promote cultural events, embrace two-way learning and knowledge sharing with First Nations peoples to gain access to, and better manage and improve upon, the health of land and waterways.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5.</b> Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Review current learnings to enhance a more specific localised cultural awareness training at regional offices and projects.	Feb 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Develop and implement Level 1 online training and Level 2 face-to-face cultural awareness and competency training in metropolitan and regional offices and projects.	Sept 2023	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Promote positive stories on WaterNSW internet of employee working directly with First Nations communities and highlighting their individual story of successfully building relationships with First Nations communities based on inclusion, trust and mutual respect.	July 2024 July 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist <b>Support</b> - Digital Media Officer - Corporate Affairs
	Promote stories on WaterNSW intranet and in the media of First Nations business success stories working with WaterNSW.	Nov 2023 Nov 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Continue to embed and champion cultural competency and awareness training to all WaterNSW employees.	Bi-monthly Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5.</b> Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Facilitate local First Nations protocols as part of the induction process with local Traditional Owners for all project work sites.	As per induction for start of projects	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Provide opportunities for Ngulaway RAP Working Group members and key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural competency and awareness training.	Jan 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Liaise with the property group to implement opportunities for dual naming within each project and identify any internal assets that can be dual named such as meeting rooms and office locations.	Feb 2024	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Property
<b>6.</b> Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase employee's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	August 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Develop and implement an educational plan for employees to increase understandings of different cultural protocols.	Dec 2023	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Include Acknowledgement of Country signs in all WaterNSW offices and at the front gates of our operations and infrastructure areas. Engage First Nations communities and Local Aboriginal Land Councils when developing appropriate locations and language for dual naming and signage and maintain on a database.	August 2023	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Property
	Develop a strategy/policy to guide employees on the cultural protocols for engaging Traditional Owners services for events.	Nov 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	Monitor current protocol document and update as required.	August 2023 August 2024 August 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2024 July 2024 May 2025 July 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Ngulaway RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023-25	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Promote HR policies and procedures that support Aboriginal staff to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.	First week in July 2023-25	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2023-25	Manager First Nations Engagement
8. Establish practices that embrace two-way learning and knowledge sharing with First Nations peoples to better manage and improve upon the health of land and waterways.	Provide opportunities for First Nations employees and community members to share stories and practices relating to land and waterways from their nations.	Mar 2024 Mar 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Promote cultural stories and First Nations people's connection to land and water (including land management techniques) internally to foster the sharing of cultural knowledge.	Mar 2024 Mar 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Promote positive stories on WaterNSW internet of working directly with First Nations communities, highlighting where relationships with First Nation communities are based on inclusion, trust and mutual respect.	July 2024 July 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist <b>Support</b> - Digital Media Officer - Corporate Affairs





# Building Opportunities

WaterNSW will promote professional development internally and improve our recruitment processes and benchmarks to leverage more opportunities and retain First Nations peoples within our business. We will celebrate these successes, so we are recognised as a place where First Nations peoples feel safe, valued included and respected. We will continue nurturing our Aboriginal Support Network to provide a safe environment for our First Nations employees. We will use culturally appropriate processes to modify the way we recruit and retain First Nations employees. We will think creatively and strategically on how to transform our business processes to be more inclusive and equitable in our procurement of goods and services and engagement of First Nations businesses. We will support First Nations peoples to gain qualifications, skills, training and education in preparation for employment.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9.</b> Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Employee Experience
	Continue funding the WaterNSW Aboriginal Support Network so current First Nations employees feel safe, supported and are happy in their work environment plus have opportunities and are encouraged to participate in staff and career development.	Monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Identify partnership opportunities with People and Culture team for personal employment and professional development for Aboriginal employees.	July 2023 July 2024 July 2025	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Employee Experience
	Ensure opportunities are made available for First Nations employees to enhance their personal development and have opportunities with future training building on their personal development.	Monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>9.</b></p> <p>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.</p>	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Facilitate discussion within the Aboriginal Support Network to discuss opportunities on employment and professional development.	Monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Advertise and distribute job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander internal and external contacts	Bi-monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	<b>Lead</b> - Manager Employee Experience <b>Support</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement
	Review and monitor human resources and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace and continue to develop a framework in consultation with People and Culture partners.	Jan 2024 Jan 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Ngulaway RAP Working Group and WaterNSW Aboriginal Support Network employees to review and make suggestions as required to the First Nations Engagement plan and other HR policies that may impact on employment opportunities and/or retention towards First Nations employees.	Aug 2023 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	<p><b>10.</b></p> <p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	Develop and enhance procurement strategies for projects and support their implementation with project managers, project engineers, construction managers and contractors.	May 2023 May 2025



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10.</b> Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Utilise Supply Nation database and current NSW schemes.	Aug 2023 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Ensure Aboriginal Participation plans are included in the tender process and meet the requirements of State and Federal Aboriginal Procurement Policy, as part of project procurement.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	WaterNSW First Nations Engagement Team to review all project contractor's Aboriginal Procurement Plans.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Specialist
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to employees.	Bi-monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Organise regular meetings with WaterNSW Procurement Team to develop opportunities and implement strategies.	Bi-monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Manager Procurement
	Review and suggest changes to the procurement rules/policies to make it easier for Aboriginal businesses to be part of the supply chain.	Sept 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Dec 2023	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Bi-monthly meetings Review date: August 2024	<b>Lead</b> - Manager First Nations Engagement <b>Support</b> - Aboriginal Engagement Specialist



# Building Governance

'Together we walk as one' is our commitment to meeting the challenges and transformations on our reconciliation journey. To help us, we have a First Nations Yarning Circle made up of community representatives to govern the development of our RAP and guide our internal Ngulaway RAP Working Group.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>11.</b> 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.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Annual review of the Terms of Reference for the RWG and update as required.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Aug & Nov 2023 Mar, June, Aug & Nov 2024 Mar & June 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
<b>12.</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024	
	Identify key stakeholders both internal and external as part of the implementation phase and engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Sept 2023 Sept 2024	



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>12.</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments and develop measures to ensure targets are being met.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Aug 2023 - Aug 2025	Chief Executive Officer
	RWG representative to present the Innovate RAP to the Executive Leadership Team.	Aug & Nov 2023 Mar, June, Aug & Nov 2024 Mar & June 2025	Lead - Manager First Nations Engagement Support - Ngulaway RAP Group
<b>13.</b> 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	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Aug & Nov 2023 Mar, June, Aug & Nov 2024 Mar & June 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	Aug & Nov 2023 Mar, June, Aug & Nov 2024 Mar & June 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>13.</b> Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2024	Manager First Nations Engagement
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Sept 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement
<b>14.</b> Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Feb 2025	Manager First Nations Engagement





Together we will walk as one.

## Review

First review date for the Innovate RAP will be undertaken in *September 2024*

Final review date for the Innovate RAP will be undertaken in *September 2025*

## More information

We welcome your feedback and enquiries about our Innovate RAP.

## For further information please contact:

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