



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



goulburn
valley
libraries

Goulburn Valley Libraries logo First Nations artwork
created by Tammy-Lee Atkinson

Goulburn Valley Libraries

Reflect Reconciliation

Action Plan

September 2024 -
December 2025

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Goulburn Valley Libraries to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Goulburn Valley Libraries joins a network of more than 3,000 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 Goulburn Valley Libraries 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 Goulburn Valley Libraries, 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



Our Vision

We are a library service that respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continuous occupation and cultures.

We involve and support our local first nations peoples and communities.

We understand and recognise our histories and work to a reconciled future.

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About Goulburn Valley Libraries

Goulburn Valley Libraries provides library services to the communities in the municipalities of Greater Shepparton City Council, Moira Shire and Strathbogie Shire.

We serve a population of 108,080 people over an area of 9,772 square kilometres.

We operate 11 libraries by agreement in the towns of Avenel, Cobram, Euroa, Mooroopna, Nagambie, Nathalia, Numurkah, Tatura, Violet Town, Yarrawonga and the city of Shepparton. We operate a Mobile Library service that serves smaller towns and communities within the region.

A Central Administration centre in Shepparton supports the library operations by providing shared support services and logistics.

Our Corporation is governed by the Goulburn Valley Libraries Board. The Board is made up of nine representatives: a Councillor, an Executive representative and a Community representative from each municipality.

Our library services include maintaining a collection of over 160,000 physical items for all age groups located at our libraries, including books, DVDs, magazines, newspaper and audio books. Our collections include categories such as popular adult, junior and teen fiction, non-fiction, reference, westerns, local history and large print. We also maintain a large online presence including access for our patrons to eBooks, audiobooks, eMagazines, video streaming and several informational databases. We partner with 26 other library services throughout the state to share a catalogue and resources increasing the

available physical collection to over 2 million items.

We run many community events and programs supporting lifelong learning, social inclusion and physical and mental health.

Employment

Total employee number: **61**

Permanent employees full time: **9**

Permanent employees part time: **31**

Casual employees: **21**

Full time equivalents: **25.01**

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait

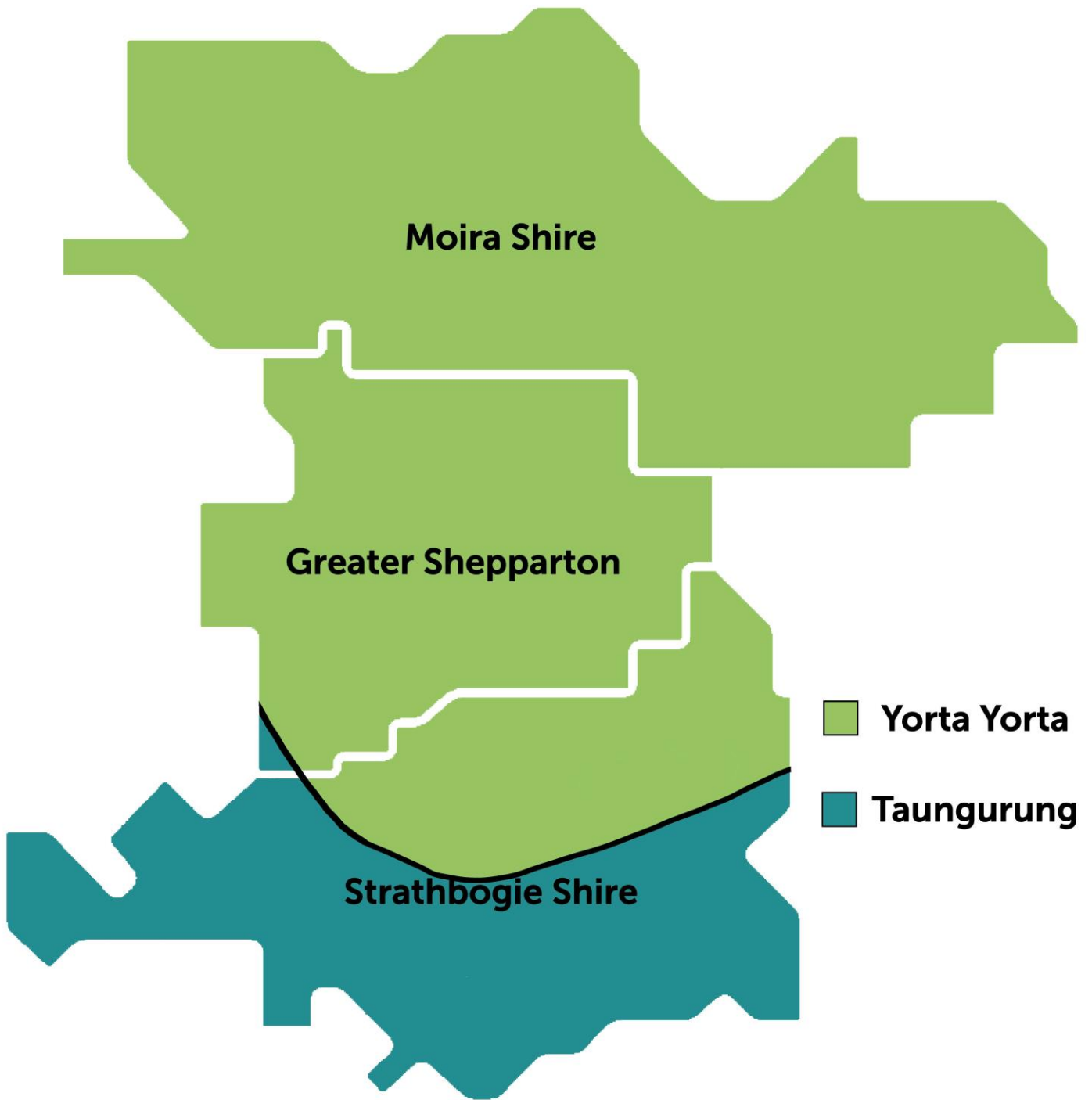
Islander peoples: **1**

Registered Aboriginal organisations in our region

- Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council

Council Reconciliation plans

- The Greater Shepparton City Council Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) July 2023 – July 2025
- Strathbogie Shire Council– MOU with the Taungurung Land and Waters



First Nations Organisations in our region

Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative

Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative is a provider of community-controlled whole-of-life services that support, honour, and respect First Nations people. The Co-operative was established by the community in 1980 to be a place where our people could meet for cultural and social activities, and provide education and information while providing support in areas of special need such as health, housing, welfare, and culture.

Academy of Sport, Health, and Education (ASHE)

The Academy of Sport, Health, and Education (ASHE) uses participation in sports to undertake education and training within a trusted, culturally appropriate environment, particularly for Indigenous students. In 2004 the Rumbalara Football Netball Club (RFNC) in partnership with the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Sciences established The Academy of Sport Health and Education (ASHE). ASHE was formed as a community and educational resource to provide young Indigenous people with an educational setting and support for their transition to employment or further education.

Ganbina

Ganbina is Australia's most successful Indigenous school to work transition program. Their approach is unique. They mentor young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from the ages of five to 25 years old, to make sure they gain the education, skills and life experiences they need to unlock their full potential. Their program includes learning support, life skills training, cultural appreciation, career guidance and financial assistance.

Rumbalara Football Netball Club

Rumbalara Football Netball Club (Rumbalara FNC) is an Aboriginal community-run sporting club located in Shepparton, Victoria. It is dedicated to strengthening the community and bringing families together through strong vibrant leadership. It is a place of belonging, a place that people of all ages and backgrounds can call their own. Rumbalara FNC has created an environment where Indigenous people, especially youth are inspired and encouraged to actively participate in the sporting community that Rumbalara FNC provides, as well as providing an opportunity to participate in the social and non-competitive aspects of this community.

Kaiela Arts

Established in 2006, Kaiela Arts is an Aboriginal art centre located in Shepparton, situated on the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta Nation. Their work drives important outcomes for both First Nations artists and the broader Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. They reference the linear art style, traditional to Kaiela Dungala (Goulburn Murray), Yorta Yorta Country.

The Kaiela Institute has been established as a First Nations-led analysis and policy think tank. They provide a place and a process to encourage and support community leaders and institutions to collaborate, and take a more strategic approach to building the future of the Goulburn Murray First Nations community.

Taungurung Land and Waters Council

Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) protects the cultural heritage of Taungurung people by performing the functions of a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

TLaWC develops projects for the economic, social and cultural well-being of Taungurung people. They provide opportunities for engagement in cultural events by facilitating camps, activities, and educational workshops for Taungurung people and minimise the barriers to participation.

TLaWC also provides services for natural resource management and liaise with governmental bodies, private land owners, developers, and other stakeholders to assist with applying protocol for best land and water management practices to ensure environmental and cultural heritage preservation.

They develop educational resources for use in schools, libraries, and community groups to promote and raise cultural awareness in our communities.

They keep their members informed and connected. Through their online social media presence and dissemination of monthly newsletters they enable TLaWC members and the wider community to be aware of the latest news, cultural events, health services, job and educational opportunities, as well as other potential pathways for social and economic well-being.

Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation

The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) is comprised of peoples with undeniable bloodlines to the Original Ancestors of the Land of the Yorta Yorta Nation. These bloodlines link Yorta Yorta peoples' past, present and future to one another, with traditional laws, customs, beliefs and sovereignty intact.

YYNAC was established, amongst other objectives, to represent the members of the Family Groups who are descendants of the Original Ancestors of the Yorta Yorta Peoples; to make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta Peoples; and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protection of Yorta Yorta Country

New First Nations Initiatives in our region

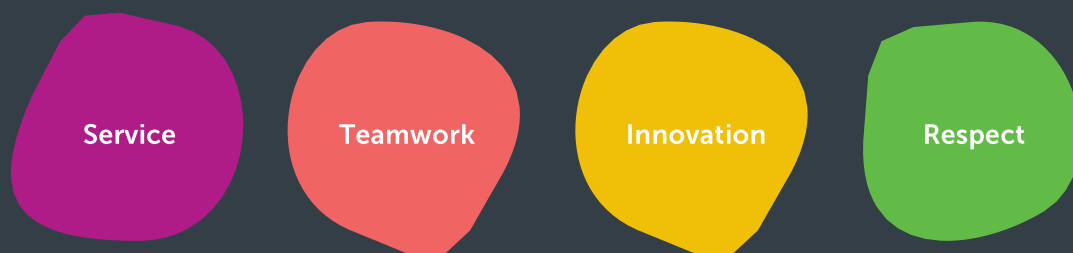
Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan

The Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan has a vision to build a thriving First Nations economy that will generate new income, opportunities and shared prosperity for the benefit of everyone in the region. Both the First Nations and the broader regional communities have guided this new, nation-leading approach, which was designed from the ground up: in the region, by the region, for the region. We take a new and positive investment-based approach for generating and sharing prosperity and value.

Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence

The Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence will be a national, state-of-the-art centre designed as a hub of connection and transformation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Australia. Munarra will provide a home for an expanded Academy for Sports Health and Education as well as the community infrastructure required to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal people in the Goulburn Murray region. It will embed Aboriginal culture across all curricula and programs, positioning Indigenous knowledge transfer and cultural exchange in striving for excellence in sports, health sciences, and education.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)



Goulburn Valley Libraries operates within the traditional country of the Yorta Yorta and Taungurung peoples.

The Goulburn Valley has one of the highest proportions of the total population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Goulburn Valley Libraries has a history of participation and collaboration with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities:

- Partnership to develop and facilitate the Dungala – Kaeila Writing Awards
- Employment of a casual Woongi officer to support Aboriginal programs such as Aboriginal Storytimes.
- Development of an Aboriginal Collection at the Shepparton Library.
- Employment of a permanent Aboriginal Library Assistant to develop and implement programs and provide a face at the counter for First Nations peoples.

We have recognised that we have an important role in our community to:

- Provide accurate information and resources to help educate our communities
- Support our Aboriginal communities to participate in the library
- Provide leadership for reconciliation in our community.
- Support the Victorian Government Treaty process

We have developed a Project Plan to develop our RAP. This Plan has been adopted and is owned by the Board of Goulburn Valley Libraries

The employment of an Aboriginal Library Assistant and the appointment of a local Yorta Yorta man to our Board has provided a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues for our organisation. Through their suggestions and guidance, we have had conversations at Board level and across our workforce about how we can improve our engagement and understanding of the First Peoples issues.

We have subsequently agreed as an organisation to develop a RAP, led by the Board providing definitive guidance and support.

To actualise this decision, we have established a RAP Working Group and appointed Jenny Wyllie (Manager Operations) as our RAP Champion.

Our RAP Working Group

Felicity Macchion – Chief Executive Officer

Jenny Wyllie – Manager Operations

Cindy Decker – Manager Technical Support

Rhonda McKie – Library Co-ordinator Mooroopna

Julie Best – Aboriginal Library Assistant (First Nations representative)

Dylan O’Connell – CIT Coordinator

Cr Greg James – Board member (First Nations representative)

Jessica Anderson – Library Coordinator Cobram

The working group includes members from our Board, Senior Executive, and field staff employed at a range of locations across our region and meets every two months or on a needs basis. Meeting notes and outcomes are reported to all staff via email and at annual all-staff forums.

The CEO reports on RAP’s progress and achievements to the Board and meets six times per year.

Our journey so far.....

The Koori Library Pathways Project, launched in 2006 was a joint initiative between the Shepparton based Indigenous organisation, the Koori Resource and Information Centre and Goulburn Valley Libraries. This project saw the establishment of the Aboriginal Collection at the Shepparton library and the employment of a casual "Woongi" officer, Sharon Charles, to support Aboriginal programs such as Aboriginal Storytimes.

The Woongi Library Officer also helped establish the Dungala-Kaiela Writing Awards in 2012. The Dungala-Kaiela Writing Awards are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a connection to our region and has an Open, Youth and Junior sections, and an Elders category. These awards continue and are a highlight of our calendar.

Employment of a permanent Aboriginal Library Assistant to develop and implement programs and provide a face at the counter for First Nations peoples. This role currently filled by Yorta Yorta woman Julie Best, who maintains deep links into First Nations communities and develops programs and activities in libraries and schools. Julie provides a friendly face for community members in our libraries.

Yorta Yorta man, Cr Greg James, joins the Board. Greg is respected Yorta Yorta man and a leader in many local organisations including a Councilor of Greater Shepparton City Council and chairperson of Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative.

We have begun to actively incorporate First Nations businesses in our procurement and utilised "Yurri Catering Services" for events and local First Nations artist Tammy-Lee Atkinson for graphic design.

We have begun an education process for all staff including Cultural Competency Training for all staff and undertaking cultural excursions such as the Yorta Yorta "Flats" walk at Shepparton and a Taungurung Cultural Tour at Tabilk for our RAP working group.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Explore relationships with Yorta Yorta and Taungurung Aboriginal Corporations.	Oct 24	Operations Manager
	Research best practices and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May 25	CEO
	Explore relationships with known local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and organisations. i.e ASHE (Aboriginal Sport Health and Education) , Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, Dungala Kaeila Arts, Kaeila Institute	June 25	CEO
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 25	Operations Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May/June Annually	CEO
	Staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May/June Annually	CEO
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Oct 24	CEO
	Acknowledgement and reconciliation commitment to be part of new Library Plan and annual reporting.	Sept Annually	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct 24	CEO
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct 24	CEO
	Ensure best practice in services and collections by participating in sector-wide programs, projects and work groups.	June Annually	CEO/Operations Manager
	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	June 25	Operations Manager
4 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.	June 25	CEO



	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5	Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Undertake Cultural Awareness Training for all staff and Board members.	March 25	CEO
		RAP Working group to undertake cultural learning tours of local sites.	March 25	Operations Manager
		Increase understanding, value, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	June 25	CEO
		Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Sep 25	CEO
6	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Ensure Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols at all meetings events and gatherings.	Oct 24	CEO
		Install Acknowledgement of Country signs at all Libraries.	Dec 24	CEO
		Include an Acknowledgement of Country in all staff email and organisational correspondence and website.	Sept 24	CEO
		Install signage in language in libraries.	Dec 25	Operations Manager
		Develop an Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocol document in consultations with First Nations stakeholders	Sep 24	CEO
		Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols and an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	Sep 24	Operations Manager
7	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	April 25	Operations Manager
		Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	May 25	Operations Manager
		RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	May 25	CEO



Opportunities

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8	Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Maintain Budget for a permanent designated part/time position. Seek other opportunities for further employment for First Peoples including Trainees, Work Experience, and Junior Shelvees within the organisation.	Dec 24	CEO
		Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 25	CEO
		Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 25	CEO
9	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Review the Procurement Policy to remove any biases and enable equal supply opportunity.	Dec 25	CEO
		Support local indigenous artists through purchasing artworks for our libraries.	July 25	CEO
		Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 25	CEO



Governance

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	June 25	CEO
		Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 25	CEO
		Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June 25	CEO
11	Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 25	CEO
		Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 25	CEO
		Maintain appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Sept 25	CEO
12	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	Operations Manager
		Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey	August Annually	Operations Manager
		Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	Sept Annually	Operations Manager
		Ensure RAP Achievements are reported in Annual Report.	August Annually	Operations Manager
13	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Sept 25	CEO

Contact details

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