



Australian Government



Services
Australia

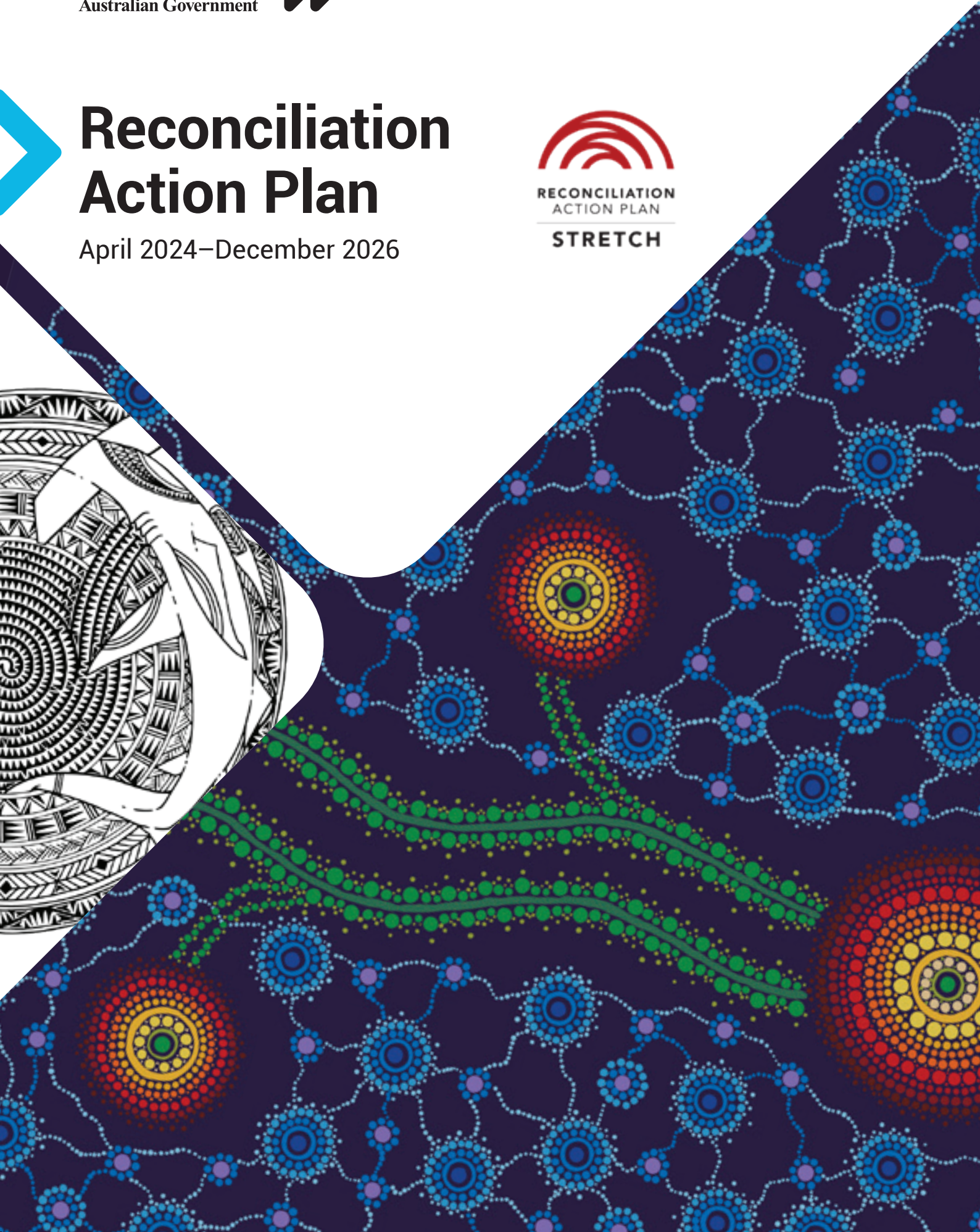
Reconciliation Action Plan

April 2024–December 2026



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

STRETCH



Acknowledgement of Country

Services Australia recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this land and their ongoing connection to the lands, seas and waterways. We pay respect to all Elders, past and present, of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations. We recognise the enduring strength and resilience of the world's oldest continuous living cultures and value the rich diversity Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritages contribute. We acknowledge the impacts of colonisation and are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to lessen disadvantage and improve life outcomes.

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About the artworks and artists

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and communities are central to how we design our programs and services and it's important that our visual designs reflect that.

We commissioned Indigenous artists Jasmine Bennett and Glen Mackie to create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks for our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

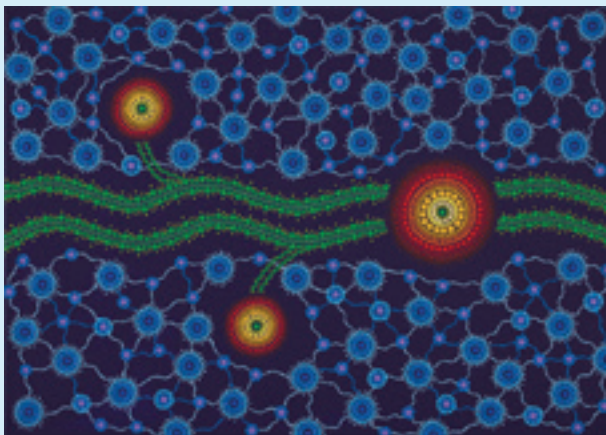
The designs represent the concept of 'reconciliation' and demonstrate our vision of working towards shared understanding, respect and trust between Australia's First Nations people, communities and our agency.

The Aboriginal design

Jasmine Bennett is a Kamilaroi and Dunghutti artist, living on Gumbaynggirr land.

There are 3 Aboriginal symbols featured in her work. First, the suns. One of the smaller suns represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the other represents non-Indigenous Australians. The third, larger sun represents the future we are working towards – a time where there is mutual respect, trust and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The second feature is the river, representing the timeline flowing between all Australians and the future ahead. The body of the work is made up of many blue, concentric circles linked together. These circles represent the vastness and variety of Australian communities connecting with each other.

This artwork represents the movement of all Australians towards a common goal of understanding, and how we are continuing to progress our reconciliation journey for staff and customers of the agency.



The Torres Strait Islander design

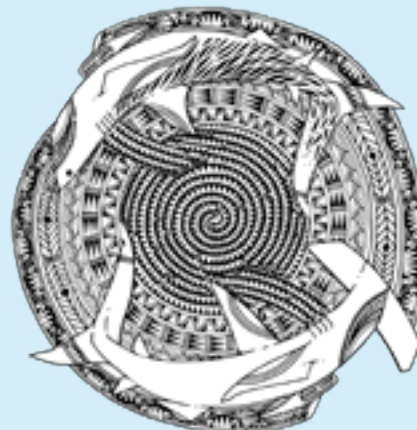
Glen Mackie is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist from Iama and Old Mapoon. He lives on Yidinji Country.

A collection of Torres Strait Islander symbols and patterns feature in his artwork. The artwork features a hammerhead and tiger shark. These represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, respectively. These sharks symbolise that though we may look different, we share similarities on the inside. This is enhanced by the sucker fish, representing blood, placed alongside each of the sharks.

The water ripple in the centre of the artwork represents unity. The pattern stretches out to each of the sharks, enhancing the connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The 'E' pattern represents talking, and used here it symbolises Indigenous and non-Indigenous people teaching one another. This is reinforced by the weaving pattern, which represents the Torres Strait Islander tradition of sitting on a mat and teaching one another about family and culture.

The outer circle of the artwork consists of a wave pattern, symbolising the ups and downs of life that all of us experience, encouraging people to be kind and considerate toward one another.

Overall, this artwork represents the way forward, with communication and understanding being the most important tools we have to further reconciliation efforts.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Yuma! [Hello in Ngunnawal language]

Welcome to our agency's Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026.

I want to start by recognising the ongoing commitment to reconciliation shown by all Services Australia staff.

People at all levels have contributed to the development of our RAP.

This coming together in action and thoughtful collaboration exemplifies the culture this RAP seeks to foster through the plan's guiding principles: listen, share, value and learn.

Any plan needs champions to keep it at the forefront of our priorities. As one of our agency's Indigenous champions, I along with my fellow champions, and the agency's leadership will be advocates for the commitments in the plan. We'll also look for opportunities to listen, share, value and learn.

Our service officers, social workers and community partnership specialists – who work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – are also important champions for the work ahead of us.

As the Australian Government's primary service delivery agency, and the largest employer of Australian Public Service (APS) staff, our reach and scope for impact in the community and across the APS is extensive.

Two aspects stand out in the impact we seek. First, our work aligns with the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Second, through our plan and the way we work we aim to accurately reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives.

I'm confident this RAP will deliver positive changes within the agency and for the customers we serve, in line with Reconciliation Australia's 5 interrelated dimensions of achieving reconciliation – race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance.

I encourage everyone to read, understand and follow this plan as we continue to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being into all our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'David Hazlehurst'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title of the Chief Executive Officer.

David Hazlehurst
Chief Executive Officer
Services Australia

Message from the Chief Executive Officer of Reconciliation Australia



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Services Australia on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements this Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program facilitates organisations to advance reconciliation in their workplace and through their business. The RAP framework is designed for continuous development, pushing organisations to constantly assess and expand on their commitments.

Services Australia has a far-reaching footprint across Australia, coming into contact with millions of Australians every year while it delivers services and payments. In its essential role of addressing inequality and helping the vulnerable, the agency has a significant role to play in reconciliation, as well as in its position as the largest Australian Government employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Services Australia's previous RAP is to be commended for its achievements during an incredibly intensive period for the agency. With its operations pushed to the limit due to natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency worked hard to innovate to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were supported by its operations. This included creating five remote service centres, providing vaccination certificate support in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley, and developing online financial management information for First Nations peoples. It also created its Community Partnership Pilot, which has helped the agency to address access barriers to its services by partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. It is clear from these initiatives and its reconciliation journey so far that Services Australia recognises its unique capability and responsibility to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and communities to provide inclusive services for First Nations Australians.

This new Stretch RAP sees Services Australia seeking to shore up its foundations to ensure reconciliation is embedded into every facet of how it carries out its work. The agency has been open and honest about the challenges it has faced on its journey, including making sure its reconciliation activities are able to adapt to the demanding landscape the agency operates in. While continuing to use its reach to ensure equality in services, Services Australia is using this Stretch RAP to focus on increasing the cultural competency of its workplace. With a suite of new initiatives to increase the knowledge and capability of its employees, Services Australia is making sure all levels of its agency are engaged in cultural learning. Not only will these efforts help retain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff Services Australia currently employs, so too will this help inform and aid the agency's policies, programs and services, putting its work into a cultural context. All in all, this will enable Services Australia to be a better employer, as well as offer better, more inclusive services for First Nations Australians.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Services Australia on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our vision

Our RAP vision:

Coming together with understanding, respect and trust to move forward in unity with Australia's First Nations peoples and communities.

Our vision is shared by agency staff and represents our guiding principles of simple, helpful, respectful, and transparent services. Specifically, our vision affirms that every interaction, policy and decision is achieved through understanding and respect.

This allows us to build trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities so we can move forward together. Our vision builds on the three domains of the Commonwealth's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.



Knowing

Knowing and understanding history, culture, customs and beliefs



Doing

Culturally appropriate action and behaviours



Being

Awareness, authenticity and openness to examining a person's own values and beliefs

Case study

Creating our agency's reconciliation vision



Our reconciliation vision was developed through a 3-stage process, through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and non-Indigenous staff were engaged. This collaborative decision making process was important to ensure staff member's perspectives were reflected in our vision.

1 Vision workshops

- Staff selected from across the agency were challenged to develop a range of vision statements across 3 workshops.
- Staff considered what reconciliation meant to them, what was meaningful for them from the 2018 to 2022 RAP that we could build on, and other organisation vision statements.
- From this it was evident that themes important to staff included: strong leadership, working together, being proactive, listening, truth telling, commitment and focus on the future.
- Teams developed a variety of visions, which were put to a vote in each workshop. The 2 most popular visions from each workshop (6 in total) were progressed to the Reconciliation Steering Group.

2 Refinement workshop

- The 6 visions developed through staff workshops were presented to the Reconciliation Steering Group, Reconciliation Working Group, and the National Indigenous Coalition and further refined.

3 All staff vote

- All staff were encouraged to vote on their preferred statement. We received over 1,800 votes.
- Our previous CEO announced the official vision for the 2024 to 26 Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our business

Our core business

Services Australia is an Australian Government agency. Our purpose is to support Australians by efficiently delivering high-quality, accessible services and payments on behalf of the government.

Our remit is large. We deliver health, welfare, child support, emergency and other payments and services to almost every Australian. In 2022–23, we made \$219.5 billion in payments to individuals and healthcare providers across the country.

Our agency plays an important role in supporting Australians in their day to day lives, helping customers to access the payments and services they need. We are responsible for supporting people at every stage of life, from newborns to jobseekers to older Australians in aged care. We play a critical role in how customers experience government every day and during key transition points in their lives.

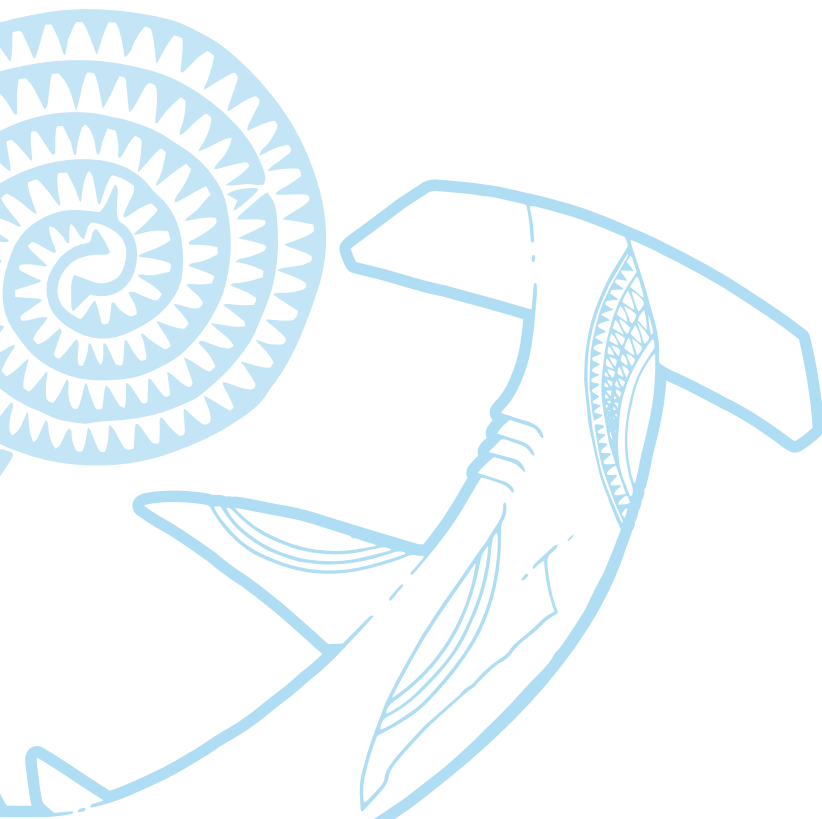
We continue to modernise service delivery so people can access Government services and payments when they need them. We aim to deliver simple, helpful, respectful and transparent services for all Australians.

Our reach

Our geographic reach is Australia-wide. In 2022–23, we answered 55.2 million calls, and saw over 10 million customers across our 318 service centres and 576 agent and access points.

As the primary Australian Government service delivery agency, we strive to foster positive experiences when interacting with individuals through accessible and tailored services which are supported by strong community relationships.

Our agency and its legacy organisations have a long history of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This has evolved over many decades through to today. Our service officers, Indigenous service officers, community engagement officers, social workers and community partnership specialist officers work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our customers. The bespoke service centres case study shows how we engaged with a local community to embed a human-centred design in the delivery of service centre excellence.



Case study

Bespoke service centres – community engagement and consultation



Incorporating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the design of the Fitzroy Crossing Service Centre.

Services Australia's transformation of service centres began in 2019. The project team used a human-centred design approach to connect with people and embed the voice of customers into the design.

Through extensive research, it was determined that a one size fits all approach would not achieve the tailored service required to meet the different demographic needs of all communities. Several communities were identified where a deeper understanding of local needs and cultural sensitivities would enhance the service experience.

Fitzroy Crossing Service Centre was selected as the blueprint site for this approach.

Fitzroy Crossing is an Aboriginal community in the very remote Kimberley region of Western Australia and is situated 400km east of Broome, 290km west of Halls Creek and 2524km north of Perth. Fitzroy Valley is home to 5 Aboriginal language groups – Bunuba, Walmajarri, Nyikina, Wangkatjungka and Gooniyandi.

Project staff visited Fitzroy Crossing in July 2022 to meet stakeholders and customers to discuss the design and redevelopment of the service centre. We engaged with the community in small groups and in our facilitated sessions we used yarning principles to collaborate. Our Fitzroy Crossing staff, who are known and trusted by the local community, were integral in these sessions.



Visual displays with 3D models were used to support an interactive approach. 8 stakeholder organisations and approximately 40 customers participated in these insightful and positive discussions.

The key insights, ideas and feedback from stakeholders, customers and the community were captured and incorporated into the redesigned service centre.

These included:

- local artwork and images displayed on a dedicated scrolling screen
- local images including scenery shots and fauna and flora that are important to the local community and culture displayed in light boxes
- a map of the Fitzroy Valley region and 5 language groups displayed on the polycarbonate screen as customers enter the service centre.
- customer video chat connection with Indigenous staff member for cultural reasons; and
- enhanced privacy through the layout of the service centre and redesigned furniture, including a custom print Indigenous fabric to workstation privacy screens.

Customers acknowledged that the proposed service offer and customer experience elements were culturally inclusive and met the needs of the community.

Fitzroy Crossing Service Centre opened on 31 October 2022. The final design is a result of consulting and listening to the voices of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community through a collaborative approach.

We will evaluate the approach and outcomes, and the learnings will inform the design of other specialised service centres. We will continue to embed human-centred design, to ensure the voice of the customer is embedded into the delivery of our services.

Our work towards reconciliation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are highly represented in remote areas and many have been affected by the inter-generational effects of colonisation. We are uniquely placed to demonstrate the importance of reconciliation to both government and the broader Australian community due to our size and reach. We have deep community links through our Indigenous services officers and other related Indigenous program support services which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities to understand and access agency payments, services and programs.

Our reach extends to strong partnerships across other government and community organisations. We work in partnership with over 50 government and non-government agencies providing access to government, social and health-related services.

We also play a leadership role in reconciliation in the APS, through the establishment and management of the cross-APS Reconciliation Sharing Network forum, operational since 2021. We currently have 21 APS agencies participating in the forum and are looking to expand this network over the coming years.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is an important strategy that also shapes our approach to delivering programs and services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to embedding the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

This includes connecting relevant RAP actions with the national agreement.

Our people and our culture

Our staff are essential to our ability to deliver culturally appropriate high-quality, accessible government services and payments. We adopt a holistic view of culture and consider mindset, behaviour, values and our organisational environment. Through an enterprise-wide learning academy, we provide our people with the support, skills and information to do their jobs.

On 31 December 2023, our agency had 31,788 APS staff members with 1,859 staff self-identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This equates to 5.8% representation across the agency, in comparison with approximately 3.5% representation across the broader APS.¹ Maintaining and increasing the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all classifications is an ongoing commitment.

Our Indigenous Employment Strategies team drives the direction and implements solutions to support Indigenous employment. This includes a range of recruitment, retention, recognition, career development, and cultural learning initiatives that provide a culturally safe environment in the agency. Ensuring the agency is culturally competent is essential to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

We play a significant role in influencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes in both our agency and the broader APS through programs such as:

- **Australian Government Indigenous Apprenticeships program.** We lead this program to equip participants with the skills to achieve a successful career in the APS.
- **Services Australia Indigenous Cultural Awareness Learning.** These learning modules raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures past and present. We facilitate this learning, which is available across the APS. We also support APS wide initiatives on cultural learning best practice.
- **APS Affirmative Measures Recruitment Hub.** Our agency was a lead stakeholder in the creation of the hub, which incorporates our best practice processes in affirmative measures recruitment. In addition, we share our merit pools across the APS, supporting mobility and promotion of Indigenous staff.

Our Inclusion and Diversity team in conjunction with other internal and external stakeholders manages the agency's workplace inclusion and diversity strategy. Having a diverse and inclusive workforce ensures we reflect and understand the communities we service so we can deliver the best outcomes to them. In removing barriers so everyone can fully participate in workplace activities and have equal access to opportunities, all staff are enabled to contribute their skills and perspectives to achieve success and personal growth. This promotes the health and wellbeing of our staff, and ultimately contributes to a high-performance culture based on service excellence.

Our People Strategy – Our vision for 2025 provides a roadmap for how we will support our people as we work towards our future-state vision. We will deliver priorities across 4 key themes – capable workforce, healthy people, purposeful leadership and modern workplaces. We enable our staff through focusing on continuous learning, wellbeing and engagement. We are committed to providing our staff with the tools, information and on-the-job support to deliver service delivery excellence. This includes regular training, as outlined in *Our learning and development plan 2023 to 26*.

¹ Australian Public Service Commission – APS Employment Database interactive interface (APSEDii), 30 June 2023.

Case study

Affirmative measures recruitment



In May 2022 we delivered APS 5/6 Indigenous affirmative recruitment processes aimed to create a culturally inclusive recruitment round for the agency. This recruitment round received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, with responses far outweighing previous recruitment. The process changes dramatically increased engagement, applicant numbers and success of candidates.

Every component of the recruitment process was redesigned in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, with cultural safety and inclusivity considered.

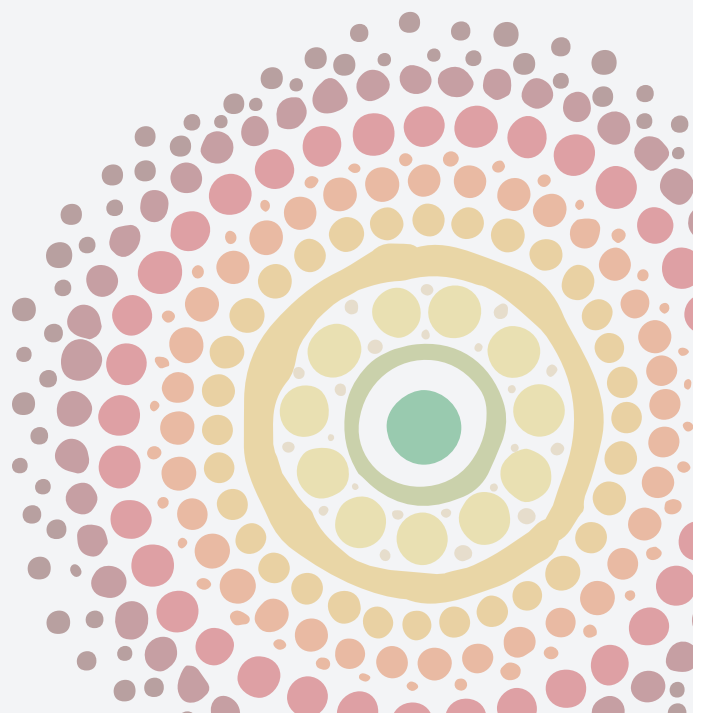
The key changes implemented were:

- **Major redesign of standardised terminology in our job packs.** Descriptors and wording were changed to make the job packs culturally appropriate.
- **Information sessions delivered by First Nations staff during the advertising period.** These sessions created a culturally safe and supportive environment. The sessions also prepared applicants for success with tips, tools and advice provided about the written application and interview.
- **Building yarning sessions into the interview process.** This was an APS first approach, through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from the agency spent time connecting with candidates, settling nerves and preparing them for the interviews.

The process received positive feedback from candidates, with particular reference to the yarning sessions. The recruitment process attracted a high number of applicants, where we interviewed nearly 300 people and established a high-quality merit pool.

Through this process, we placed over 75 Indigenous applicants in APS5/6 agency roles. The merit pool of remaining successful candidates was made available to other APS agencies, and there was overwhelming interest in accessing this list.

We also supported the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) in creating the APS Affirmative Measures Recruitment Hub. Our agency's recruitment processes are now considered best practice and are promoted for use across the APS.



Our RAP

Dimensions of reconciliation

This RAP outlines how we are working to provide a better future for all Australians through our commitment to reconciliation. It targets Reconciliation Australia's five interrelated dimensions of achieving reconciliation.

Race relations – We continue to focus on ways to help build the diversity of our workforce. Our workplace inclusion and diversity measures and Services Australia's response to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap are aligned and link to the RAP. We have implemented measures that help our people to better understand and embrace our differences. Our agency will not tolerate racism and will ensure it is addressed through a range of activities including actively promoting positive race relations, implementing anti-discrimination strategies within the agency and publicly supporting anti-discrimination campaigns.

Equality and equity – We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate equally and equitably in all areas of life. We will achieve this by expanding our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-informed service delivery and by providing exceptional customer service that meets their needs and expectations in a safe and trusted environment.

Unity – We will promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures and rights as a valued part of a shared national identity through inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages across communication with customers. We will showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our service centres through artwork and Acknowledgements of Country.

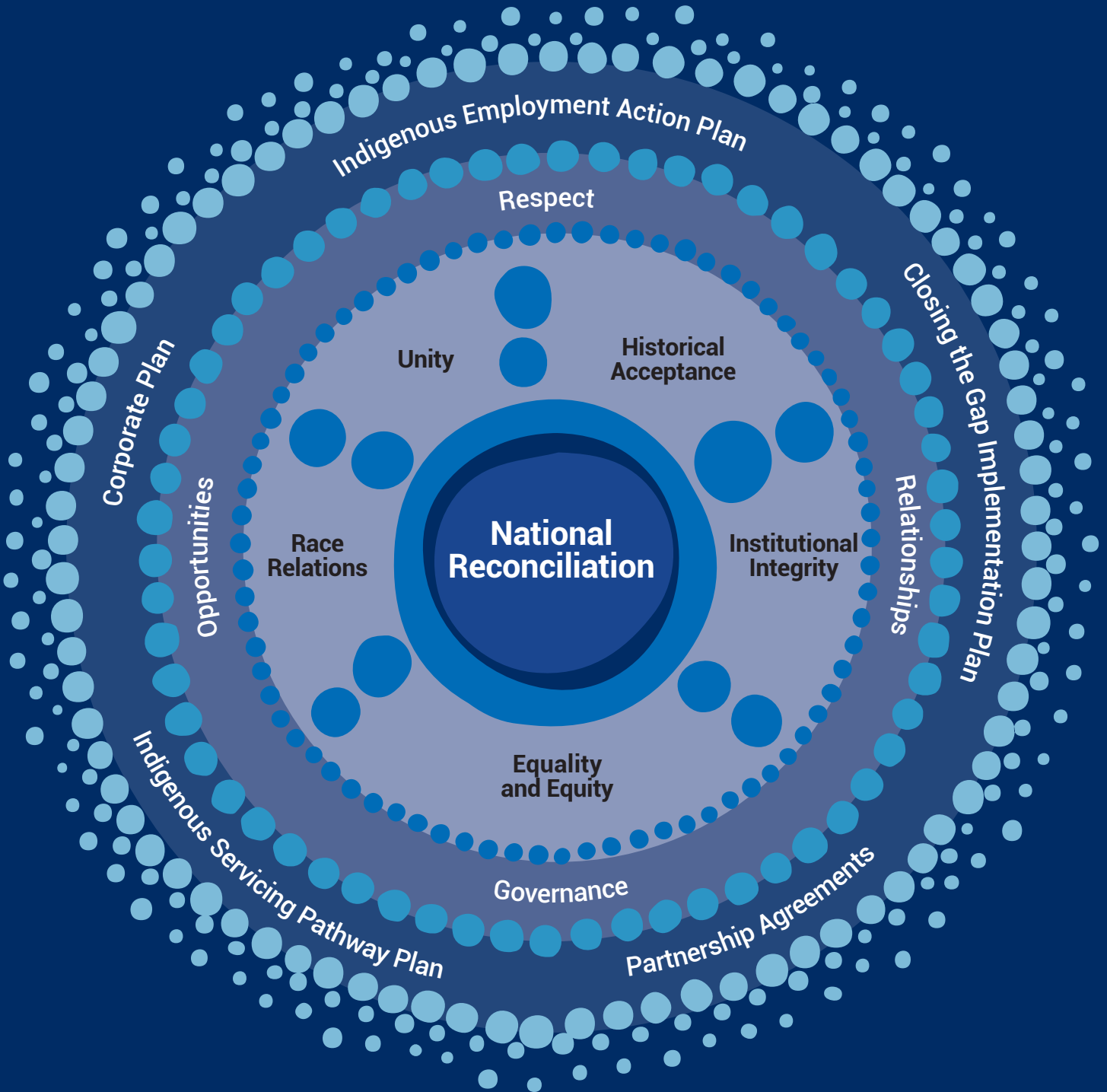
Institutional integrity – We will create a wider range of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through active support of reconciliation in partnership with APS agencies and other organisations.

Historical acceptance – We will acknowledge and promote understanding by raising public awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and facilitating truth-telling. As an agency we recognise the importance of supporting people through truth-telling and the need for this to be progressed in a culturally sensitive and safe environment.

The guiding principles of our RAP reflect these dimensions of reconciliation by:

- recognising the importance of listening deeply by walking in the footsteps of the speaker
- sharing stories to strengthen relationships expressed through kinship
- valuing place connected to land, waterways, sea and sky
- valuing the wisdom of the Elders to live today and guide the future
- collective learning enriched by the perspectives of First Nations Australians.

Figure 1: Our commitment to reconciliation



Case study

Reflection digital collection



The RAP 2018 to 2022 transformation project was published as the website *Reflection: Experiences of First Nations peoples with social security and services 1947 to 1997*.



Reflection presents over 100 historical artefacts which shed light on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences with and contributions to social services.

Historical acceptance is a key pillar of Reconciliation. This means people understand and accept past injustices, recognising the ongoing impacts these wrongs have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

By bringing together existing primary sources in an accessible online format, Reflection addresses past injustices in the federal social security portfolio. It engages in truth-telling from a government perspective. Simultaneously, Reflection promotes understanding of the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, highlighting their voices, memories and work throughout the collection.

Artefacts in the collection reveal:

- efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activists and advocates to improve outcomes for their families and communities.
- contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the public service.
- past government legislation and policies that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and restricted their access to social services.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, perspectives and experiences were essential to the creation of Reflection. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were involved in:
 - the advisory group, which shaped the development of the collection.
 - the working group, which reviewed all written content to ensure it was culturally appropriate.
 - consultation and permissions processes for each artefact.

We sought permissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights holders, who created or participated in relevant artefacts. Permissions from the appropriate rights holders were required for all artefacts published in Reflection and are described on each artefact page.

Reflection was published as part of National Reconciliation Week 2023. The website can be accessed at: reflection.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Development of our RAP

As an agency, we pride ourselves on engaging staff in agency initiatives and transformation activities. Staff across the agency from all business areas, locations and classifications, were challenged to develop our RAP vision statement (see Case study 'Creating our agency's reconciliation vision' on page 7). Our Reconciliation Steering Group (RSG), Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) and the National Indigenous Coalition (NIC) refined the vision and an all-staff vote was held, resulting in the following vision statement being adopted:

Coming together with understanding, respect and trust to move forward in unity with Australia's First Nations peoples and communities.

Staff were also asked to contribute ideas that could be included as commitments through a reconciliation action challenge. Ideas submitted through this process were collated and reviewed and this input shaped the content of our RAP actions.

The overall direction and broad framework of this RAP was informed by all our staff. We have communicated with staff through intranet updates, CEO messaging, responses from the agency-wide APS Census and promoted through Viva Engage, the agency's collaboration tool to connect all staff. Details of RAP commitments, deliverables and actions have been developed working closely with business areas and RSG, RWG and NIC.

Championing our RAP

Our CEO, Deputy CEOs, all Senior Executive Service (SES) Officers, Indigenous champions, and the Steering Group champion our RAP. We encourage all staff to be engaged in promoting reconciliation.

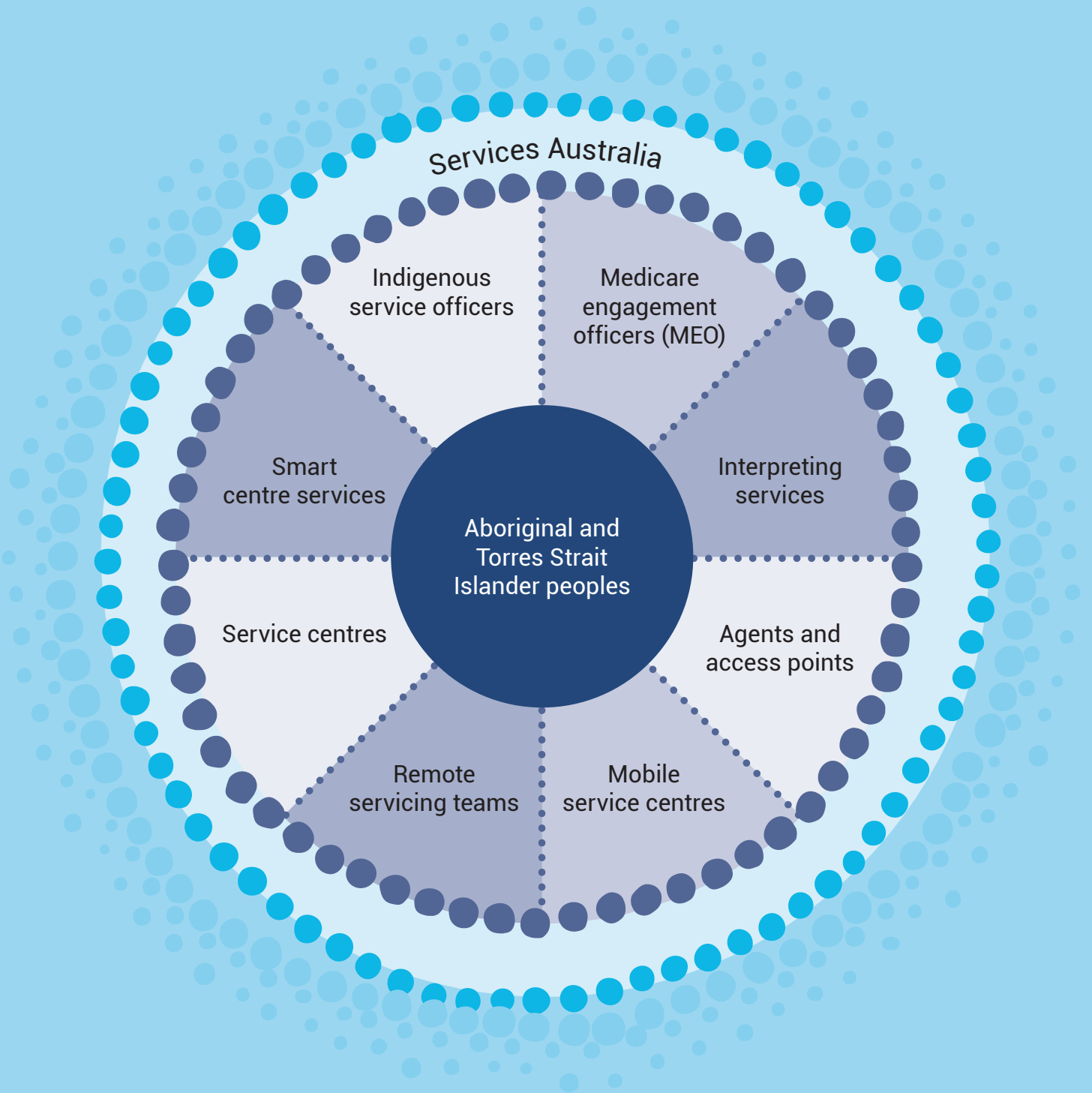
Our agency has a long history of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This has evolved over many decades where service officers, Indigenous service officers, community engagement officers, social workers and community partnership specialist officers work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities to ensure that the services being provided continue to meet the needs of our customers.

These teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, are important champions of reconciliation in the agency. Their work is detailed on the next page.

Services provided by agency champions of reconciliation

| Team | Services provided |
|---|---|
| Indigenous service officers | <p>Support service delivery staff and local communities to improve customer service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a culturally appropriate way. Their duties include promoting our payments, services and programs; helping people to access mainstream channels where appropriate and providing support and formal and/or informal training to staff to improve their cultural awareness and knowledge to enhance service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.</p> <p>Indigenous service officers support the agency to identify service delivery gaps and barriers and build community capability that contributes to improved outcomes with a focus on customers and communities with complex needs. They do this by establishing meaningful connections and effective working relationships with community agencies that provide health, education and welfare services for their local communities.</p> |
| Medicare engagement officers (MEO) | <p>Have culturally appropriate knowledge and skills and work closely with Aboriginal medical services, communities and other health service providers to improve access to our Medicare services.</p> |
| Interpreting services | <p>Give Indigenous peoples with limited or no English access to Indigenous interpreters through the Aboriginal Interpreter Service in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley Interpreter Service in Western Australia. Indigenous interpreters are located in high demand service centres and also frequently help agency staff working in remote and very remote Indigenous communities. To supplement these services, our agency has a small number of Indigenous language officers in targeted locations with a language need.</p> |
| Agents and access points | <p>Third party organisations in small/remote and regional communities contracted to provide a range of services on behalf of the agency.</p> |
| Mobile service centres | <p>The agency has 4 mobile service centres: Golden Wattle, Desert Rose, Blue Gum and Kangaroo Paw II, with the latest joining the fleet in June 2023. Our mobile service centres travel to rural and regional communities to ensure they have access to the same range of services available at any other service centre in Australia.</p> |
| Remote servicing teams | <p>The agency has remote servicing teams who provide access to income support payments and services through face to face and virtual services to remote locations across Australia. These teams operate across the agency's remote footprint in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.</p> |
| Service centres | <p>The agency engages directly with people living in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deliver services that are culturally appropriate, effective and empowering.</p> <p>We have 16 service centres in remote communities across the Northern Territory (9), Queensland (3), and Western Australia (4), offering a range of face to face services as well as supported digital services from a single physical location.</p> |
| Smart centre services | <p>Deliver phone services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including advice about Indigenous specific payments. Service officers respond to calls from customers, as well as from agents acting on their behalf in regional and remote areas.</p> |

Figure 2: Agency champions of reconciliation



Case study

National Indigenous Social Work Group



The National Indigenous Social Work Group (NISWG) was formed in 2009 to promote culturally safe and responsive social work practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through their individual and collective leadership, the NISWG influences service delivery and internal policy by providing a voice through representation on the Social Work Leadership Group and other forums. They contribute to world leading social work practice, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are fully incorporated.

Some key NISWG achievements include:

Cultural Supervision Framework

NISWG have developed a Cultural Supervision Framework, 'Two Way Strong: walking in two worlds with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers', to support the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers in the workplace. It captures needs, knowledge and skills, and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, doing and thinking in both leadership and social work practice.

Disaster response and our First Nations communities' resource

NISWG developed this professional resource for social workers. Taking account of the unique cultural and spiritual impacts natural disasters have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this resource highlights NISWG's commitment to nurturing a culturally responsive social work service.

Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Program

This mandatory program aims to build and strengthen the cultural responsiveness of social workers and improve the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues. Its core values of shared respect, meaning, knowledge and experiences promotes learning and working together with dignity. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work colleagues share their knowledge to influence and enrich the program, bringing deeper understanding of their culture and history.

Our RAP journey

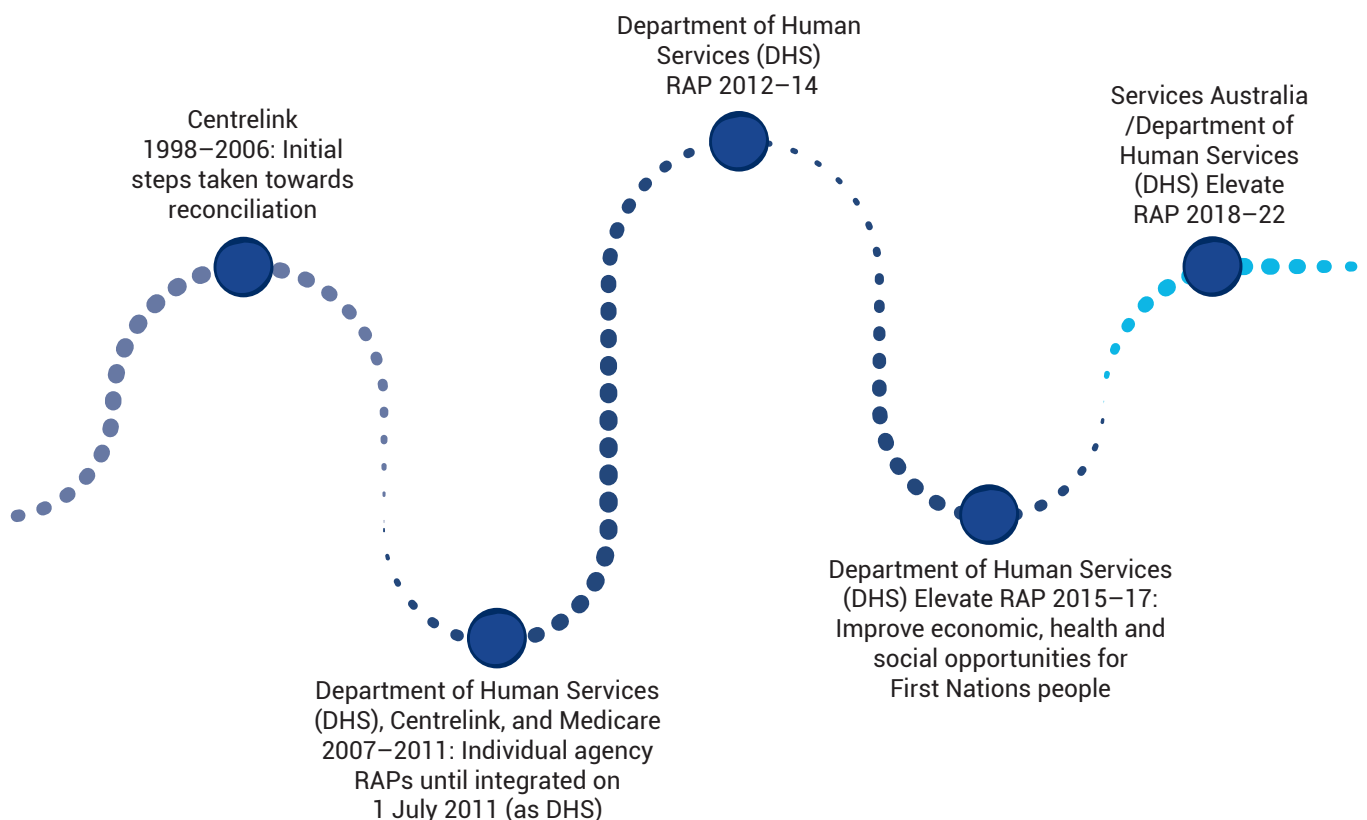
Services Australia has reflected on our journey in this brief overview (see Figure 3 below). We are committed to advancing reconciliation through our staff and customers, as well as in the general community, and are proud of what we have achieved so far.

Our reconciliation journey started 25 years ago. Centrelink established itself as a leader within the APS, by committing to reconciliation and looking for ways to fast-track reconciliation developments. From its creation as an agency in 1997, Centrelink considered the social and economic outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by reviewing its Employment and career development plan for

Indigenous staff and establishing an Indigenous reference group to ensure the needs of Indigenous staff were met.

Since 2007, Services Australia, including the former Department of Human Services, Centrelink and Medicare agencies have been committed to advancing reconciliation through individual agency RAPs.

Figure 3: Our reconciliation journey



Centrelink 1998–2006: Initial steps taken towards reconciliation

- **2000:** Launch of Centrelink's Commitment to Reconciliation 'A united Australia which respects this land of ours: values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.'
- **2006:** Re-signed Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation. The statement was used as a blueprint to develop Centrelink's first RAP launched in July 2006.
- **Centrelink focus:** establishment of the National Indigenous Debt Prevention Strategy; expansion of Centrelink's Remote Area Service Centres and Agent network; strengthen Indigenous recruitment and retention through the Centrelink Indigenous Scholarship Programme and the National Indigenous Employees Plan.

Department of Human Services (DHS), Centrelink, and Medicare 2007–2011: Individual agency RAPs until integrated on 1 July 2011 (as DHS)

- **DHS focus:** improved service delivery; increased employment and development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; greater appreciation and respect for Indigenous Australians through promotion of cultural awareness.
- **Centrelink focus:** improved access to services and information; increased recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff and all-staff cultural awareness training.
- **Medicare focus:** improve access and awareness of services for Indigenous customers and becoming an employer of choice for First Nations people.

Department of Human Services (DHS) RAP 2012–14

- **Focused on:** building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians; embedded recruitment and retention policies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- **Achievements included:** establishment of a working group comprising both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to monitor RAP implementation; 2600 staff and senior executives took part in the face-to-face Indigenous Cross Cultural Awareness training during 2013–2014; 2 senior executive officers were appointed as Indigenous champions; 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants took part in the apprenticeship programme in 2014; 900 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff registered for the National Indigenous Employees Network.

Department of Human Services (DHS) Elevate RAP 2015–17: Improve economic, health and social opportunities for First Nations people

- **Focused on:** promoting respect and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture; collaborated with other APS agencies in their reconciliation journey; increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from 4% to 5%.
- **Achievements included:** being the first department to be awarded Elevate status by Reconciliation Australia; increased overall Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from 3.1 per cent to 5.2 per cent; provided access to departmental services in 12 Indigenous languages; 95 per cent of staff completed Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training and delivered this training to 16 other APS agencies.

Services Australia/Department of Human Services (DHS) Elevate RAP 2018–22

- **Focused on:** developing a digital collection titled *Reflection: Experiences of First Nations people with social security and services from 1947 to 1997*; played a leadership role by progressing reconciliation across the APS; actively led whole-of-government Indigenous workforce initiatives; grew our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and empowered them to achieve their career potential.
- **Achievements included:** a focus on promoting the importance of historical acceptance in building a respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and strengthening the reconciliation network across the APS.

Summary of our key learnings

In bringing together this journey under the Services Australia banner, it became clear that our strong commitment and ambitions to progress reconciliation unified us as one agency.

Our previous RAP allowed us to build on our successes across a range of initiatives.

We learnt a lot through our last RAP journey and our key learnings include:

- **The importance and value of engaging with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff early and often.** We consult our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to help guide our reconciliation initiatives and seek input from all staff. This engagement provides learning opportunities for our staff, sharing of knowledge and a deeper understanding of culture. This translates into how we work with our staff and customers in a meaningful and respectful way.
- **Embedding previous actions as 'business as usual'.** Having reached a certain level of maturity in our reconciliation journey, we are looking for ways to consider how we measure progress in the future with some of our existing RAP actions becoming 'business as usual'. These may be removed from the RAP to make way for new actions. Developing uniform guidelines and parameters of how this transition is managed will be important for all RAP holders and ensure consistency of practice.
- **Facilitating the success of transformation projects through appropriate planning and resourcing.** Our RAP 2018–22 transformation project involved the development and launch of the website *'Reflection: Experiences of First Nations people with social security and services from 1947 to 1997'*. The original project plan did not fully consider the complexity and need for staff with specific skill sets, and risk mitigation strategies if any of these were realised.
- **Anticipating changes which impact the delivery of actions.** Various contingencies that may affect the delivery of actions over the life of the plan should be considered in future RAP plans. Unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters, may affect staff capacity and ability to deliver certain RAP actions.

Challenges

As a large Australian Government service delivery agency, we support the nation's emergency response to disasters across the country through the delivery of disaster and emergency relief payments.

Over the 4 years of the previous RAP, we faced many unique and unforeseen challenges impacting the entire workforce.

Key challenges included the global pandemic and several natural disasters. With the Australian bushfires in late 2019/early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020, 2021 and the first half of 2022 and several flooding events in New South Wales and Queensland during 2021 and 2022, we faced

an unprecedented level of demand to support Australians in need. We managed the largest volume of telephony and claims processing work in our history. Our challenge was to deliver support to our customers at a volume and pace we had never done before.

As a result, we were frequently required to pause work throughout 2019 to 2022, including RAP initiatives, and pivot to support and administer relief payments and mobilise resources in both face-to-face and telephony service delivery. Despite these challenges, we achieved most of the 32 actions included in our previous RAP.

Highlights and achievements

We achieved strong results against our reconciliation goals throughout 2018 to 2022 in the following areas:

Cultural learning

- We updated our Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training and made it available as an e-learning product to allow easier staff access and participation.
- We provided training for managers of Indigenous apprentices and Human Resources staff to ensure they can provide a culturally safe and supportive environment.
- We introduced new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design into our visual brand elements. The artworks represent the concept of 'progress', especially how we're committed to progress together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The artworks are a visual demonstration of the work we're doing to deliver simple, helpful, respectful and transparent services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers.

Employment

- We undertook Affirmative Measure recruitment at the APS5/6 (2022), EL1/2 (2021) and SES Band 1 levels (2021). These recruitment processes resulted in the filling of a significant number of leadership positions across all levels to achieve our 3% targets.
- We also made the merit pool available across the APS, resulting in a range of agency Indigenous staff being promoted across the APS.
- We influenced the design and content of the APS Affirmative Measures Recruitments Hub, which has a range of tips and tools to support culturally safe recruitment activities.
- As an agency we are proud of the significant future leadership pathways arising from these initiatives which provided our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with more opportunities to progress into more senior roles within the agency.
- We placed 824 apprentices across the APS over the 4 years of the previous RAP.

Services

- We undertook trials in broadening Indigenous Service Officer activities (across a range of areas). The trials led to improved service delivery outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers across a broad range of areas.
- We adapted technology during COVID-19 and delivered audio in 19 Indigenous languages, including voiceover technology presentations in Djambarrpuyngu and Pijantjatjara.
- We offered interpreter services in an additional 4 Indigenous languages, bringing our total to 16.
- We transitioned the Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services to an online customer experience allowing easier access to services.

Procurement

- We increased spending with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses from less than \$5 million in 2017 to over \$44 million in 2022 (including GST).
- We increased the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses contracted by Services Australia from 90 businesses in 2018 to 187 businesses in 2022.

Innovative responsiveness

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our operating environment became increasingly complex and Australians expected and needed much more support from government services. Our customer-centric approach, underpinned by innovation and responsiveness, met the surge in demand while managing the unique needs of customers in extraordinary circumstances.

We introduced a range of new initiatives or increased accessibility options:

- We delivered 5 modular remote service centres at Wadeye, Halls Creek, Groot Eylandt, Galiwinku and Hermannsburg.
- Our Operational Support and Outreach Services provided vaccination certificate support for health practices in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region.
- We developed online services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to provide information and free services to support improvement of financial management skills.

Case Study

Community Partnership Pilot



The Community Partnership Pilot sees agency officers co-located in local non-government organisations (NGO) on a full-time basis.

Community partnership specialist officers (CPSOs) provide end-to-end, wraparound support for people experiencing significant vulnerability, with a focus on homelessness.

CPSOs work to connect people to relevant agency payments and services and other support, based on their individual circumstances. The pilot is actively working towards improving payment quality and reducing debts in remote and disadvantaged communities by engaging with, and working alongside, local organisations who provide culturally safe and responsive services.

CPSOs are selected based on their previous community engagement experience and cultural capability. To prepare for the role, they are provided with a formal orientation, which includes community relationship training. CPSOs also complete Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training and continue to undertake learning relevant to the role.

The pilot highlights the importance of shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through formal, place-based partnership arrangements.

Four of 18 of the pilot's NGO partnerships primarily support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. This includes an Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation (Central Australian Aboriginal Congress) and an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council). By partnering with the community-controlled sector, our agency is better able to deliver services that are culturally safe, locally tailored, and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

CPSOs work with business areas across our agency and with the community to address service access barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and improve outcomes for those

experiencing significant vulnerability. They work in city and regional areas (and collaboratively with the agency's rural and remote services) to improve awareness of, and access to, health, income and family support payments.

Working out of locations where people feel comfortable and safe supports the CPSO to build trust and rapport. This allows them to develop an understanding of the person's circumstances and the specific supports and assistance that may be required.

CPSOs support people to engage with employment, education and training assistance and connect customers to other parts of the agency for specialised family and domestic violence, youth homelessness, caring and disability, or aged care support.

This often involves connecting customers in language, enhancing the cultural knowledge of other agency staff, and helping customers and partner NGO staff to better understand and navigate complex assessments. Through their established connections with local community organisations, CPSOs confidently refer customers for further assistance.

CPSOs also support the partner NGOs to identify and raise local service delivery barriers in order to improve our agency's overall service provision. The pilot team works across our agency to support the Indigenous and Remote Servicing Branch in highlighting and addressing systemic issues that affect mainstream service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, with a focus on those experiencing homelessness. This includes addressing and improving service accessibility, addressing technology barriers, ensuring customers thoroughly understand information and services so they can make informed decisions, ensuring agency decisions for customers are culturally appropriate, and collaborating across government to improve access and consistency.

The agency is undertaking research, co-design and evaluation activities, including site visits, throughout the pilot. Insights gained will support the ongoing development and refinement of this work and enhancements to service delivery.

Our RAP governance

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives have been embedded across our agency to lead business decision-making and ensure appropriate resources are available to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and customers.

We will embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing through committing to targets in our Indigenous Servicing and Indigenous Employment Action Plans.

We have adopted a set of cultural principles to guide all our actions, as we continue to work towards outcomes aligned with Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

The principles of listen, share, value and learn were co-designed in collaboration with First Nations agency staff and build on the simple, helpful, respectful and transparent principles adopted by our agency.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives play a critical role in shaping our RAPs. RAP governance structure in the agency involves the following bodies:

| Governance body | Function |
|---|--|
| Services Australia Executive Committee | We report our RAP results to the Executive Committee. The committee is the most senior governance committee of our agency and is chaired by the CEO. |
| Indigenous champions | Our agency's Indigenous champions are senior executives who are responsible for advocating for improved recruitment, development and retention outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Indigenous champions help to ensure our employment policies, systems and processes support current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The Indigenous champions are committed to engaging with employees to understand their priorities and ideas for improvements which are captured, considered and progressed. |
| Steering Group | The Steering Group consists of senior executives from across the agency, with a representative from each of our agency's groups. They're responsible for the development and implementation of the RAP and other matters relevant to reconciliation. The membership is reviewed annually and key outcomes are reported to the Executive Committee. |
| National Indigenous Coalition (NIC) | The NIC is our agency's peak strategic and advisory forum on the effective delivery of payments and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. The NIC gives our agency's Indigenous servicing network opportunities to engage with business areas on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and communities. The NIC also guides the agency around best practice Indigenous employment and ensuring human resources policies and practices are culturally inclusive. |
| National Indigenous Employees Network (NIEN) | The NIEN is a national network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. It reflects our recognition and support of Indigenous staff and aligns to our commitment to reconciliation through our RAP. |

In addition, our agency has specific business areas that specialise in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and staff:

| Business area | Responsibility |
|--|--|
| The Indigenous and Remote Servicing Branch (IRSB) | <p>IRSB is part of Program Design Group. It provides high-level strategic advice and leadership direction to support our agency in improving the delivery of equitable and appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people living in remote locations.</p> <p>The Closing the Gap Team within IRSB is responsible for developing our approach to the National agreement on Closing the Gap and supporting governance arrangements to ensure the new approach of the national agreement is embedded across the agency.</p> |
| The Indigenous Employment Strategies (IES) Team | <p>The IES Team is part of Corporate Enabling Group. They develop and implement Indigenous employment and recruitment strategies and administer Indigenous entry-level programs. This team works closely with the Indigenous champions to ensure employment policies, systems and processes support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who work for our agency.</p> |
| The Reconciliation Action Team | <p>This team coordinates relevant agency reconciliation activities associated with governance and reporting of the RAP. They monitor the existing RAP and are responsible for developing future RAPs.</p> |
| National Indigenous Social Work Group | <p>This group influences service delivery and policy, providing a voice through representation to the Social Work Leadership Group and other forums. They contribute to world-leading social work practice, incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.</p> |

Our commitments

Focus area 1 – Relationships



We are committed to creating, supporting and growing genuine, productive and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our agency and in the broader community.

Our service delivery footprint across Australia involves maintaining strong partnerships and networks through building alliances, creating partnerships and engaging with stakeholders, communities and organisations. The maturity of our Indigenous servicing and Indigenous employment programs will allow us to actively drive and support the APS in implementing best practice models.

Collaboration on policy and services remains a high priority and is essential to providing Australians with a seamless experience when interacting with government.

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|---|--|---|
| ACTION 1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations | | |
| 1a. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Program Design |
| 1b. Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Program Design |
| ACTION 2: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW) | | |
| 2a. CEO, DCEO and/or Indigenous champions to participate in at least 2 external NRW events | 27 May – 3 June 2024 27 May – 3 June 2025 27 May – 3 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 2b. Promote NRW across the agency, and support and encourage all staff to participate | 27 May – 3 June 2024 27 May – 3 June 2025 27 May – 3 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 2c. Provide staff across the agency the opportunity to help organise NRW events | May 2024 May 2025 May 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 2d. Conduct local National Reconciliation Week events (across agency) | 27 May – 3 June 2024 27 May – 3 June 2025 27 May – 3 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|--|---|---|
| ACTION 3: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence | | |
| 3a. Develop and implement strategies to engage all staff to drive reconciliation outcomes | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 3b. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 3c. Collaborate with two APS RAP organisations to implement ways to advance reconciliation | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 3d. Attend at least two RAP Leadership Gatherings per year | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| ACTION 4: Promote cultural safety through anti-discrimination strategies | | |
| 4a. Identify opportunities to strengthen the agency's approach to combatting racism and make recommendations on ways forward | Options paper December 2024 Review: December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 4b. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination learning, procedures and policies | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 4c. Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives and stances against racism | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| ACTION 5: Promote and maintain the Reconciliation APS Network | | |
| 5a. Continue to manage and hold regular meetings and grow the APS Reconciliation Network | Monthly meetings | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 5b. Establish partnerships with other APS agencies to co-chair and manage | 3 Monthly Meetings co-chaired by other APS Agencies | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |

Focus area 2 – Respect



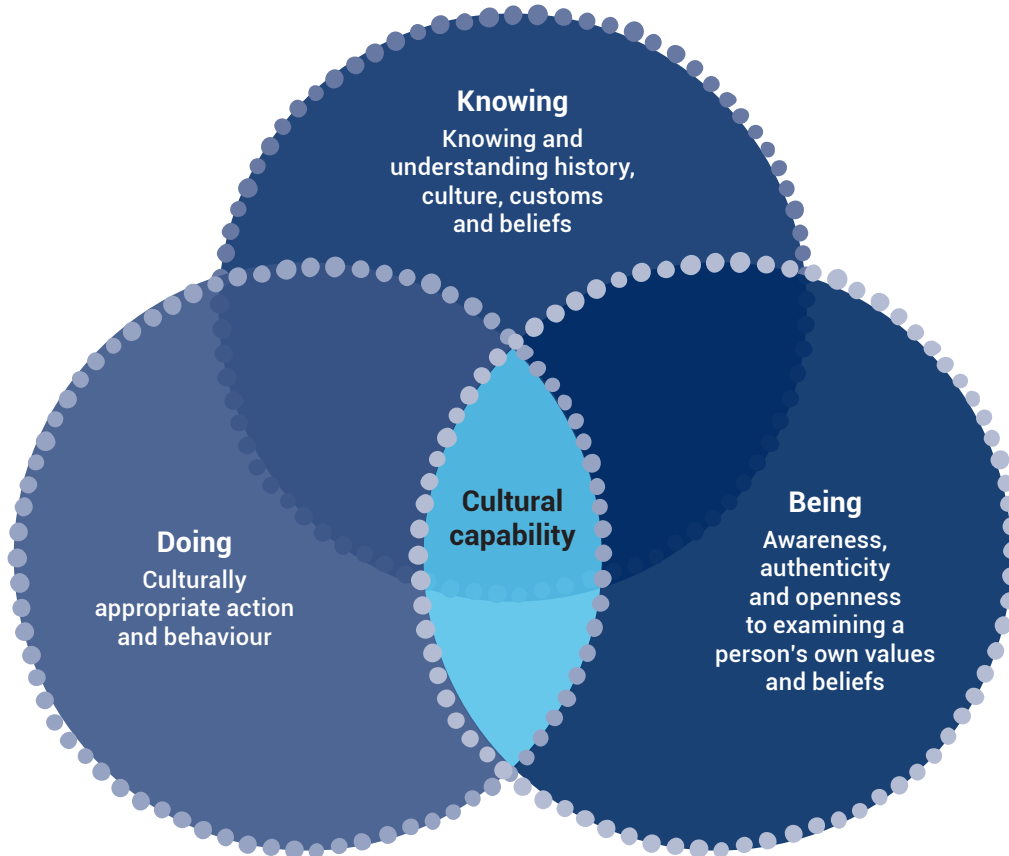
The cultural competency of our agency and the broader APS will directly affect our ability to attract and retain Indigenous staff. Our cultural competence will be achieved through a holistic range of cultural uplift strategies designed to create cultural safety in the workplace for Indigenous people.

Access to quality Indigenous cultural capability training is vital for all employees to engage in and have a good understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This knowledge allows staff to perform their duties in a culturally informed way and show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights. Our capability framework encourages learning about our own biases as well as learning about the strengths, history and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Underpinning cultural learning in our agency is the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework developed by the APSC. The framework takes a people-action approach, aimed to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It encourages shared values, beliefs, and actions for working together towards an inclusive workplace culture.

Our agency has a range of learning programs available to help our employees develop the capabilities outlined in the framework. The programs put our services into a cultural context, supporting cultural sensitivity for our customers and staff. They are designed to increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities and to reflect this awareness in our internal and external relationships. They will help staff and leaders build on their cultural capability and enhance the cultural safety of the workplace.

The suite of programs support continuous cultural learning for employees to expand their knowledge and understanding of the past, while keeping up to date with what is happening today for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes their specific needs in policy, programs and services.



Source: Australian Public Service Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework, Australian Public Service Commission (apsc.gov.au) 2019

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|---|--|--|
| ACTION 6: Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning | | |
| 6a. Development and implementation of a Cultural Immersion Framework | Implementation: December 2024 Post implementation review: December 2025 Review: December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6b. All new senior executives undertake facilitated cultural learning within 12 months of commencing | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6c. Implement a cultural safety framework, toolkit and learning to ensure managers understand cultural needs and can support cultural safety in the workplace | Implement: December 2024 Post Implement review December 2025 Review: December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6d. All new staff (including senior executives) undertake self-paced Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training within 3 months of commencing | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6e. Identify critical roles/teams where Indigenous Cultural Awareness facilitated learning is required and ensure completion in required timeframes | Implement: December 2024 Review: December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6f. All staff (including senior executives) complete mandatory cultural awareness refresher training every 12 months | Implement: December 2024 Review: December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 6g. 100% of offices to have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork in the main entrance featuring an Acknowledgement of Country (in language where possible) | Ongoing rollout review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Service Delivery Excellence |

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|---|--|--|
| ACTION 7: Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols | | |
| 7a. Review and update the existing suite of internal staff resources to reflect protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country | Implement: December 2024 Review: December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 7b. Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year | NAIDOC Week 2024 NAIDOC Week 2025 NAIDOC Week 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 7c. Develop guidance to support personalisation of Acknowledgement of Country including identification of the traditional custodians at the commencement of important meetings and at all public events | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 7d. Provide opportunities for 9 employees to participate in Jawun and Remote Graduate Placements | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| ACTION 8: Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week | | |
| 8a. CEO, DCEOs and Indigenous champions to participate in at least 1 NAIDOC Week event | 1st week July 2024 1st week July 2025 1st week July 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 8b. Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 8c. Promote NAIDOC Week events across the agency, and support and encourage all staff to participate | 1st week July 2024 1st week July 2025 1st week July 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 8d. Conduct 1 agency-wide NAIDOC week event that is accessible (online) to all employees | 1st week July 2024 1st week July 2025 1st week July 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| ACTION 9: Establish Bespoke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Centres through a community engagement approach with identified communities | | |
| 9a. Host community consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in identified communities | Ongoing rollout review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Service Delivery Excellence |
| 9b. Create at least 1 bespoke (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Service Centre per annum until December 2026 | Implement: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Service Delivery Excellence |

Focus area 3 – Opportunities



We are an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are continuously improving to both lead and support the Australian Government to fulfil its commitment to Indigenous employment in the APS.

We aim to improve economic, health and social opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities through employment.

We have a presence in most towns, cities and remote communities. We are the largest Australian Government employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This places us in a unique position to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We comply with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules via the Indigenous Procurement Policy, administered by our Procurement Branch. We seek to create opportunities for Indigenous businesses to grow and employ more people and aim to stimulate Indigenous entrepreneurship and employment in Australia.

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|---|---|---|
| ACTION 10: Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development | | |
| 10a. Implement culturally safe recruitment practices and improve retention of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander staff | Review and monitor progress: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 10b. Achieve and maintain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce above 6% | Review and monitor progress: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 10c. Maintain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at the APS5 level above 6% | Review and monitor progress: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 10d. Grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at the APS6, EL1, EL2 and SES levels to 4% by 2027 | Review and monitor progress: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 10e. Lead the Australian Government Indigenous Apprenticeships Program, expanding growth in agency participation and apprentice numbers | Review and monitor progress: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|--|---|--|
| ACTION 11: Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes | | |
| 11a. Develop an engagement framework to support the agency to contract at least 10 new Indigenous businesses per year | Implement/Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 11b. Develop and implement an Indigenous Procurement Strategy to increase spending with Indigenous businesses, and implement 1 major initiative from the 3 pillars of the Strategy each year (i.e. Leadership, Communication, and Relationship) | Implementation of 1 major initiative from 3 Pillars of Indigenous Procurement Strategy: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 11c. Promote procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vendors through guidance materials and training programs | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 11d. Continue our commitment to maintain commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses in line with requirements of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Indigenous Procurement Policy and Commonwealth Procurement Rules | Reporting in line with targets set by NIAA: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 11e. Continue Supply Nation membership | Renew annual Supply Nation Membership: October 2024 October 2025 October 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 11f. Continue to educate staff in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation | Reported: October 2024 October 2025 October 2026 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| ACTION 12: Improve the accessibility of our services to multilingual Indigenous customers by strengthening our engagement with Indigenous language interpreters | | |
| 12a. Develop a training program to build staff capabilities and awareness on when and how to engage Indigenous language interpreters | Implement: December 2024 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Customer Service Delivery |
| 12b. All new customer service delivery (CSD) staff to complete training on how to engage Indigenous language interpreters, upon commencement. Refresher training to be completed by all CSD staff every 3 years | Review: December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Customer Service Delivery |

Focus area 4 – Governance



We have effective governance arrangements to drive reconciliation and provide strong support for implementation of RAP commitments. We are committed to the following actions and deliverables to maintain appropriate governance and assurance structures over the lifespan of our RAP.

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|---|--|---|
| ACTION 13: Establish and maintain an effective Governance structure to drive RAP | | |
| 13a. Review and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on RAP Governance structure/committee | Review: June 2024 June 2025 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 13b. Review the terms of reference of the RAP Governance structure/committee for currency | Review: June 2024 June 2025 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 13c. RAP Governance structure/committee to meet regularly (at least 6 times per year) to drive and monitor RAP implementation | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| ACTION 14: Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments | | |
| 14a. Embed resource needs for RAP implementation, tracking, measuring and reporting on RAP commitments | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 14b. Explore options for senior leaders having reconciliation performance expectations | Working Party: December 2024 Possible Implementation: December 2025 | Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Enabling |
| 14c. Maintain an internal RAP champion from senior management | Review: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 14d. Hold an annual round table for agency senior leaders to meet with Reconciliation Australia | Coordinate by: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |

| Deliverables | Timeline | Lead |
|--|--|---|
| ACTION 15: Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally | | |
| 15a. Report RAP progress to the Executive Committee outlining achievements, challenges and learnings | September 2024 September 2025 September 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 15b. Publicly report on RAP commitments annually | Report in annual report: October 2024 October 2025 October 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 15c. Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer Survey | Completion: June 2024 June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 15d. 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 | Provide update: December 2024 December 2025 December 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| 15e. Request unique link from Reconciliation Australia to access, complete and submit RAP Impact Survey | Completion: September 2024 September 2025 September 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |
| ACTION 16: Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP | | |
| 16a. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP | Registration June 2026 | Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategy and Performance |

