
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2021–June 2022

VAGO

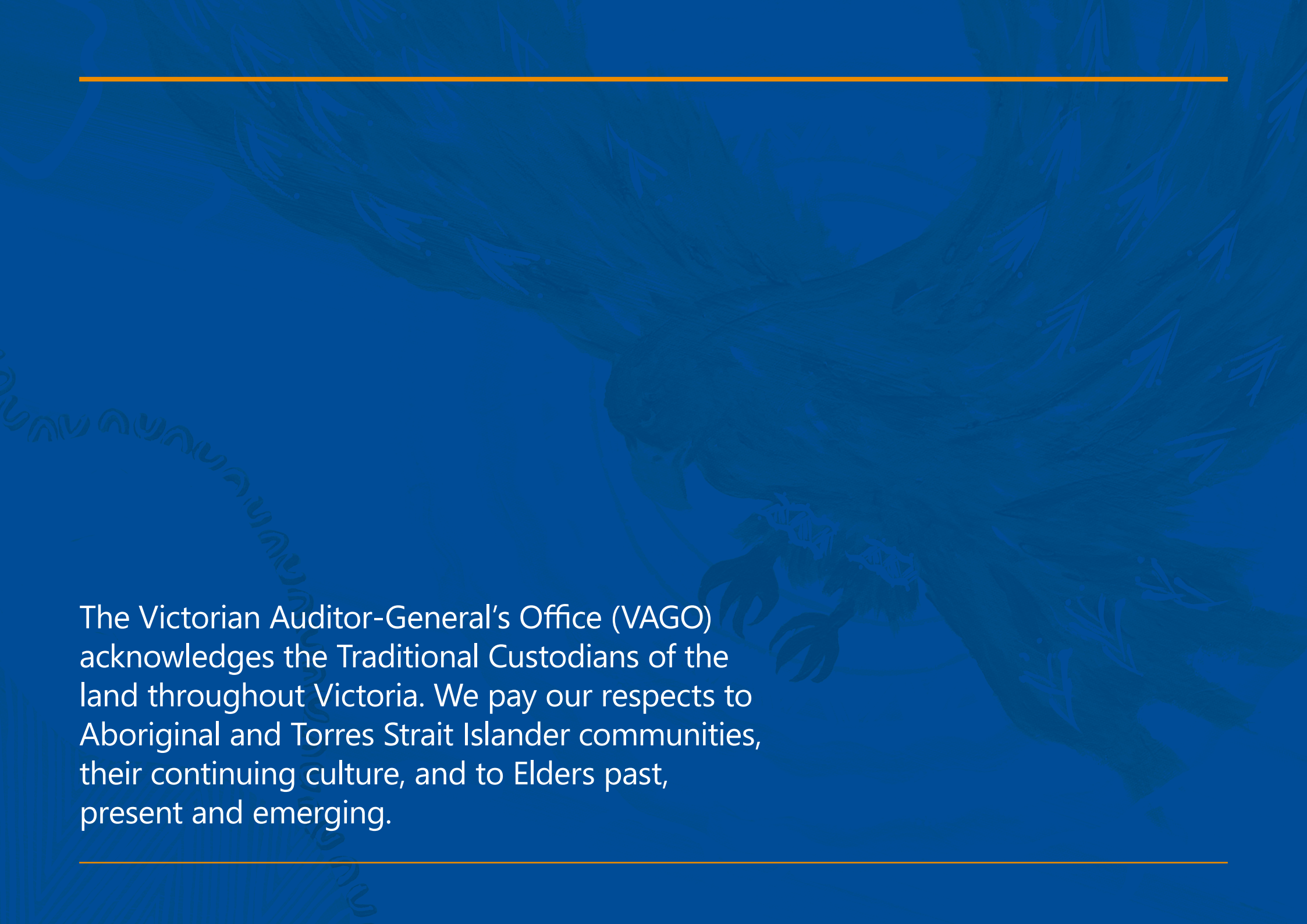
Victorian Auditor-General's Office



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT





The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their continuing culture, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Message from Reconciliation Australia's CEO



Karen Mundine

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Victorian Auditor-General's Office to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Victorian Auditor-General's Office joins a network of more than 1,100 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 over 2.3 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 Victorian Auditor-General's Office 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 Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 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

Message from the Auditor-General



Andrew Greaves

I am pleased to present our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This plan, the first for VAGO, is an important step toward a skilled and flexible workforce that embraces cultural diversity.

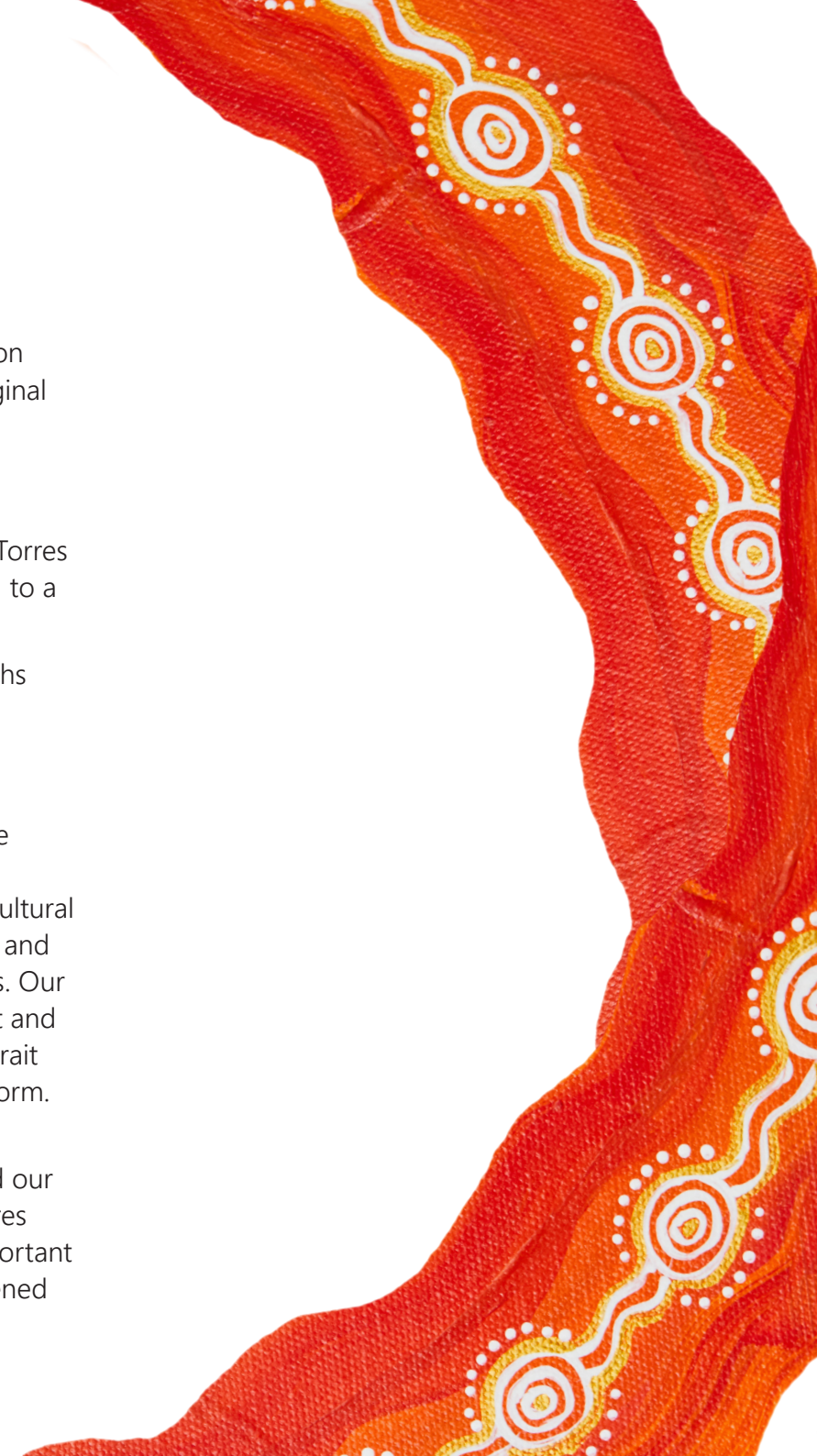
We acknowledge the lands that we work on across Victoria have been home to Aboriginal peoples, their cultures, knowledge, and languages for tens of thousands of years.

We recognise and celebrate the strength, resilience and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are committed to a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

By acknowledging the uncomfortable truths of our collective histories, we establish a foundation for positive change.

This RAP formalises our goals and actions that we will take to achieve them. We have designed specific strategies to guide and empower employees in building greater cultural awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Our RAP also encourages further engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the work we perform.

I thank all involved in developing our RAP and the many advocates that have guided our reconciliation journey. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' inclusion is an important part of Victoria's future and we are heartened to undertake this important work.





Yaalingbu, Yirramboi –
Nallei Jerring
Today, Tomorrow - Adjoin
By Simone Thompson,
Wurundjeri/Yorta-Yorta

A representation of reconciliation

Yaalingbu, Yirramboi–Nallei Jerring
Today, Tomorrow–Adjoin



'Bunjil the Creator Spirit soars across the Victorian sky; his strong majestic wings span the breadth of the vast state. Bunjil's wingspan reflects the Victorian Auditor-General's Office and its far-reaching work. His endless flight across country symbolises VAGO's ongoing journey and the diverse landscape he covers whilst embracing his people and communities.

Bunjil flies in front of the sun, the giver of life. Just as the sun embraces us all, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office embraces all Victorians in inclusiveness and reconciliation. The sun is also designed as a Gathering Circle, the connecting circles around its border represent the Victorian Auditor-General's Office as a community, they are unbroken in strength. The spear heads within the circle represent VAGO's accountability to community.

The markings across the sky symbolise the thirty-eight Aboriginal clans and countries within Victoria. Just as Bunjil's endless journey encompasses all of these homelands, so too does the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

The unbroken band of U shapes below Bunjil take the form of his wings – the wide wingspan encompasses land and water, the varying community relationships built within the

Victorian Auditor-General's Office. The U shapes represent those people and communities.

The landscape below tells of the diverse mountainous ranges and bushland to the sacred waterways on country, they are all under Bunjil's wingspan. Just as the mountains meet the sea, so too does this reflect the Victorian Auditor-General's Office meeting and coming together with the Aboriginal Community. Yaalingbu, Yirramboi–Nallei Jerring. Today, Tomorrow–Adjoin in reconciliation.

Simone Thomson
Wurundjeri/Yorta-Yorta

Our business

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) is a specialist public sector body that supports the Auditor-General to discharge their legislated duties.

As an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament, the Auditor-General's role is to assure the community that public sector agencies use public money efficiently, effectively, and economically. VAGO achieves this goal through an annual program of financial and performance audits and reviews. We aim to enhance the public sector by promoting transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. At April 2021, VAGO employed 196 staff—none of whom identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

We annually audit the financial statements of seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entities. Our performance audit program has assessed the design and delivery of programs that specifically affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians. This has included 'Coordinating services and initiatives for Aboriginal People' (2008) and 'Accessibility of Mainstream Services for Aboriginal Victorians' (2014). In other audits, we have included the examination of service provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within broader topics.

We acknowledge there are further opportunities for VAGO to use its unique powers to highlight the inequalities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Therefore, as part of our commitment to the five dimensions of reconciliation, we will review the methodology and impact of our audits. We will also explore ways that our work can respectfully highlight the unique perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to engender change.

While our auditors conduct work across Victoria, our office is located in Melbourne, on the land of the Wurundjeri people.

Our RAP

The development of this RAP enshrines VAGO's commitment to respect, acknowledge and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

By forging meaningful and collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, we aim to embrace reconciliation both within our organisation and the broader community. We hope these relationships will increase the impact of our audits for all Victorians, specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

VAGO has established a Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) to support the development and implementation of our RAP. The RWG includes an executive sponsor, Andrew Greaves, Auditor-General, and five employee members—none of whom identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. As such, we have engaged Aboriginal community members Seona James, Liz Allen and Ian Ham to ensure that the implementation of our RAP contains an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice. In addition to the deliverables within this RAP, Seona James will advise the RWG to develop a program of motivating, educational and informative events for our staff. The RWG has an 'open door' policy, whereby any staff member can

participate at any time. The RWG reports to VAGO's Diversity and Inclusion working group and is supported by VAGO's inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2019–22.

To date, the RWG has organised various events that celebrate the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These events have sparked positive conversations within the office environment and propelled VAGO on its journey towards reconciliation.

The RWG has also supported the process of acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the VAGO office. Since the RWG formed, VAGO has introduced Aboriginal artwork, a language map, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners plaque within our office space. An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners has also been published on our website and, since late 2019, within our publications.

Our partnerships/current activities

We are committed to change and seek to provide opportunity for our employees to contribute to implementing our RAP and build their influence as part of the reconciliation journey. Throughout the implementation of this RAP, we aim to expand our activities and partnerships which promote and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and businesses.

In 2018, we invited an Elder from the Wurundjeri Land Council to formally open an All Staff Forum with a Welcome to Country. Since 2018, we have acknowledged National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week with a calendar of events.

These events instigated important conversations in the office, and examples of these include:

- SBS's Reconciliation Film Club movie screenings
- NAIDOC Week Book Club event
- participation in a cultural walk hosted by Koorie Heritage Trust
- attending the River of Languages exhibition at Melbourne Museum
- organisational online discussions about how we can support the reconciliation journey and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To mark the launch of our inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2019, VAGO welcomed Treaty Advancement Commissioner, Jill Gallagher to address staff on her role overseeing the important work of establishing Treaty in Victoria.

In addition to her support of the RWG and delivering Aboriginal Culture Awareness training to employees, Seona James is currently assisting VAGO's Human Resources team to develop best practice recruitment and workforce policies. This includes aiding in the design and implementation of our annual graduate program to ensure it is culturally safe and there are no barriers to participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.



Our RWG



Executive Sponsor

Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General



Project Leader

Kitty Gordon
*Learning and
Development Adviser,
Human Resources*



Executive Champion

Caitlin Makin
*Director, Performance
Audit*



VAGO RWG Employee Members

Iona Annett
*Manager, Performance
Audit*

Mollie Tobin
*Assistant Manager,
Performance Audit*

Catherine Fist
*Analyst, Performance
Audit*



Aboriginal Advisors

Seona James
Liz Allen
Ian Ham

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2021	RWG Project Leader
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022	RWG Project Leader
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May to 3 June 2022	RWG Project Leader
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May to 3 June 2022	RWG Project Leader
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	August 2021	Auditor-General
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2021	RWG Project Leader
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research HR best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2022	Human Resources Director
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	June 2022	Human Resources Director

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	May 2022	RWG Project Leader
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2022	RWG Project Leader
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	June 2022	RWG Project Leader
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2022	Manager, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
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	July 2022	RWG Project Leader
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022	RWG Project Leader
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022	RWG Project Leader

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	April 2022	Human Resources Director
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2022	Human Resources Director
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	May 2022	Finance Director
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2022	Finance Director

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	June 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June 2021	RWG Project Leader
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2021	RWG Project Leader
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	November 2021	RWG Project Leader
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2021	RWG Project Leader
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	March 2022	RWG Project Leader

Contact details

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