



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT OUR 2020–21 RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Q What is Reconciliation?

A Reconciliation is about building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people. There are five inter-related dimensions of [reconciliation](#): historical acceptance, race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity and unity. It recognises the impact of our shared history and the journey and efforts we need to do together towards meaningful change that will benefit all Australians

Q What is a Reconciliation Action Plan?

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an organisational commitment towards reconciliation. The RAP framework sets out practical actions and deliverables that are designed to support us to:

- learn about, acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, beliefs and contributions
- consult, engage and build genuine relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and
- embed the spirit of reconciliation in policies, procedures and services to make it part of practice.

Actions and deliverables will be monitored to see how the organisation is progressing with its commitment and to learn from lessons and celebrate achievements.

Q What is the background to the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan?

A Communities@Work made a decision to return to a **Reflect** Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to strengthen its commitment towards reconciliation.

An Innovate RAP 2017-2018 was in place that achieved certain commitments. A decision was made to return to a Reflect RAP to embed reconciliation in our core business.

The Reflect RAP 2020-2021 is designed to outline actions and deliverables in a simplified elegant way. The spirit of the RAP is in the implementation of these actions and deliverables – the more staff behind it, the more impact it has. The RAP invites opportunities for staff at all levels to contribute to reconciliation.

Through quarterly reporting, Communities@Work can track organisational progress towards reconciliation as part of practice.

Q What are the three pillars of reconciliation?

A The RAP framework has three key pillars: respect, relationships and opportunities. Each pillar has actions and deliverables against them to work towards reconciliation.

Q Who/when should a Welcome to Country be performed?

A Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land perform a Welcome to Country at the beginning of events and activities hosted by Communities@Work. A Welcome to Country welcomes visitors to the land and informs ancestors of who the visitors are and their purpose. (See *Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy* for more detail.)

Q Who/when should an Acknowledgement of Country be performed?

A Staff members, volunteers and those who are associated with Communities@Work can and are encouraged to perform an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of meetings, events and activities. An Acknowledgement of Country pays respect to Aboriginal people on whose Country or ancestral land where the forum is held. (See *Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy* for more detail.)

Q How can your program contribute to the RAP?

A Client-based programs are encouraged to contribute to the RAP by initiating different activities and practices that invite clients to be involved and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. Share ideas at staff meetings and follow-up on progress. These initiatives can be anticipated and incorporated into Business Plans and reported on in RAP quarterly reports.

Examples of initiatives could be:

- inviting an Aboriginal person for story-telling
- accessible cultural resources
- hosting an activity for clients
- understanding and accommodating family connections etc.

Non-client based programs are encouraged to review organisational policies and procedures to incorporate complementary practices that invite, engage, consult, build relationships and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and take into consideration their cultures. Share ideas, challenges and solutions at staff meetings and follow-up on progress. These changes can be anticipated and incorporated into Business Plans and reported on in RAP quarterly reports.

Examples of initiatives could be:

- displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and artwork to create welcoming spaces
- considering Indigenous suppliers
- offering training opportunities
- encouraging employment and volunteering opportunities etc.

Q How can Communities@Work celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and achievements?

A Staff representatives are encouraged to participate in events, activities and projects that are hosted internally in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and achievements. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can participate in external events, activities and programs that are significant to their heritage and are encouraged to share the experiences with other staff formally or informally. With management approval, staff can participate in external events, activities and projects as a representative of the organisation. Programs are encouraged to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events through their networks.

Q How will Communities@Work implement Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training?

A Communities@Work supports a range of training options to accommodate individual learning needs of Board members, staff and volunteers and to acknowledge Recognition of Prior Learning. Training can be in the form of:

- full training courses
- refresher courses
- attendance to suitable presentations
- online flexible learning.

Managers will be required to contact Human Resources to record training undertaken by their staff and volunteers.

Q How do we know if we are on track to making progress?

A The spirit of the Reflect RAP 2020-2021 is in the implementation. If each program contributes to some part of the RAP then that in itself is progress and will demonstrate the organisation's commitment to strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

Actions and deliverables will be monitored through quarterly reporting to see how the organisation is progressing and to learn from lessons and celebrate achievements.

With the focus and help of staff and volunteers over the next 12 months, Communities@Work aims to lay strong foundations for our next RAP and the next steps in our reconciliation journey.