

Melbourne Water

Reconciliation Action Plan 2016 – 2017



Managing Director's message, Melbourne Water

At Melbourne Water, we understand the central role water plays in our communities, environment and economy. We also understand that through our activities, we inherently work on the land and waterways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have lived on and used for thousands of years.

This intrinsic connection is why I am proud to launch Melbourne Water's first Reconciliation Action Plan. It builds on the strong relationships we have formed with many Traditional Owner Groups through our Cultural Heritage Program, and is a blueprint for the work we will continue to drive reconciliation and inclusion across our business.

I am excited for what the future holds for reconciliation at Melbourne Water, and look forward to sharing our progress.

Michael Wandmaker
Managing Director



CEO's message, Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Melbourne Water on their inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)—an Innovate RAP.

Our RAP program is integral in effecting social change in workplaces around the country by turning good intentions into measurable actions. By implementing this RAP, Melbourne Water now joins more than 650 organisations dedicated to providing meaningful opportunities in education, employment and business for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While this is the first RAP for the organisation, it builds upon the existing relationships and activities that Melbourne Water has already developed as part of their reconciliation journey.

Melbourne Water acknowledges the strong connection to land and waterways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have, and through this Innovate RAP will continue to work closely with local Traditional Owner Groups in the management and delivery of services.

The organisation has also committed to promote reconciliation across the business, engage employees in cultural learning, and increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. These actions reflect the organisation's genuine commitment to achieving long-term, sustainable relationships for the benefit of all Australians.

I warmly welcome Melbourne Water to the RAP community and I look forward to working together as we continue to work toward a reconciled, just and equitable Australia.

Justin Mohamed
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia





Our Vision for Reconciliation

Melbourne Water's vision is *enhancing life and liveability*. We do this by delivering essential water services and desirable urban spaces, and protecting our natural environment for future generations.

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a connection to the land and waterways that is inseparable from their own life and liveability.

We are therefore committed to working in partnership with local Traditional Owner Groups to manage our natural resources, upon which our services heavily

depend. We recognise that by diversifying and sharing our knowledge, while building meaningful relationships with the community, we can continue to successfully manage our land, water and ecosystems now and into the future.

Our Business

Melbourne Water is owned by the Victorian Government and has provided safe, secure and affordable water services to Melbourne for over 120 years.

We treat and supply drinking and recycled water, remove and treat most of Melbourne's sewage, and manage waterways and major drainage systems in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. In doing so, we strive to deliver solutions that are financially and environmentally sustainable and achieve the best outcomes for the community.

We value strong relationships with our customers, stakeholders, Traditional Owner Groups and suppliers in community, government and industry, and care for the health and wellbeing of our people – which includes nurturing a diverse and inclusive working environment. As we continue to drive inclusion across the organisation, we will begin to track the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees that our organisation employs.

Our Operating Environment and Current Partnerships

Delivery of our services, including management of land and natural resources, is shaped by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006)* and *Regulations (2007)*, which provide for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. This legislation also recognises Aboriginal peoples as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

In keeping with the objectives of this legislation, since 2008 Melbourne Water has operated under the framework of our *Cultural Heritage Action Plan* to ensure cultural heritage management is integrated into the planning and delivery of our core services – particularly in natural resource management along waterways and land. Under this framework, we have worked collaboratively with a number of Traditional Owner Groups to drive reconciliation across our organisation and the broader community. These partnerships have driven change in the way we operate, including using more native plants and ensuring that waterways and land are used in ways which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

We recognise the value of working in partnership with local Traditional Owner Groups and will continue to do so; however, our *Reconciliation Action Plan* will help us proactively search for new opportunities, while continuing to build mutual capacity to achieve shared outcomes outside of this sphere of influence.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Acknowledging the strong connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to the lands and seas, our journey toward Reconciliation began with our inaugural Cultural Heritage Strategy in 2008.

Through this strategy, we continue to strive to work more collaboratively with local Traditional Owner Groups, ensuring their input is better integrated into the planning and delivery of our core services, particularly in natural resource management along the waterways and land that we manage.

Through this plan, we have built our commitment to reconciliation, by:

- Training frontline employees in cultural awareness
- Working in partnership to support community-initiated cultural projects
- Participating in key reconciliation events (National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC)
- Involving Traditional Owner Groups in Melbourne Water open days
- Establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Our *Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP) is a natural extension of our commitment to creating a culturally diverse and inclusive business. It provides a framework to move beyond the legislative requirements concerning Aboriginal cultural heritage management, and will help us drive reconciliation with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Implementation

Delivering the actions in our *Reconciliation Action Plan* is the responsibility of all Melbourne Water people, including our leadership team. The Diversity and Inclusion Manager, together with the Reconciliation Working Group, will be accountable for ensuring this happens.

We envisage that through this organisational commitment, Melbourne Water will foster a culture that demonstrates an increased awareness and understanding of reconciliation as an extension of diversity and inclusion.

It has been written by members of the RAP Working Group, which includes our Diversity and Inclusion Manager and Heritage Services Coordinator, with input from senior leaders across Melbourne Water. It is endorsed by our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee which includes our Managing Director, Michael Wandmaker.

The plan contains a number of actions under four focus areas:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Tracking and reporting progress

We look forward to building on our previous successes as we embed cultural change and reconciliation across our organisation, ensuring better economic and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The *Reconciliation Action Plan* will be reviewed in the second half of 2017 to evaluate its effectiveness, with the findings used to further improve the plan.

The Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee will monitor improvements on an ongoing basis and will report to the Melbourne Water Board of Directors on these developments.



Relationships

Melbourne Water recognises the important connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and waterways. We remain committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deliver safe, secure and affordable water services to all of Melbourne.

Action

Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
RWG oversees the development and endorsement of the RAP	February 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Project Manager, Reconciliation
Meet quarterly to monitor and report on RAP implementation	April, June, September and December annually	Project Manager, Reconciliation
Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG	November annually	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Project Manager, Reconciliation
Develop and distribute an expression of interest to join the RWG to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	June 2016	RWG
Review Terms of Reference for the RWG	November annually	Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
RAP launched at Melbourne Water with all employees invited together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations	March 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/RWG
Implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders	March 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/RWG
Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders	March 2017	Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Development of an external advisory body

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to provide cultural advice and guidance	January 2017	Diversity and Inclusion Manager
An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to present at one Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee Meeting and at least one Melbourne Water Board Meeting	December 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee Chair/ Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Organise at least one internal event for NRW	27 May - 3 June, annually	RWG
Advertise external events celebrating National Reconciliation Week within the community to employees and encourage them to get involved	27 May - 3 June, annually	RWG
Organise an event in partnership with a community group to celebrate National Reconciliation Week	27 May - 3 June, annually	Heritage Services Coordinator/RWG
Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	27 May - 3 June, annually	Heritage Services Coordinator/RWG
Support an external NRW event	27 May - 3 June, annually	Heritage Services Coordinator/RWG
Ensure our Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	27 May - 3 June, annually	Project Manager, Reconciliation

Action

Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	December 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Heritage Services Coordinator
Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement	June 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Heritage Services Coordinator
Continue to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community including sharing knowledge and information to deliver services appropriately	June annually	Heritage Services Coordinator/Waterways and Land Manager
Develop and offer volunteering opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure that Melbourne Water employees are able to have greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and traditions	January 2017	Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Internally raise awareness of the Recognise Campaign

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Through supporting the Recognise campaign, the need to eliminate discrimination from the constitution understood by over 200 employees	December 2016	RWG/Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Develop relationships with other organisations to share knowledge and learnings

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Meet with at least one other organisation to share knowledge, best practice and support Reconciliation	August 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Heritage Services Coordinator



Respect

Melbourne Water values a working environment based on respect. We understand that as caretakers of the land, we play an important role in protecting and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Action

Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Continue to deliver cultural awareness training to frontline employees, delivered by a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person	December annually	Heritage Services Coordinator
Develop online cultural awareness training suitability for all employees	September 2016	Learning and Development Manager
All RWG and General Manager's partake in Cultural Awareness training	July 2016	Heritage Services Coordinator

Action

Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
A cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country developed and available on the intranet	February 2016	RWG
A Traditional Owner invited to provide a Welcome to Country at least one significant event	December 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Heritage Services Coordinator
Organise and display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our head office	November 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Heritage Services Coordinator
Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships	February 2016	Heritage Service Coordinator

Action

Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are able and supported to partake in NAIDOC Week activities	July annually	RWG/Human Resource Business Partners
Provide opportunities for employees to participate in NAIDOC Week activities	July annually	RWG
Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week	April 2017	RWG

Action


Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Create a calendar of Significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates and make it available for all employees via the intranet	May 2016	RWG

Action

Raise internal awareness and understanding of the importance of Melbourne’s waterways (e.g. Merri Creek, Yarra River) and their stories to the Traditional Owners

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Discuss with Traditional Owners and Elders to seek permission in sharing knowledge	March 2017	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/ Heritage Service Coordinator



Melbourne Water partnered with Wurundjeri people to undertake a cultural values mapping project of Merri Creek, north of Melbourne.

The pilot helped us understand the current and historical cultural importance of Merri Creek to the Wurundjeri community, how Merri Creek has changed over time, and meaningful actions we could undertake to improve and protect the Aboriginal values connected to Merri Creek.

Through working together with the Wurundjeri, Melbourne Water has a deeper awareness of Indigenous cultural values that can be considered, when planning for and implementing river health improvements.



Opportunities

Melbourne Water is committed to creating opportunities that help build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We acknowledge our position to make a difference and recognise the value of working in partnership with communities to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Action

Develop opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development	July 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Human Resource Business Partners
Implement systems to measure Melbourne Waters current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee population	September 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy	September 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Manager, People Services
Ensure that all vacancies explicitly explain Melbourne Water's commitment to Reconciliation	December 2016	Manager, People Services
Advertise Melbourne Water as an equal opportunity employer and link to the Melbourne Water careers page in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media at least every 6 months	May 2017	Manager, People Services
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace	August 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Explore the feasibility of a secondee or internship program and report back to the Steering Committee	November 2016	Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Action

Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate Supply Nation membership	August 2016	Procurement Manager
Develop list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services and publish on the intranet	September 2016	Procurement Manager
Host at least one Supplier Diversity workshop to increase the understanding of Supplier Diversity within the workforce	July 2016	Procurement Manager
Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-owned business	March 2017	Procurement Manager
Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services	August 2016	Procurement Manager

Action

Provide information on community grants

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations are aware of Melbourne Water's grants program	August 2016	Heritage Services Coordinator/Community Engagement Manager

Tracking and Progress Reporting

Action

Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually	September annually	Project Manager, Reconciliation
Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer	Biannually	Project Manager, Reconciliation

Action

Report annually on RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Annual report completed and available on Melbourne Water website and intranet	September annually	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Project Manager, Reconciliation

Action

Report back to the RWG, External Advisory Council and Steering Committee on the achievements of our actions

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Bi-monthly reports provided to RWG, External Advisory Council and Steering Committee on achievements to date	Bi-monthly	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Project Manager, Reconciliation

Action

Review, refresh and update RAP

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Review, refresh and update RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	June 2017	RWG/Project Manager, Reconciliation/Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement	September 2017	Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Contact details

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Terminology:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:
 A person belonging to the Indigenous peoples of Australia, including the Indigenous inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands, and any descendants of those peoples.

Traditional Owner Groups: Includes all Registered Aboriginal Parties throughout Victoria



