

# 2016 Melbourne Water Reconciliation Action Plan Report

## About Melbourne Water's RAP

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), launched in March 2016, is a natural extension of our commitment to creating a culturally diverse and inclusive business. It builds on the strong relationships we have formed with many Traditional Owner Groups through our Cultural Heritage Program. It also provides a framework to move beyond the legislative requirements concerning Aboriginal cultural heritage management, and will support reconciliation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It was developed by the RAP working group and its sponsors, who continue to monitor the delivery of the plan and outcomes.

## What we've achieved so far:

Melbourne Water has committed to promoting reconciliation across the business, engaging employees in cultural learning, and increasing 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.

Some key highlights include:

- Working with organisations to create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities at Melbourne Water, with four trainee's commencing work in 2017
- Delivering cultural awareness training for the Leadership Team, our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee and the RAP working group
- Promoting and hosting events to support National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week
- Launching the Diversity Census to understand and track the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within the business
- Reviewing Human Resource policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention.

## What we've learnt

The RAP has provided a strong framework and guidance for Melbourne Water to evolve its approach as we build towards reconciliation, and we'll continue to

evolve and learn as we work to embed the plan across the business. Some key learnings have been:

- The importance of strong governance and accountability at the leadership team level
- The need for organisation wide coordination in establishing relationships with local traditional owner groups and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- The criticality of bringing Aboriginal people into the business to support and guide the business in pursuing reconciliation.

## What the future holds

Working and developing relationships with local traditional owner groups and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations will continue to be a strong focus for Melbourne Water, as will work to further build a culture of reconciliation within the business.

As a part of our broader Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Melbourne Water has set a target of having 3% of our workforce identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by 2020. Key actions to support this goal, including the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy, are already in progress. Further work will need to be undertaken to develop long term partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other organisations to achieve the 3% target.

Another area of focus for Melbourne Water is developing opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation. Work has already commenced to promote opportunities to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers, and the Procurement team will also be looking at ways to incorporate Supplier diversity within our revised Contract Management Framework, to be launched in 2017.

And finally Melbourne Water is committed to emerging efforts to combine the knowledge, resources and opportunities available within the Victoria Water Industry to ensure an integrated approach to building reconciliation.

## Symbol of change

To celebrate National Reconciliation Week in 2016 Melbourne Water unveiled an amazing piece of art by artist Robbie McKnight which was purchased through the Torch program. Torch seeks to provide a forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening for members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who are incarcerated, while supporting their return to the community and reducing recidivism.



**Robby Knight, *Rebirth*, 2015, Acrylic on Canvas**

'It was a real pleasure to be involved in the unveiling - this artwork is a great symbol of the commitment we have made to reconciliation as an organisation through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)' said Anthony O'Shannessy, General Manager of Commercial and Technology Services.

'Kent Morris (from Torch) talked about how the circles represent the change and rebirth that happens at an individual level through a lifetime, with new elements forming within the old.'

'He then went on to say how that is happening at an organisation wide level at Melbourne Water in terms of our efforts and commitment toward reconciliation – I think that's a great way to see it.'



**The artwork was launched during NAIDOC week with (L to R) Anthony O'Shannessy, General Manager of Commercial and Technology Services, Kent Morris, CEO of Torch, and Melbourne Water Managing Director Michael Wandmaker**

For more information contact Jill Sears, Manager, Diversity and Inclusion.