



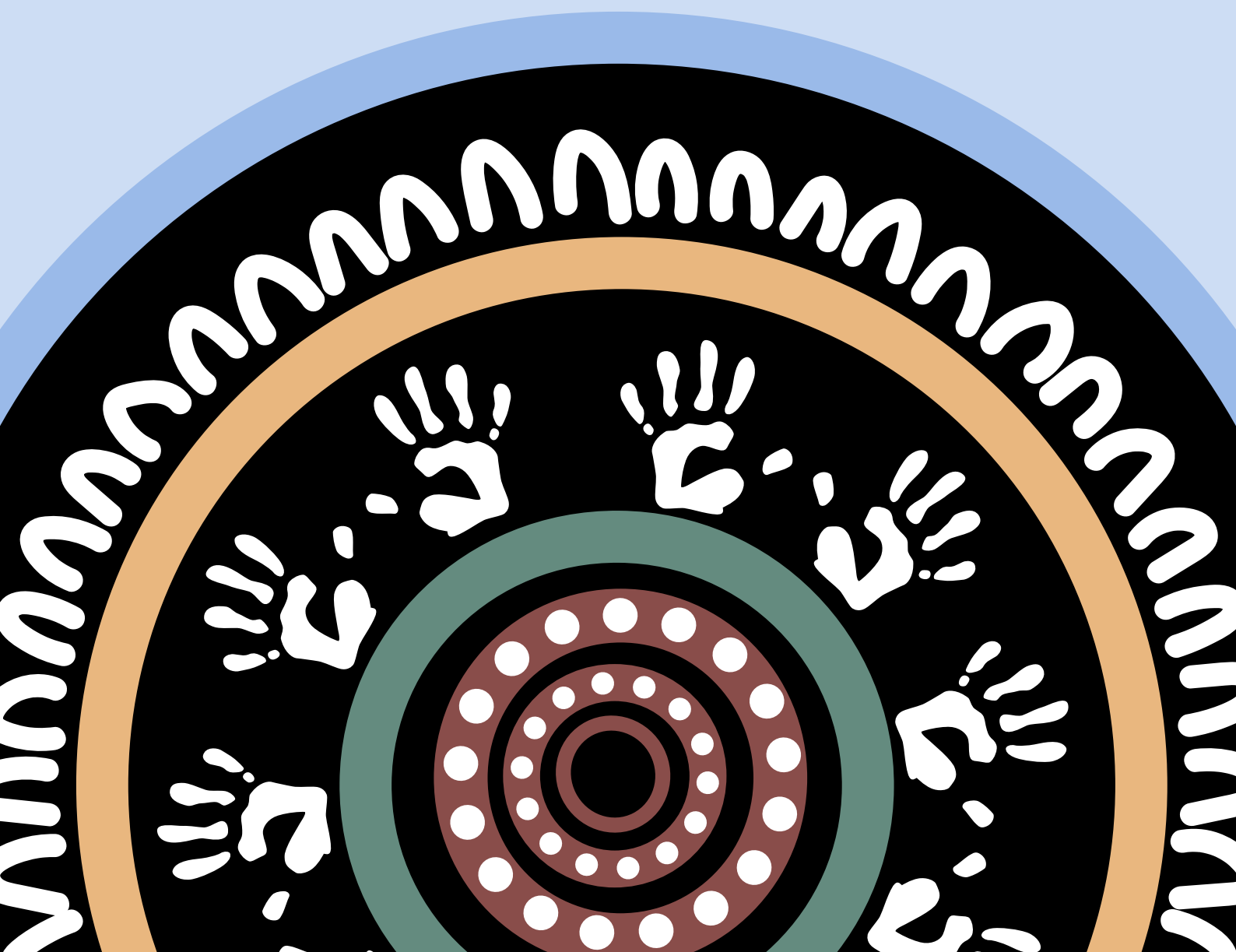
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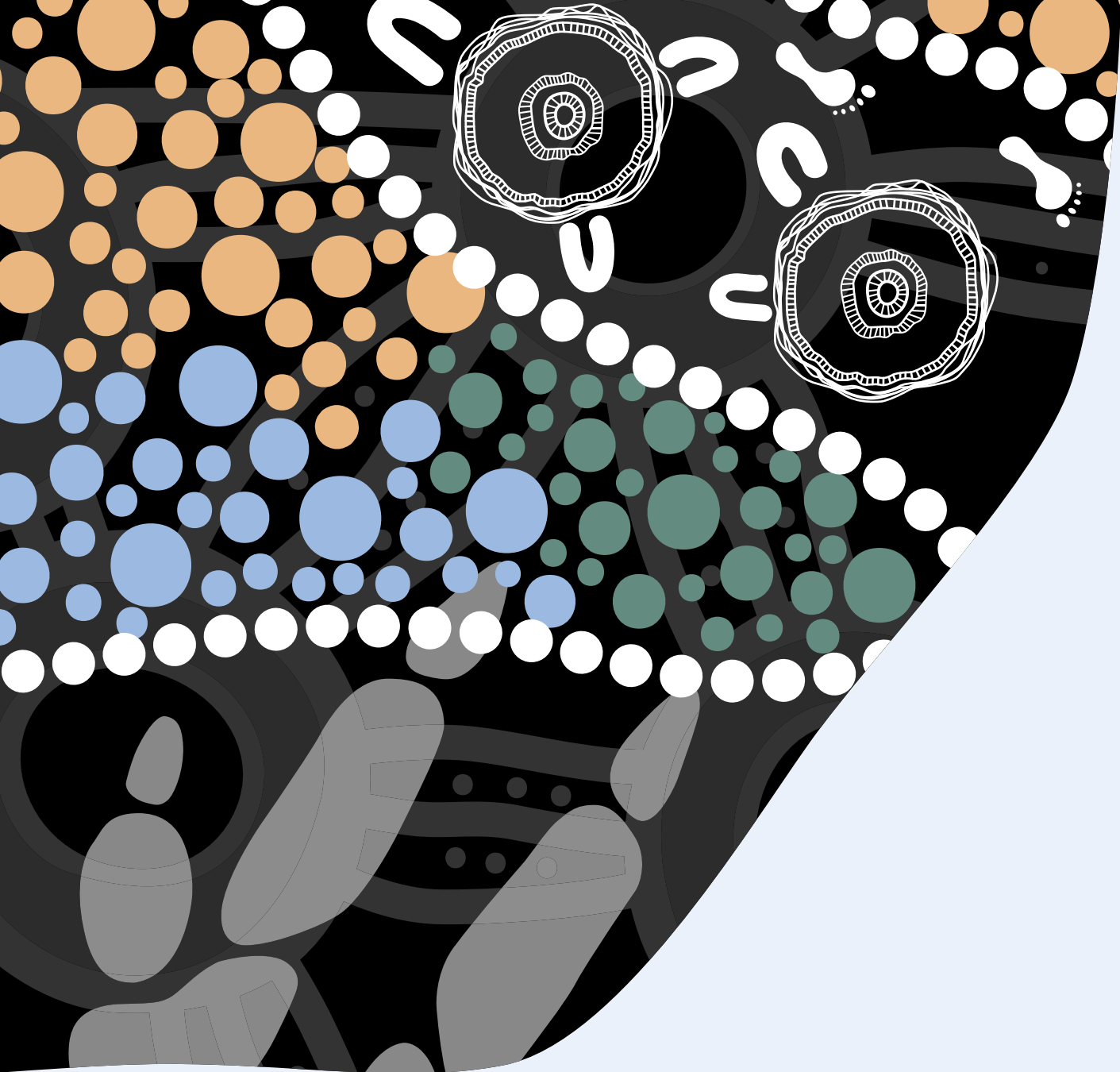
Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2025 – September 2028





Acknowledgement of country

We, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and pay respect to those who have preserved and continue to care for the lands and waters on which we live and work, and from which we benefit each day.

We recognise the strengths and knowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples provide to the health and aged care system and thank them for their ongoing contributions to those systems and the wider community.

We extend this gratitude to all health and aged care workers who contribute to improving health and wellbeing outcomes with, and for, First Nations peoples and communities.

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This document must be attributed as the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2028



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Artist overview

Brad Hore

Brad Hore is a two time Olympic and Commonwealth Games boxer, turned artist who has represented his Country and Culture on the world stage. Brad's connection to his Indigenous community, his passion for Australian sport and his cultural practice, provides Brad with the expertise as a member of the Australian Olympic Indigenous Advisory Committee and motivational speaker in schools all over Australia.

Brad's cultural artworks support First Nations peoples to feel connected to their land, sea and waters, whilst sharing and educating those wanting to learn more, welcoming in all who find a way to connect. Brad's paintings can be found in government departments, universities and supporting individual businesses to connect to a culture more than 65,000 years old.

Brad's storytelling is told in traditional symbols and colours that align with the words that help connect those to the bigger picture, that our culture is one to be celebrated, supported and enriched by community, encouraging connection for all.





Harmony in Unity

Harmony in Unity

This artwork symbolises the importance of our cultural connections, through our people, our lands and our storylines. It carries our past, present and future and shows respect to our Elders, to our histories and to our ability to provide our future with hope and connection.

The middle meeting place is where our healing is empowered. It is where we all come together as one, it brings our history and our future and it meets us in the middle with unity and belonging. It is a safe place for all, where care, connection and experience advance us forward.

The kangaroo and emu footprints highlight our commitment; their footprints show us how to keep striving in a forward motion with purpose, direction and the path that our ancestors lay before us. The boomerang symbolises the coming and going of our people through time, their connection to health and well-being and the commitment to always come back to the community needs of our people.

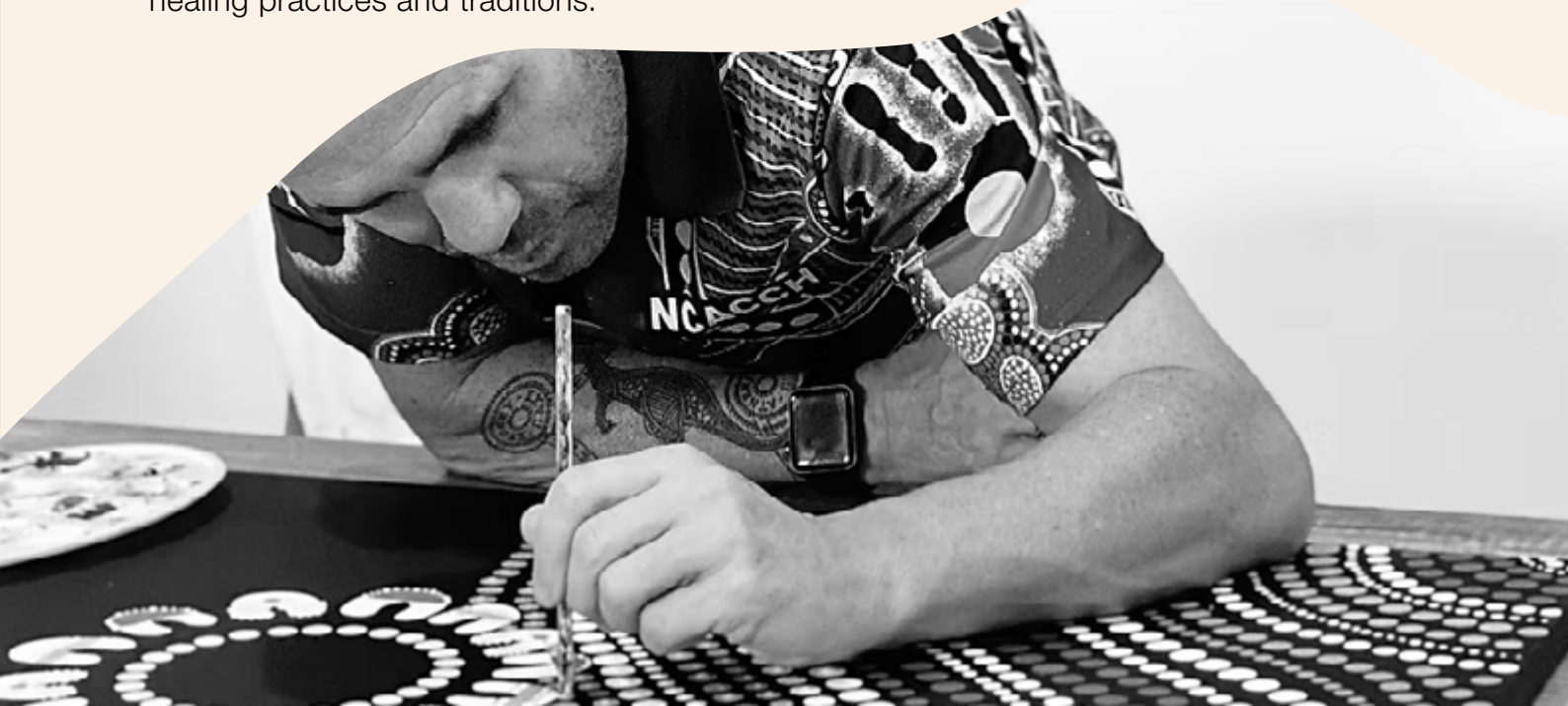
The flow of tides down the bottom connects our nation as a whole, it brings our Torres Strait Islands a link to our Aboriginal lands and shares stories of healing practices and traditions.

The smaller yarnning circles represent the journey of storytelling; it is where we meet on lands far and wide and how our acts of trust, respect and justice connect and lift us up. These symbols serve not only as a celebration of our identity but also as an invitation for dialogue - a space where truth can flourish, and relationships can deepen.

The artwork speaks to the power of moving forward together, anchored in mutual respect and understanding. It is a call to action and active efforts, urging us to honour the experiences of our Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander peoples whilst acknowledging and enhancing health and aged care practices.

In unity we hold space, in unity we hold belonging and in unity we receive healing, as we walk alongside each other, we create our harmony in unity together.

Brad Hore – Artist



Secretary's Foreword

I am proud to present the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2028.

This plan reflects our genuine commitment to a future where all Australians are respected, valued, and supported to thrive. We remain dedicated to working in genuine partnership to improve health, disability and ageing outcomes, and to enhance the wellbeing of every member of our community.

At the core of our work is a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. We believe that when our people are empowered to reach their full potential — and when our workforce reflects the communities we serve — we are better placed to deliver meaningful and lasting change.

This is our sixth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) since we launched our first in 2007. Each plan has built on the last, and this Stretch RAP continues that journey. It strengthens our commitment by embedding reconciliation more deeply into our everyday work. Guided by the pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, this plan sets out clear, measurable actions that will help us close the gap and create a more equitable future.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan. It is a privilege to lead our department as we take these next steps together. I look forward to the positive impact this plan will have as we continue to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the path to reconciliation.

Blair Comley PSM



RAP Champion's Foreword

As the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Champion, I am honoured to support our inaugural Stretch RAP which demonstrates the department's ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

Embedding an inaugural RAP Champion in the governance structure further demonstrates the importance of reconciliation within the department. The Stretch RAP outlines the key actions and deliverables we are taking to embed effective reconciliation practices throughout the workplace, in our core business and within our sphere of influence. But there is still much to do, including increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at all levels across the department, and lifting cultural competencies for all staff. As RAP Champion, I will support the department to achieve our goals and deliver on our actions.

The RAP Artwork "Harmony in Unity" by Brad Hore speaks powerfully "of moving forward together, anchored in mutual respect and understanding. It is a call to action and active efforts, urging us to honour the experiences of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whilst acknowledging and enhancing health, disability and aged care practices".

This Stretch RAP delivers on the artist's vision by placing an emphasis on empowerment, self-determination, and the valuable perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders. Our RAP commits us all to foster an inclusive workplace culture, to build mutually respectful relationships, and to demonstrate respect for and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories through meaningful actions.

Andrea Kelly



Reconciliation Australia CEO Statement

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its sixth overall.

Formed around the pillars of *relationships*, *respect* and *opportunities*, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has a mandate to ensure the best quality healthcare is provided to all Australians, and its commitment to the objectives of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is critical to this work. To achieve this vision, the department understands that the knowledge, strengths, skills and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are crucial.

The department's previous RAPs mark its work to cultivate respectful relationships and meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Supporting Indigenous businesses, increasing First Nations representation in senior roles and cultural capability strategies laid the groundwork for expanded commitments to genuine partnerships and First Nations led outcomes.

For health and aged care services to be responsive, they must be tailored to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. In recognition of this, the department's new RAP is built around building the community-controlled sector and shared decision making. It aims to prioritise the transition of programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Community Controlled Organisations wherever possible while improving First Nations representation on boards and committees.

With this work to make health and aged care more culturally appropriate and accessible, the department has the potential to drive considerable reconciliation outcomes across its sphere of influence. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision is for a reconciled Australia that honours the unique cultures, experiences, and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and recognises their vital contributions to the health and wellbeing of all Australians, both now and for future generations. We imagine equitable health systems free from racism, where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to health, disability and ageing services that are effective, high-quality, appropriate and affordable.

By enhancing our workforce's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, we will enable them to contribute actively to achieving our vision. Then we will achieve this by working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations, as well as other critical organisations delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace that is culturally safe, embraces the rich and proud histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and empowers our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to reach their full potential.

Together, we will welcome, learn from, and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, ensuring these are integrated into our daily operations, both internally and in our interactions with the community.



Our business

Our history

The Commonwealth Department of Health (now known as the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing) was established on 7 March 1921, in part as a response to the devastating effects of the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1919, and through the vision of Dr John Howard Cumpston, the first head of the department. At first, the department looked after quarantine, reporting infectious diseases, public health research laboratories, and occupational health.

Following reforms in the 1940s, the Commonwealth Government was authorised to subsidise medicines and other health benefits, leading to the creation of Medibank, Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme we still have today.

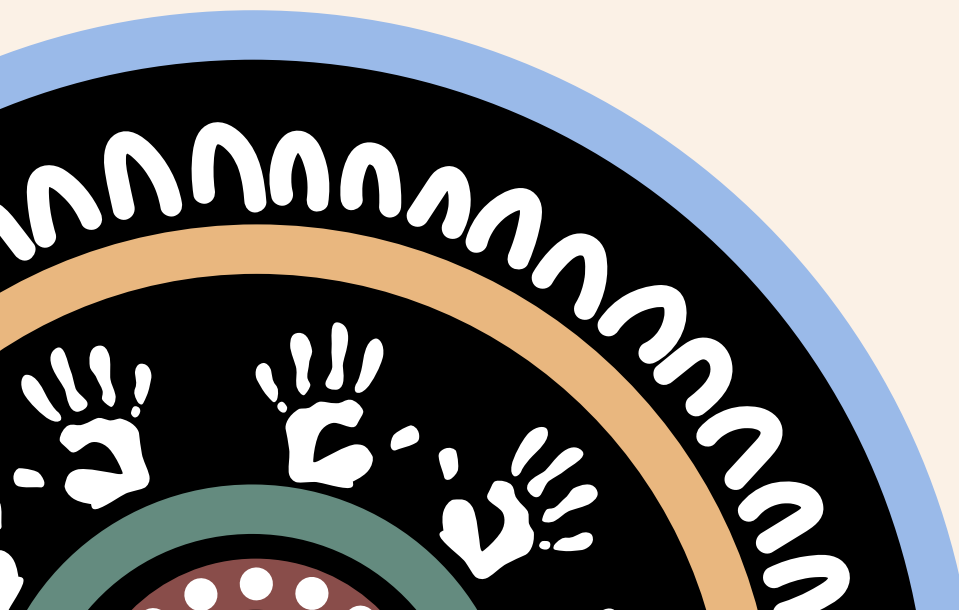
The department has continued to evolve, undergoing many changes in name, function, and structure over the years. Throughout this evolution, our core focus has remained on promoting the health and wellbeing of all Australians — including older people and those living with disability — by ensuring our services are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to diverse needs.

Our vision

Better health and wellbeing for all Australians — now and for future generations.

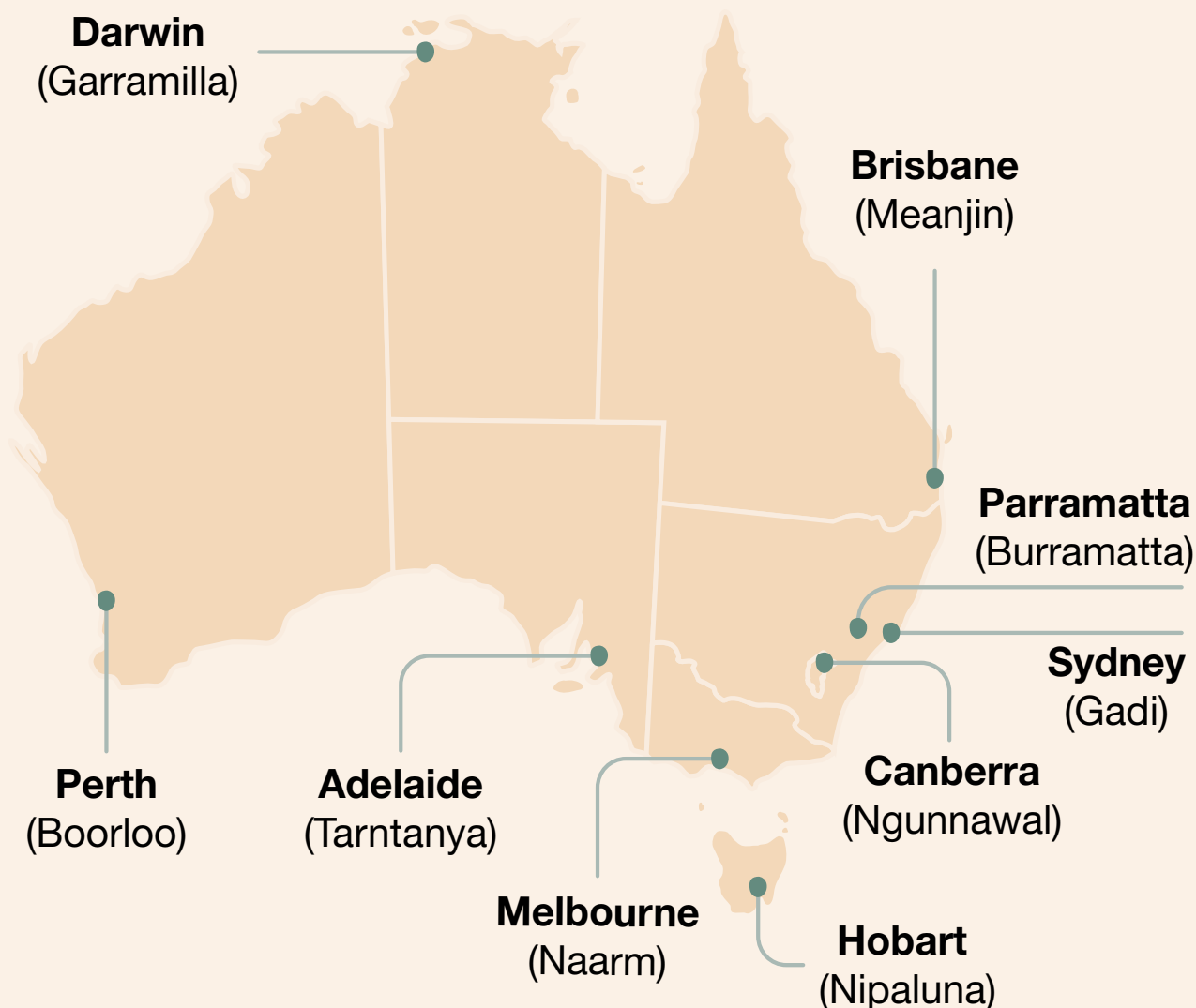
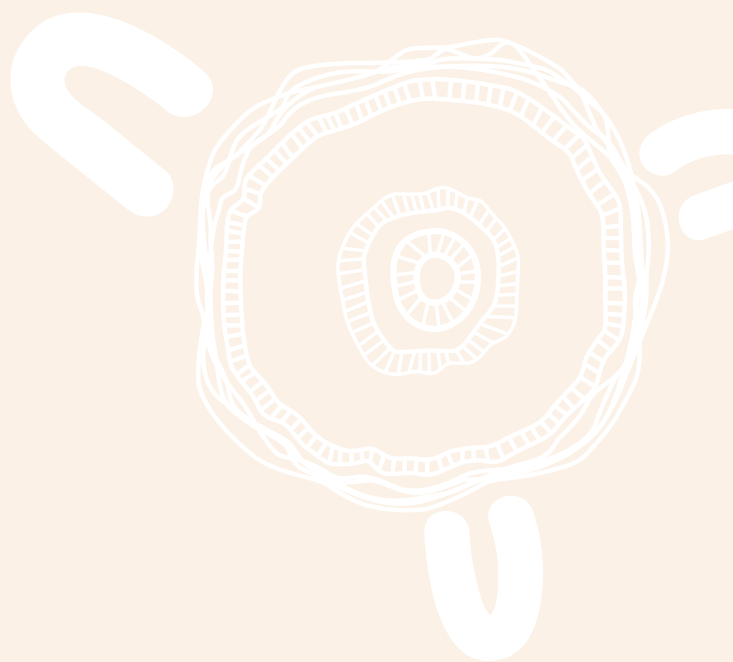
Our purpose

With our partners, support the Government to lead and shape Australia's health, disability and aged care systems through evidence-based policy, well-targeted programs, and best practice regulation — ensuring these systems are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of all Australians.



Our locations and our workforce

We have offices in Canberra (Ngunnawal), Adelaide (Tarntanya), Brisbane (Meanjin), Darwin (Garramilla), Hobart (Nipaluna), Melbourne (Naarm), Perth (Boorloo), Parramatta (Burramatta) and Sydney (Gadi), as well as staff working from many other locations. As of 14 August 2025, we employed 7,774 people, 164 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons, representing both 2.1% of the total workforce and 3.4% of our Senior Executive Service.



What matters to us

We work in partnership with our stakeholders to develop, implement, and oversee policies and programs that are clear, connected, and evidence based. We are committed to learning from and sharing our experience and expertise with partners in Australia and globally, aiming to improve health domestically, in the Asia/Pacific region and worldwide.

We strive to be a high-performance organisation focused on improving workforce capability, providing high-quality advice, and are dedicated to fostering an inclusive, diverse and collaborative workplace to support this.

We engage with a broad and varied range of stakeholders, including other government agencies, industry organisations, service providers, researchers, and the Australian public. Our people and partnerships with health, disability and aged care stakeholders are central to delivering the outcomes and programs outlined in our Corporate Plan. We are keen to ensure we leverage these relationships to advance reconciliation within our sphere of influence.

Our commitment to learning from and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations

We are working to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices guide reforms across the spectrum of health, disability and aged care workforce programs, services, and policies. To achieve this, we need to learn to engage and partner in different ways including being prepared to take risks in areas we may have previously sought to control.

We recognise that the knowledge, strengths, skills, and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are critical to achieve our vision of better health and wellbeing for all Australians. Australia comprises hundreds of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries, each with its own culture, language, and belief system. For health, disability and aged care services to be responsive, they must be tailored to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. To achieve this, we will continue to support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine and lead priorities and actions which impact them.



The department is committed to the objectives of the **National Agreement on Closing the Gap**. Under the National Agreement, the Australian Government committed to changing how its agencies work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by focusing on four Priority Reforms:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision making.
- Building the Community-Controlled Sector.
- Transforming government organisations.
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

To put our commitments under the National Agreement into action, the department has established structured mechanisms to:

- strengthen our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- enhance departmental policies, procedures, and committees to better reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' views and participation in workforce, policies, and programs
- improve Australia's health systems by working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stakeholders to drive better outcomes, and
- build the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing as a leading Australian Public Service employer of first choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our approach is led by our Closing the Gap Steering Committee, a forum that brings together senior leaders from across the organisation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to shape the action we take in relation to the priority reforms. The First Nations Health and the First Nations Aged Care Governance Groups provide opportunities for us to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to strategically shape health, disability and aged care policies and programs.

Established in 2024, the First Nations Health Governance Group (the group) is a genuine partnership between the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and First Nations health experts and leaders. The Group will be in place until 2031, aligning with the term of the **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031 (Health Plan)** and seeks to co-design and share decision making by embedding expert and First Nations perspectives in the department's policy design, delivery and advice to government.

The Group is comprised of leaders of the First Nations health sector and four departmental representatives. Organisational based members include:

- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- National Indigenous Health Leadership Alliance (NIHLA)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC)
- the department, represented by:
 - the Secretary
 - Deputy Secretary of Strategy and First Nations Group
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - First Assistant Secretary (FAS) of the First Nations Health Division (FNHD).

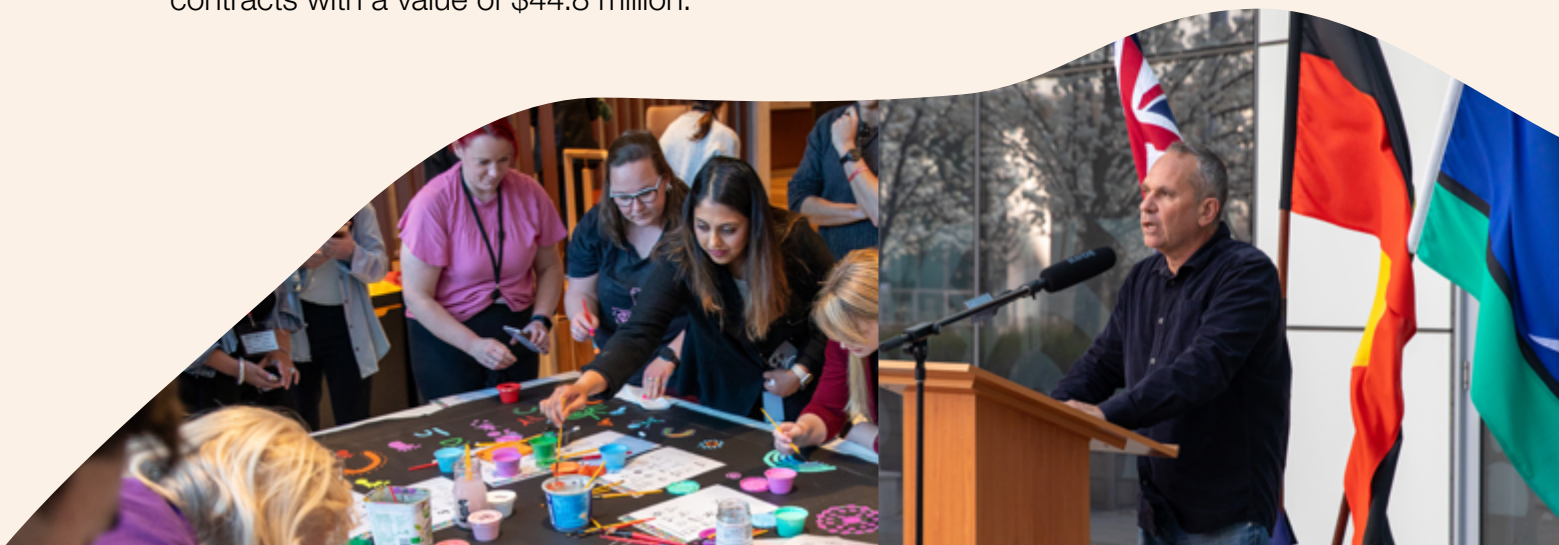
Our RAP

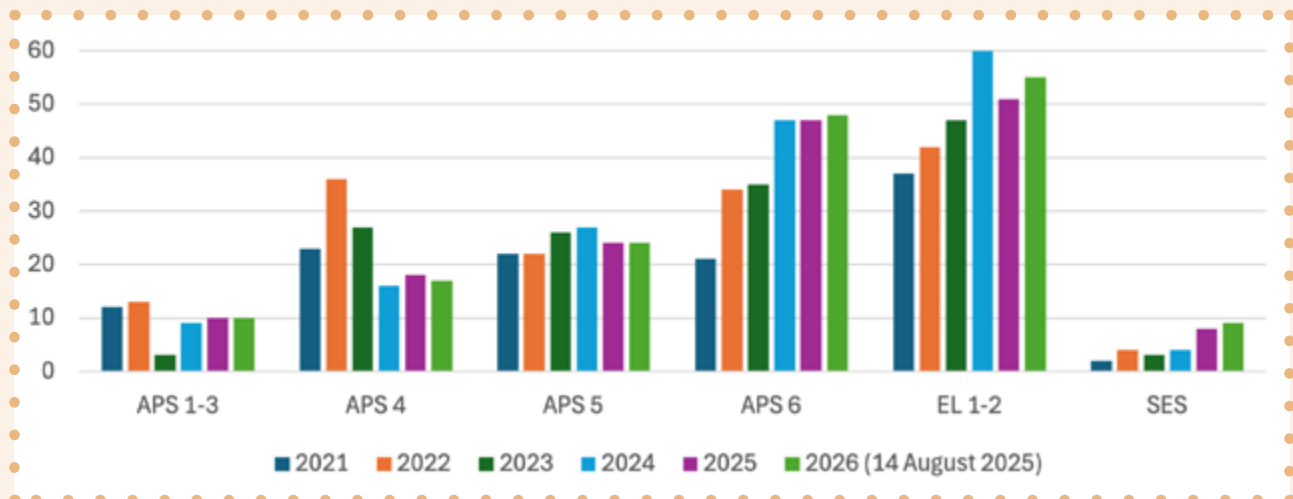
We first developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2007. Since then, successive RAPs have outlined practical actions to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAPs have driven our contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which we operate, while supporting business outcomes.

Teams from across the department have been involved in developing this Stretch RAP, the first Stretch RAP for our department. We have been guided by our Closing the Gap Steering Committee, RAP Action Group and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network. Our consultation process highlighted the need for this RAP to continue to have a strong focus on our internal policies and procedures, while reflecting our commitment to continue to improve how we work with external stakeholders to deliver better policies and programs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We are proud of our progress so far as an organisation, noting some key achievements:

- We have overachieved against our commitment to supporting Indigenous businesses to grow, creating jobs and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 2023–24, we entered into 159 new contracts with Indigenous businesses, worth a combined \$71.6 million, easily exceeding the target of 136 new contracts with a value of \$44.8 million.
- To demonstrate respect for and encourage staff to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, our three Canberra buildings now all have Ngunnawal names that reflect our role and purpose. Our staff were actively involved in nominating and selecting these names:
 - Our Woden building, previously known as the Sirius Building, is now the Yaradhang Building, the Ngunnawal term for 'eucalyptus', a plant known for its medical and health purposes.
 - Our office building at Fairbairn, home to our Health Products Regulation Group, is the Gulgana Building, meaning 'to protect'.
 - The building at Fairbairn that houses the laboratories of the Therapeutic Goods Administration is the Yarwan Gawar Building, meaning 'strong heart'.
- We have continued to offer talent and career development programs to build capability, identify opportunities and retain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, and have seen growth in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff in more senior roles in the department.
- We have recently started a First Nations Capability Unit to bring a strategic approach to building the cultural capability of all our staff.





Graphic A: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by classification

Indigenous staff by classification

Championed by our Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner (and RAP Champion), Closing the Gap Steering Committee Chairs, and five senior Indigenous Champions, under this RAP we will:

- review, strengthen, and extend initiatives established under previous RAPs to ensure they continue to be relevant and effective
- pursue new actions within our organisation and across the department's sphere of influence, and
- embed reconciliation into core business strategies.

By expanding our actions and ensuring they are embedded in how we work, we are seeking to advance reconciliation in our agency and across the wider community for years to come.

The Department's Senior Executive Service Diversity Champions

Our Senior Executive Service leadership team all play an important role in promoting workplace diversity and inclusion, driving diversity related employment initiatives, and giving voice to and addressing the concerns of staff. The Diversity Champions go a step further, actively connecting with and advocating for the staff networks, connecting with colleagues in similar roles across the Australian Public Service, addressing behaviour and processes that are not consistent with an inclusive and diverse workplace, and leading by example in fostering a positive and inclusive workplace.

We value the range of views and approaches diversity brings to our workplace. We are committed to being inclusive, culturally aware, and responsive to the needs of individuals in our policies and practices. We actively pursue initiatives to broaden diversity and inclusion in our workplace, supporting a wider range of diversity dimensions including gender, neurodiversity, disability, LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, and cultural diversity.

Meet our Indigenous Champions



Mary Wood

Deputy Secretary

Mary is currently leading the department's Interim Centre for Disease Control Group and has extensive experience in policy, strategy, advocacy, and communications. Mary has served as Press Secretary and Chief of Staff to a federal minister, Deputy Director-General in ACT Health, and led corporate citizenship at the Business Council of Australia. Mary holds qualifications in law and public policy and previously led the Commonwealth taskforce responsible for negotiating the national public hospitals agreement with the states.



Melinda Turner

First Assistant Secretary

Melinda, a Yuin/Monaro woman from Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community on the New South Wales South Coast, has over 20 years' experience working on First Nation-specific policies and programs. Currently, she is the First Assistant Secretary of the First Nations Health Division. Melinda has a strong understanding of the health system from her 5 years at the department, and a deep appreciation of the additional challenges experienced by remote Indigenous communities from her 8 years working on a wide range of remote-specific policies and programs in the Northern Territory. She has developed meaningful partnerships with community-controlled organisations and various government departments, delivering numerous policies and programs aligned with the Closing the Gap agreement.



Mark Roddam

First Assistant Secretary

Mark is the First Assistant Secretary of the Primary Care Division, overseeing the Australian Government's primary care policies and programs. He has previously served as the First Assistant Secretary of the Social Policy Division at the Department of Finance, and the department's Mental Health and Indigenous Health Divisions. Mark's career also includes significant experience in the Indigenous Affairs Group at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and 15 years in the employment portfolio focusing on workplace relations and employment programs and policies.



Anthony McEachran

Assistant Secretary

Anthony is an Assistant Secretary in the Benefits Integrity Division, leading the Health Professionals Compliance Branch. Before joining the department, Anthony spent 14 years with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, overseeing regulatory functions, engagement, and government relations. He played a key role in increasing Indigenous participation on National Boards, led the governance review of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) Reconciliation Action Plan, and contributed to the development of the Cultural Safety Program.



Jonathan Bray

Assistant Secretary

Jonathan is Assistant Secretary of the Systems Strategy and Network Support Branch, focusing on health and aged care system integration and operational strategy for the department's Aged Care Local Network. Career highlights at the department include working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peaks in delivering post-COVID health workforce reform and leading the Sport Integrity Taskforce to establish Sport Integrity Australia and the National Sports Tribunal – eventually serving as the Tribunal's inaugural Deputy CEO. Jonathan is passionate about being an Indigenous Champion and is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable environments both at and through work in the public service.



Andrea Kelly

Commissioner

Andrea is a proud Warumungu and Larrakia woman with over 30 years' experience in the Australian Public Service. Her career is marked by her commitment to advancing the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including through her previous role as Deputy Chief Executive Officer at Reconciliation Australia. Andrea played a pivotal role in establishing the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme, addressing historical injustices faced by Indigenous communities. Currently, as the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, Andrea advocates for culturally safe aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Her extensive experience and deep cultural insights drive her ongoing efforts to influence public policy and achieve meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Reconciliation Action Plan Action Group

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Action Group (RAPAG) is supporting the successful development and implementation of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2025 – 2028. The RAPAG has an important role to play, not only to promote the RAP, but to also participate in activities that raise awareness across the department.

While the RAPAG is not a primary decision-maker in the department's day-to-day operations, it plays a crucial role in shaping our reconciliation efforts. The group is composed of dedicated individuals who provide collective input and strategic guidance in relation to RAP-related decisions of organisational significance.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Action Group

Chair: RAP Champion

Secretariat: Indigenous, Diversity and Inclusion Team

Members:

- Our Indigenous Champions
- A First Assistant Secretary from each of the Groups within the department
- The co-chairs of our National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network
- Cultural Capability Unit representative
- Our Indigenous Liaison Officers (ILO).



Case Study - Jawun Secondment Program

Operating in 12 regions across the country, the Jawun Secondment Program (Jawun) is a unique cultural immersion experience providing participants an opportunity to live and work in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities for 6-12 weeks.

Jawun is a mechanism for a two-way exchange of knowledge where participants share their subject matter expertise with the community organisation while working on a needed community project, in return, the community shares their history, stories and their way of being and doing.

This two-way exchange provides the opportunity to both develop and strengthen the capability of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations and their leaders, while providing the participant a greater appreciation and understanding of matters impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We have been a contributor to the Jawun Program for several years, with 14 staff participating since 2023. We will continue to support the Jawun Program during this RAP.

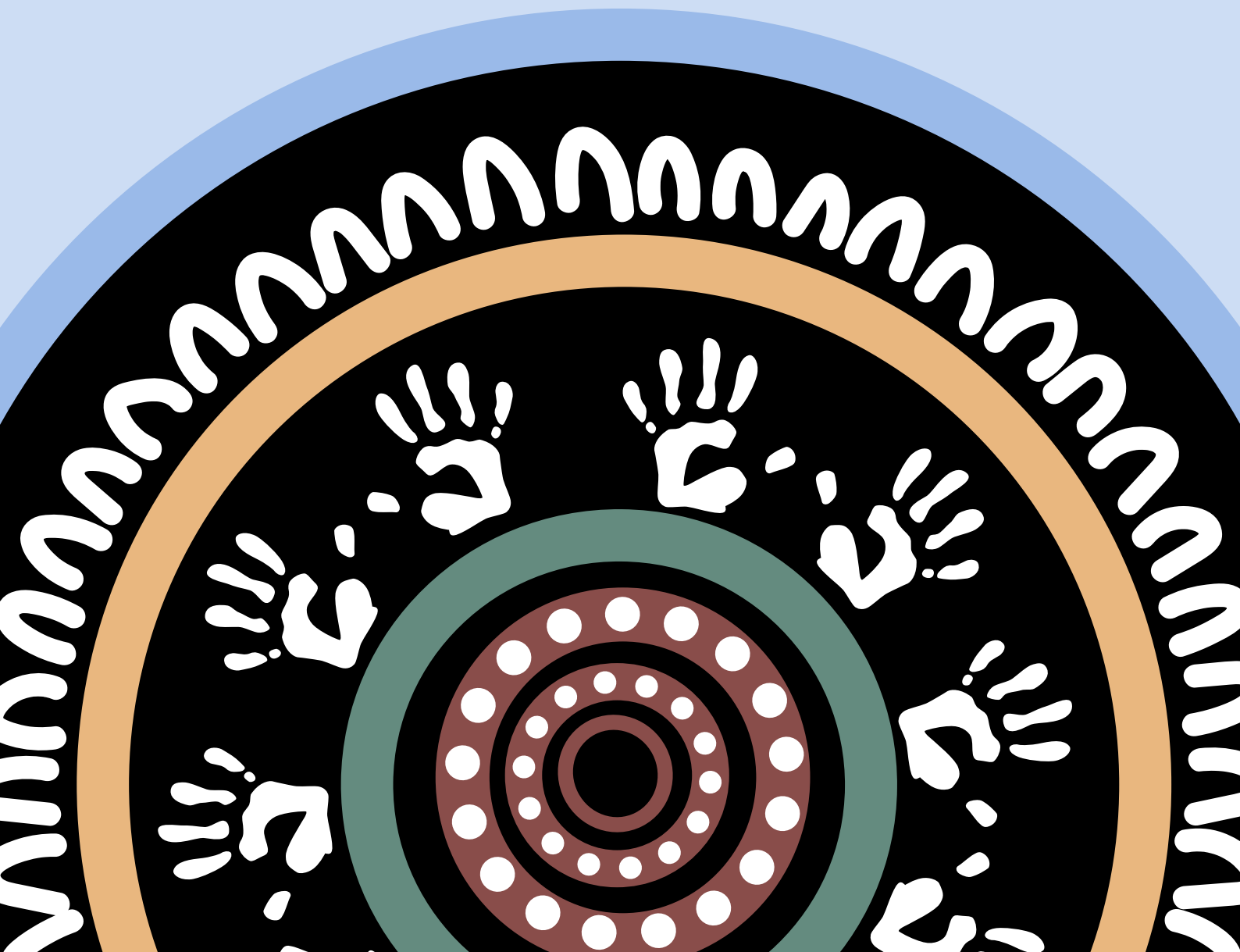
- Through my Jawun placement ... I had the
- opportunity to build genuine relationships,
- listen deeply, and contribute to a project
- that could create lasting benefits for the
- community. It was an incredible experience
- that strengthened my commitment to
- working in true partnership with Aboriginal
- and Torres Strait Islander organisations –
- **Participant, Goulburn Murray Region**

- I had the most incredible experience
- on Yawuru Country. While working ...
- I contributed to their advocacy work to
- support the establishment of an Aboriginal
- community controlled primary health care
- service in I feel so lucky to have had
- such an enriching experience learning
- powerful lessons that I can bring home and
- share with others – **Participant, West**
- **Kimberley Region**

- My experience challenged me both
- professionally and personally, in remarkable
- ways and some I didn't expect. I really
- came to appreciate how stories carry
- layers of meaning and how even small
- actions can quietly create lasting impact –
- **Participant, North-East Arnhem Land**



Reconciliation Action Plan

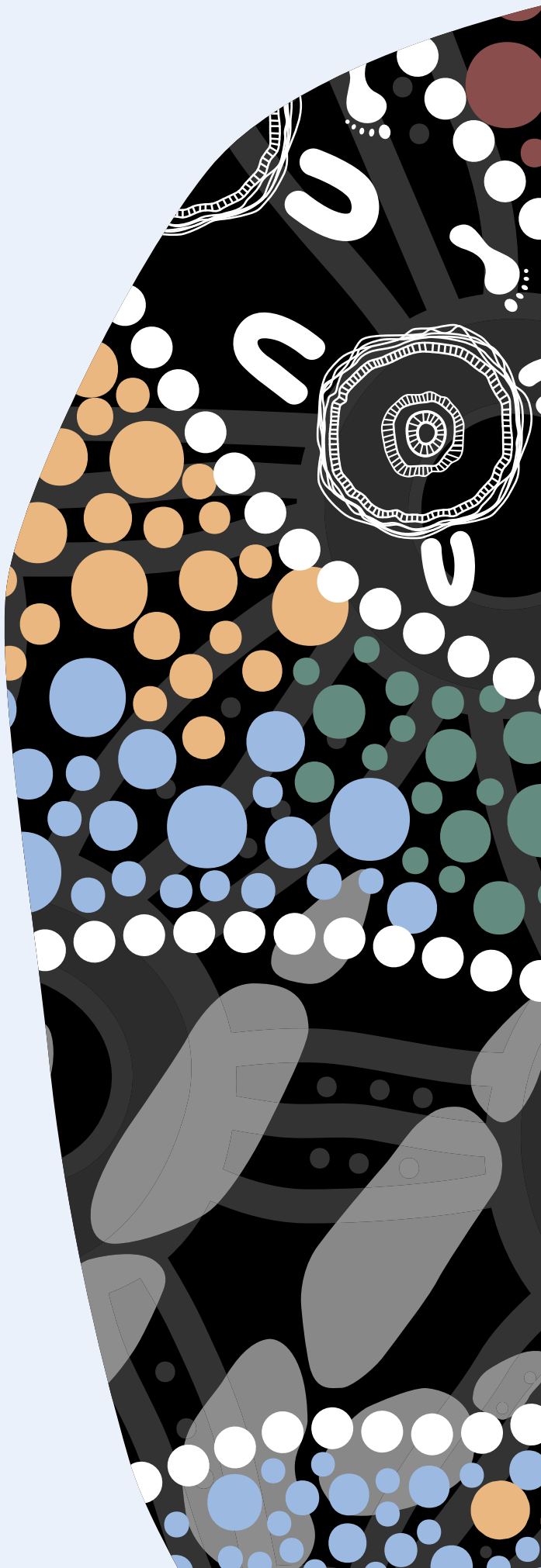


Relationships

The department's relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders have changed significantly in recent years. We have always seen the value in having strong, meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. These relationships foster culturally safe, responsive, and genuine partnerships, ensuring that health, disability and ageing programs and services are tailored to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and working towards achieving the broader goal of achieving equitable health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Building on this foundation, we are committed to formal partnerships and sharing decision-making, in line with **Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1**. Our First Nations Health Division is leading across government in their commitment to genuine partnership. Our focus under this Stretch RAP is to extend and embed this approach across our business, as part of business-as-usual functions.

By connecting people and sharing experiences, we can enhance mutual understanding and respect, which is essential for effective governance and communication. Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in a meaningful way allows for better-informed decision-making and policy development, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes. Furthermore, these partnerships help build trust and collaboration, which are vital for the successful implementation of health initiatives and achieving our goals in promoting health equity and closing the gap in health disparities.



Action 1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1 Meet with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	Review November 2026	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
1.2 Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2026	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
1.3 Establish and maintain five [5] formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations during the RAP lifetime.	Review September 2026, 2027, 2028	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs

Action 2. Increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on ministerially appointed boards and committees

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Strengthen guidance to policy areas to advance Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on boards and committees, including the establishment of an ongoing centralised talent candidate pool in the longer term.	June 2027	First Assistant Secretary - People Communication, and Parliamentary
2.2 Establish long-term data collection mechanisms and benchmarks to capture and foster awareness for opportunities to increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on boards and committees.	June 2027	First Assistant Secretary - People Communication, and Parliamentary

Action 3. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
3.2 RAP Action Group members and Secretariat participate in one internal and one external National Reconciliation Week event.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	RAP Action Group
3.3 Host a minimum of one National Reconciliation Week event across all State and Territory Offices, to share challenges and showcase innovation, including involving external Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander partners.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	RAP Action Group
3.4 Circulate a schedule of events to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week and encourage and support staff participation.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Indigenous Champions

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.5 Organise National Reconciliation Week events and register on Reconciliation Australia's national website.	March 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
3.6 Closing the Gap Steering Committee and RAP Action Group members to participate in a closed truth-telling workshop with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander speakers.	February 2026, 2027, 2028	RAP Action Group Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs and members

Action 4. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1 Develop and implement strategies to engage all staff to raise awareness of reconciliation outcomes across our workforce, including awareness of our RAP commitments.	January 2026 Review January 2028	Assistant Secretary – Corporate Communication Branch
4.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly by publishing our RAP on our website and utilising social media to highlight key activities and achievements each year.	September 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – Corporate Communication Branch
4.3 Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes and review each year to share with the department's portfolio agencies.	November 2026, 2027	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
4.4 Collaborate with other like-minded organisations and the APS Reconciliation Network to implement innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	Review March 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
4.5 Include RAP and Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in staff induction processes.	March 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
4.6 Enable inclusive and targeted approaches to achieve equitable health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by funding health and medical research focussed on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	First Assistant Secretary – Health Economics & Research Division
4.7 Attend a minimum of two RAP Leadership Gatherings hosted by Reconciliation Australia per year.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Action 5. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5.1 Identify and engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to develop anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	September 2025	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
5.2 Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	July 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
5.3 Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, and stances against racism.	Review November 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
5.4 Adopt a continuous improvement model for HR policies and procedures relating to anti-discrimination, reviewing and updating regularly.	March 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

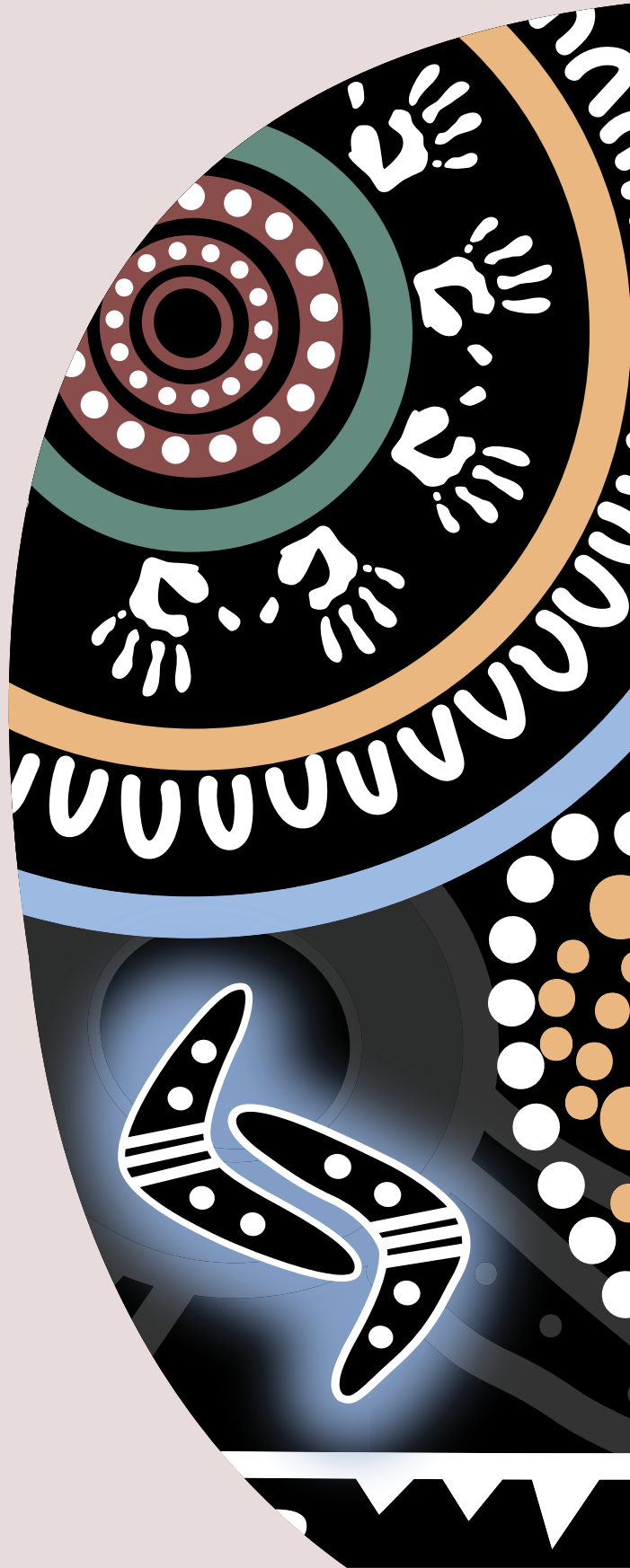
Action 6. Strengthen access and governance of Indigenous data to support self-determined community led solutions

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6.1 Implement the department's Governance of Indigenous Data Implementation Plan, with an initial focus on 3 priority areas to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed governance of Indigenous data and establish ongoing oversight 2. Build trust and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and support appropriate and timely access to data 3. Build capability in the department 	Review December 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – Data & Analytics Branch, Health, Economics and Research Division
6.2 Identify and utilise appropriate systems to track, measure and report on Governance of Indigenous Data implementation progress.	November 2025	Assistant Secretary – Health Modelling Partnership & Evaluation Branch, Health, Economics and Research Division

Respect

We commit to promoting and encouraging a culturally safe workplace that respects, acknowledges, and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories and cultures. To deliver high-quality and culturally appropriate policies and programs, we must demonstrate our understanding and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures and histories. This includes our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

Our APS Census survey results identify overall improvements in the experience of our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff in recent years, however, there remains room for significant improvement. Under our Stretch RAP we are focussed on building the capability of our entire leadership cohort and all staff. While we see a role for formal learning and development, our approach is centred on creating opportunities to genuinely engage with new knowledge and experiences. By engaging the hearts and minds of our staff, we will drive a culture of respect and appreciation throughout the department.



Action 7. Increase understanding value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation, including consulting with internal and external subject matter experts.	July 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
7.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of the Indigenous Cultural Capability Action Plan.	June 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
7.3 Commit all RAP Action Group members, HR managers, senior executive group and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning.	August 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Action 8. Implement the Indigenous cultural capability action plan to enhance the department's cultural capability and awareness

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8.1 Provide at least 3 workshops a year for Senior Executive Staff and Executive Level 2 staff to attend cultural learning programs.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
8.2 Provide ongoing education to senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism. (six face to face and six virtual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander truth telling workshops).	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
8.3 Executive Level Two and Senior Executive Staff officers participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability development as agreed to in the department's Enterprise Agreement and Senior Executive Service Leadership Framework.	Review July 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
8.4 All staff undertake formal and structured cultural learning over the life of the previous and current RAP with progressive targets of 50% year 1 – 75% by year 2 – 95% by year 3.	Review July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
8.5 Coordinate several opportunities each year for Walk on Country cultural experiences for the Executive Leadership team, Senior Executive Service and people leaders at all levels. Include these experiences as an option in the Executive Leadership Learning Program.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
8.6 The Department is committed to releasing 12 staff to attend the Jawun Program each year, based on the operational needs of the Program.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Action 9. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9.1 Increase staff understanding by delivering 6 learning opportunities to raise awareness and understanding around the purpose and the significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2027	First Nations Capability Unit
9.2 Develop and promote a cultural protocol document on SharePoint that outlines the practices for observing Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country in each of our office locations.	September 2025	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
9.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country for significant events each year, including but not limited to National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC.	Review March 2026, 2027, 2028	Deputy Secretaries, ILOs and Indigenous Champions
9.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings and public events.	Review March 2026, 2027, 2028	Deputy Secretaries and Indigenous Champions
9.5 Display Acknowledgment of Country plaques, including the National Apology and the Indigenous Map of Australia in all State and Territory offices.	January 2026	Assistant Secretary – Workplace and Change Branch



Action 10. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10.1 Indigenous Champions, RAP Action Group, and Indigenous Liaison Officer Unit are supported to participate in and/or actively contribute to an external NAIDOC Week event and share reflections with colleagues.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Indigenous Champions Indigenous Liaison Officers
10.2 Ensure the continuation of HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week events and promote these provisions across the department in the lead up to NAIDOC Week.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
10.3 Support all staff to participate in at least 1 NAIDOC Week event in their local area, including departmental-wide promotion of events local to all departmental offices and portfolio agencies.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Indigenous Liaison Officers, Indigenous Champions
10.4 Hold 1 internal NAIDOC week event each year that staff from all states and territories can participate in.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Indigenous Liaison Officers, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network and Indigenous Champions
10.5 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Indigenous Champions, Assistant Secretary – Corporate Communication
10.6 Host annual Departmental NAIDOC awards in recognition and promotion of work achievements of award recipients and involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff on the judging panel.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
10.7 Encourage all staff to participate in the NAIDOC awards including by nominating a colleague, joining or watching the all-staff event, and visiting the dedicated intranet page that showcases and recognises teams and individuals.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

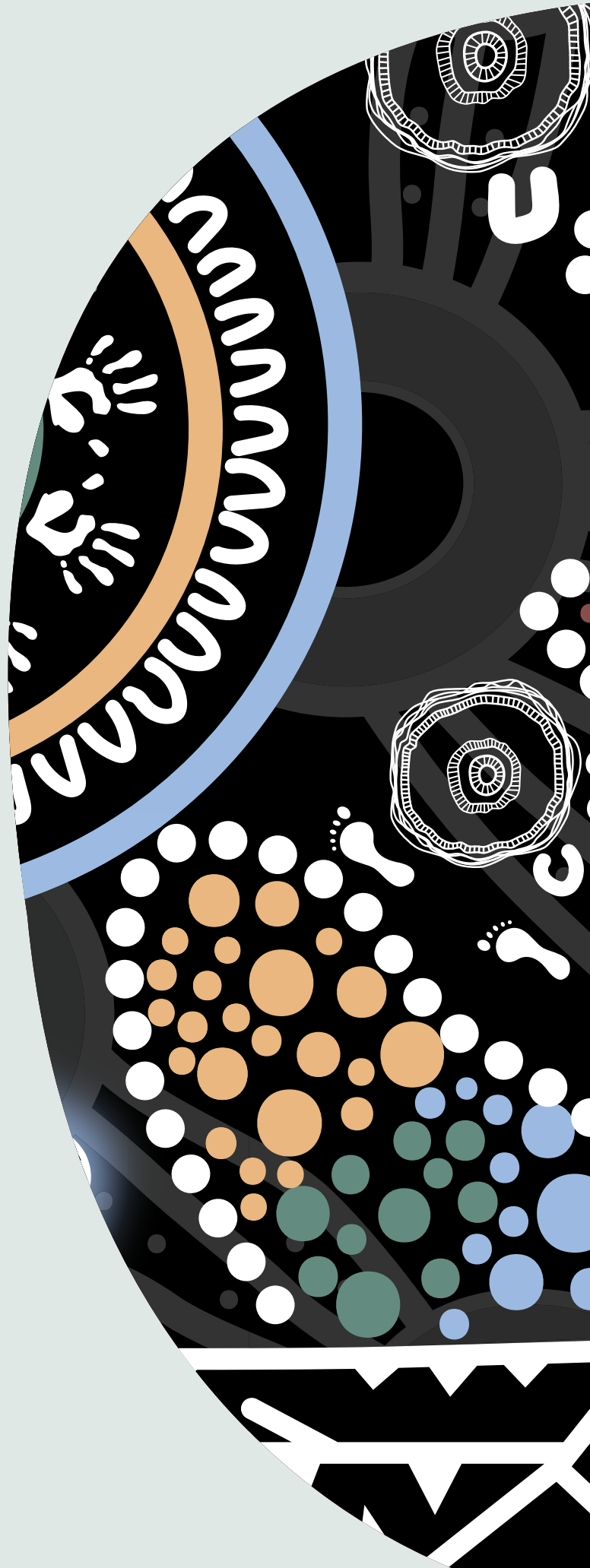
Action 11. Review and create culturally inclusive policy and programs in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11.1 Engage and co-design policies and programs with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peak bodies, experts, service providers and/or communities.	Review October 2026, 2027	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
11.2 Undertake a review of the grants and reporting process, addressing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders’ challenges.	December 2026	Assistant Secretary – Grants Branch
11.3 Transition health and aged care programs and services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to Community Controlled Organisations where possible.	Report October 2026, 2027	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs



Opportunities

Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities are integral to our organisation and its core business activities. We recognise and value the diverse and extensive knowledge, skills, and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffs bring to our department. To support this, we are dedicated to increasing opportunities for professional and personal development and are committed to increasing our engagement with Indigenous businesses, fostering mutually beneficial commercial relationships that contribute to the economic empowerment of these communities.



Action 12. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12.1 Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff on the effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategies.	November 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.2 Review and update an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	August 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.3 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Review July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.4 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.5 Continue efforts to recruit and support careers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to meet Australian Public Service wide targets of 5 per cent Senior Executive Staff (SES) and 5 per cent overall by 2030.	Review July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.6 Implement our First Nations Recruitment and Retention Strategy, including supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff development by diversifying and strengthening career pathways into and across the department, providing career development and advancement opportunities, and equipping hiring areas with resources to ensure recruitment and onboarding processes are culturally safe.	August 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.7 Boost Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment by considering the SES 100 candidate merit pool candidates for suitability prior to advertising SES positions and promote the opportunity to staff as relevant. Consider merit pool candidates before advertising for SES positions.	Review October 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.8 Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coaching Program and implement as part of the individual career development and advancement plans for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to target development initiatives and advancement opportunities.	January 2026 Review January 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
12.9 Continue to enhance the department's Cultural Value Proposition to attract new talent, establishing appropriate cultural mechanisms to embed cultural inclusive leadership behaviour across the department.	April 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12.10 Continue participating in entry level programs to ensure there are opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to commence a career with the department.	Review January 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Action 13. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	December 2025	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch
13.2 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	October 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch
13.3 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	August 2026	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch
13.4 Maintain commercial relationships and maintain awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, including ongoing relationships with existing strategic Indigenous suppliers.	Review July 2026, 2027, 2028	Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Operations
13.5 Identify any categories of services specific to the department that fall outside of mandatory Whole of Australian Government panels where an Australian Public Service panel could be established for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	February 2028	Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Operations
13.6 Set targets for annual procurement from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch
13.7 Maintain Supply Nation membership and promote throughout the department.	July 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch

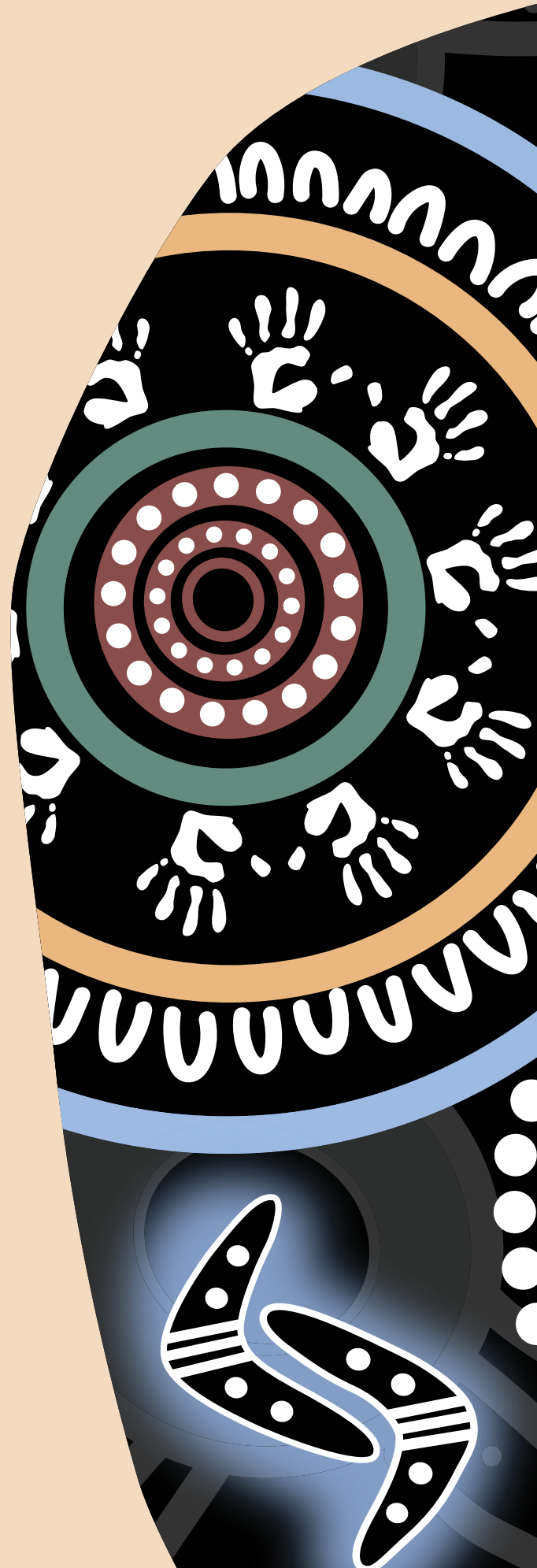
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13.8 Train all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – Strategic Procurement Branch
13.9 Schedule and attend quarterly meetings with Supply Nation and other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, as appropriate.	Review December 2026, 2027	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
13.10 Promote cultural awareness and inclusivity in all procurement activities as underpinned by the Indigenous Procurement Policy.	Review December 2025, 2026, 2027	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs
13.11 Continue to support Supply Nation in delivering seminars across the department that aim to enrich our understanding of Indigenous business and Indigenous Procurement Policy awareness.	Review August 2026, 2027, 2028	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs



Governance

Reflecting the broader scope of our Stretch RAP, which includes a wide range of actions and deliverables, we'll be utilising the Closing the Gap Steering Committee to challenge ourselves and explore new opportunities to strengthen relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Our goal is to help improve outcomes in health, disability and ageing.

The RAP Action Group will focus on embedding these actions into the department's culture and day-to-day operations. By involving more people from across the organisation, we aim to build shared knowledge and extend the reach and impact of our efforts.



Action 14. Establish and maintain RAP Action Group (RAPAG)

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14.1 Maintain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAPAG.	Review March 2026, 2027, 2028	RAP Action Group Chair
14.2 Establish a Terms of Reference for RAPAG.	September 2025	RAP Action Group Chair
14.3 RAPAG to meet at least 4 times a year to monitor and drive the implementation of the department's Stretch RAP.	October 2025 January, March, June, August, October 2026, 2027 January, March, June, August 2028	RAP Action Group Chair

Action 15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
15.1 Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of Senior Executive Service and Executive Level Two staff.	August 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
15.2 Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments and outcomes including developing a RAP SharePoint interactive page to promote reconciliation.	February 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
15.3 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Review March 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
15.4 Maintain RAP updates as a standing agenda item at the Closing the Gap Steering Committee.	September, November 2025 February, April, July, September, November 2026, 2027 February, April, July 2028	Closing the Gap Steering Committee co-chairs

Action 16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
16.1 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.	June 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August 2026, 2027, 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2025, 2026, 2027	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	October 2025 January, April, August, October 2026, 2027 January, April, August 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.5 Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges, and learnings.	April 2026 and 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.6 Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer and circulate results to the department.	April 2026	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
16.7 Undertake a full evaluation of the Stretch RAP, circulate outcomes to Executive Committee, Closing the Gap Steering Committee, and the RAP Action Group.	March 2028	RAP Action Group Chair

Action 17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
17.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Register March 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch
17.2 Submit an evaluation report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Report September 2028	Assistant Secretary – People Branch

Contact details

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