



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
July 2023 - July 2026



Barwon Water



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
STRETCH



Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, and of the water on which we rely. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We value the continuing cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our community and their ongoing connection to the land and water over many thousands of years.

We're committed to strong, meaningful partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to achieve positive and prosperous outcomes for all.

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Wadawurrung Foreword

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was appointed in May 2009 as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The Barwon Water service area encompasses a portion of Wadawurrung Country which is rich in stories, history and aspects that are important for Wadawurrung people while they exist in a diverse cultural landscape.

Caring for this significant region also means that Wadawurrung people are committed to the ongoing protection of culture and Country for future generations by fostering a meaningful partnership with Barwon Water. The partnership ensures that Wadawurrung people are celebrated, our culture is strong, Country is healthy, and our values and goals are embedded into the fundamental principles which are at the core of our partnership with Barwon Water.

In the spirit of reconciliation, this plan is endorsed by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation which celebrates the commitment to a healthy, sustainable, and meaningful future with Barwon Water. This reconciliation action plan means that the voice of the Wadawurrung is amplified not only within one organisation but across multiple as Barwon Water lead and commit to numerous initiatives throughout the region which have a tangible benefit for Wadawurrung Country and Wadawurrung people.

Eastern Maar Foreword

Eastern Maar is a name adopted by the people who identify as Maar, Eastern Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Peek Whurrong, Kirrae Whurrung, Dharrud Whurrong, Gulidjan, Gadabanud, Kuurn Kopan Noot and/or Yarro waetch (Tooram Tribe) amongst others.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party and Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate for a large part of Southwest Victoria on behalf of the Eastern Maar Society, whose land extends as far north as Ararat and encompasses the Warrnambool, Port Fairy, and Great Ocean Road areas.

We know Meerreeng, Parreeyt, Moornong, pa Maar (land, water, sky, and people) to be intrinsically co-dependent upon the other. We relate to parreeyt as we would a family member. Parreeyt is Sacred. And with that sacredness comes an obligation to act as its advocate, its guardian, its community, its family. If our Parreeyt is sick, then so are we.

The Eastern Maar Corporation looks forward to building a genuine relationship with Barwon Water, which will work towards the opportunities that exist for both organisations in regard to improving the management of parreeyt and creating a positive change for Eastern Maar Country and Community.



About the Artwork

Water is one of our most valuable and important resources.

Water sustains, nourishes, cleanses, heals, nurtures and preserves us;

When Country (and water) are well; so are we, it is everyone's business to care for Country.

We must ensure we reflect this back.

The art honours Water Country and the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar communities on whose land Barwon Water maintains water environmental well-being and prosperity.

~ (Bitja) - Dixon Patten (the artist)

WATER CYCLES

The art centres around the seven cycles of water, each cycle is honoured through the varied patterns. Each cycle playing a role in ensuring Mother Earth has the array of water that it does. In the centre of the art, the patterns are placed in a circle; symbolising that the water cycle has no beginning or end and can start at any of the below processes.



SEASONS

It is a universal understanding that seasons bring different weather patterns, seasons influence migration and/or breeding of birds and animals and also encourage plants to bloom or hibernate as a method of survival.

Easter Maar followed six seasons;

Chinnup (season of the cockatoos) from around June to late July.

Gwangel morronn (honeybee season) from around late March to the end of May.

Kooyang (season for eels) from late January to late March.

Larneuk (season for nesting birds) in the pre-spring time around late July and August.

Petyan (wildflower season) from late August to around mid-November.

Ballambar (butterfly season) that runs from mid-November to late January.

PARREEYT MEERREENG (WATER COUNTRY)

Our abundant waterways shaped much of modern 'Victoria' and thus carved out the landscape and influenced plant life and in turn the animals and communities and their direct access to resources, and where we lacked; we formed our trade economy across Nations. Our moieties, totems, songlines, ceremonies, rituals, lore are all shaped by the land, waters and sky.

KARRANG and PAWAN KOOLORR MEERREENG (MOUNTAIN and VOLCANIC COUNTRY)

The Great Dividing Range starts/ends on Eastern Maar Country, it is the fourth longest mountain chain in the world, traversing up to the Torres Strait Islands at the northerly tip of Queensland. The East Coast of Australia has abundance of water due to water systems starting in high country, seeking low country; meandering and splitting to create the many rivers, lakes, creeks, billabongs and underground aquifers. This part of Maar Country holds significant meeting places for our people to gather and have ceremony and trade.

WANGEEYARR BA WANGEET - OUR ELDERS

The two elders double as the mountain ranges; representing them being our pillars, leaders, and lore holders. Our intricate knowledge throughout many millennia is due to the never-ending cycle of cultural protocol, practices and understanding of Country being passed-down through our elders.

NGAYOOK and PONPONPOORAMOOK FEATHERS - OUR MOEITIES

Eastern Maar clans are divided into two moieties, respectively; the Ngayook (sulphur-crested cockatoo or Long-billed corella) and the Ponponpooramook (Red-tailed black cockatoo). Tribal descent was matrilineal.

WRAPPED IN CULTURE - KOORAMOOKYAN POSSUM SKIN CLOAK

Once an everyday item for Aboriginal people in south-eastern Australia, possum skin cloaks were worn for warmth, used as baby carriers, coverings at night, drums in ceremony and for burial.

Today, possum skin cloaks remain important to Aboriginal people across the south-east of Australia with new uses and contemporary ways of making.

Like many areas in Australia, colonisation had a devastating impact on Aboriginal people. Disconnection to culture and language and dislocation of people continues to have lasting trauma effects. Participating in cultural practice has a powerful healing effect.

The fine-lined art are directly influenced by our Traditional Maar Cloaks. The various panels honour Country, specifically Water Country.

HARVESTING, MIGRATION + TRADE - KOOYANG (EEL) + EEL TRAP

Eeling remains an important traditional, social and economic practice among our Eastern Maar people. Our people were master weavers and the eel trap symbolises this important practice; which assisted in harvesting and shaping our trade economy. The eel also travels to New Caledonia and back, symbolising migration as a means for survival and to allow for rejuvenation. Kooyang return to the waters of their parents/grandparents, like blackfellas to Country.

WORKING TOGETHER - RECONCILIATION VISION

Ants work together for the good of the collective. Our decisions affect future generations who inherit our actions and inactions. We are accountable to them as much as we are to our old people and old ways. Ants were also observed as a messenger for rain, their behaviours were indicative of when rain might be on its way.

About the Artist

Bitja (Dixon Patten) is a proud Gonnai, Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa and Yorta Yorta man with blood connection to Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Wadi Wadi, Monaro and Djab Wurrung.

He is an artist, designer, mentor, influencer and a strong community advocate.

Bitja's artistic practice is informed through a strong cultural value that his family and community have imprinted into his mind, heart, and spirit and the narratives often delve deep into familial history, often in celebration but also in search of healing.

Bitja's exploration of culture and connection and his willingness to share and learn are informed by the art of Deep Listening, or in his native Yorta Yorta language 'Gulpa Ngawul'.

This practice has guided many of Dixon's expressions by uncovering the layers, exploring trauma, exploring grief, reclaiming culture, bridging gaps, being accountable, learning to understand and also challenge systems, influencing spaces and learning to celebrate self.


He takes his role as a storyteller seriously and feels humbled to continue this strong aspect of Aboriginal culture.

About Bayila Creative

Bayila Creative is an Aboriginal-owned art and graphic design business; founded in Naarm (Melbourne).

Cultural integrity guides Bayila's approach, it respects and takes the lead from our collective First Nations traditional wisdoms and aim to ensure our community's stories and narratives echo loudly and proudly across the land.

Bayila is the Yorta word for Red Gum. Just like the 'Red Gum', Bayila has its feet firmly planted in the ground.



The Artist, Bitja (Dixon Patten)
of Bayila Creative

A message from Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Barwon Water on its first Stretch RAP.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program provides organisations with a framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement. This framework allows for continuous development, pushing organisations to constantly embed and expand on their commitments, while adapting to obstacles and circumstances as they arise.

As this is Barwon Water's first Stretch RAP, it will spend the next three years trialling and testing new ways of working and embedding reconciliation into its every day.

Guiding this are the learnings it has established in its previous Innovate RAP, where it has already learnt something crucial: to align and integrate its reconciliation commitments with its organisational mission.

Namely, Barwon Water has recognised that its mandate to deliver safe, secure and sustainable water and a healthier environment works best in true partnership with the Traditional Owners of the lands on which it operates – especially as the organisation adapts its operations to address a changing climate.

Thoughtful, considered and even brave initiatives Barwon Water has already implemented during its Innovate RAP support this learning.

Barwon Water has worked with Traditional Owners to embed First Nations land and water management into its business, signing two consecutive partnership agreements with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to work together on a range of projects.

Not only this, but in 2019 Barwon Water finalised the sale of a 54-hectare parcel of land that was no longer needed to its Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, supporting self-determination and First Nations peoples' inherent right to steward Country.

These strong, two-way relationships speak volumes about Barwon Water's commitment to overturning what it acknowledges as the historical exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from land and water management, and of the bright potential of its journey to come. Advancing to a Stretch RAP means challenging itself and expanding on these capabilities – and the learnings it has developed so far will help guide its next steps.

New initiatives such as providing opportunities for Traditional Owner groups to have representatives on its Environmental Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group, as well as delivering a Caring for Country education program for staff, show Barwon Water embedding First Nations peoples' perspectives into its work, and making reconciliation a core part of its business as usual.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Barwon Water on this excellent first Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia's
Chief Executive Officer,
Karen Mundine



Managing Director Statement

On behalf of Barwon Water, I am proud to present our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2023 – 2026. It is the second RAP in our reconciliation journey, following on from our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (May 2018 – May 2022).

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this nation. We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and value the continuing cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our community and their ongoing connection to the land over thousands of years.

We would also like to give a special thanks to Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners for helping guide us to see the land, water and environment around us through the eyes of an Aboriginal person.

Their willingness to share knowledge and stories assists us to understand and support their cultures and histories, in turn helping us to connect with Country. We will continue to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to help us incorporate their knowledge and cultures into our business.

This Stretch RAP outlines the steps we will take to ensure that reconciliation becomes part of everything we do at Barwon Water. It shows we will continue to invest in relationships with Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations and advance reconciliation within our organisation and our sphere of influence in the region and the broader water industry.

For tens of thousands of years, Traditional Owners have successfully cared for land and water with a Caring for Country approach. Respecting land and water is intrinsic to the culture of Traditional Owners and First Nations people and there is so much for us to learn through listening, curiosity and respect. Building and maintaining our relationships with Traditional Owners is critical to the way we work, and helps guide us to see the land, water and environment around us from a Traditional Owners perspective.

Through this Stretch RAP, we plan to embed reconciliation initiatives into our strategies so that reconciliation becomes an essential part of how we do business. Every time we engage with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners, we have the benefit of learning more, and we are reminded how much better our organisation and region will be when we create a future with a common purpose. I am deeply grateful for the generosity Traditional Owners have shown in sharing their deep knowledge.

This RAP is an ambitious plan that draws on that knowledge and commits us to many practical actions that will contribute to reconciliation within our region. It will guide our actions and approach in several significant projects like Porronggitj Karrong and Murrk Ngubitj Yarram Yaluk.

But this RAP isn't about what our local Traditional Owners can do for us, it is what we can do for them and the First Nations people who live and work in our region. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with First Nations staff and communities, gaining greater understanding of the Country we work on and care for.

Across a range of areas outlined through this document, Barwon Water will:

- continue to build our relationship with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners through a variety of practical projects, partnerships and initiatives
- continue to create a culturally safe workplace, which is free of discrimination at all levels and expands the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Barwon Water and in the region generally.

At Barwon Water, we hope to empower our staff to advance reconciliation individually and collectively. Our Stretch RAP will only be successfully delivered with everyone doing their part.

I thank the Traditional Owners, First Nations groups and Barwon Water employees who helped contribute to the development of our Stretch RAP. This work is helping us to lead on reconciliation regionally and taking more meaningful steps towards reconciliation.

Shaun Cumming
Managing Director
Barwon Water





Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is a community that celebrates and protects the ongoing cultural and spiritual connections of First Nations peoples to the land on which we live and work, and on the water on which we rely.

Supporting the delivery of safe, secure and sustainable water and a healthier environment for our communities is core to our purpose, and we work in true partnership with our Traditional Owners to achieve this.

Water is fundamental to life and we continue to learn much from our Traditional Owners who have sustainably managed Country for tens of thousands of years. We're grateful for the flow on benefits from the rich contribution of First Nations peoples and communities in our region.

Truth-telling is recognised in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as an essential element of our commitment to reconciliation. Our vision for reconciliation see all who live on this land acknowledge our shared history and move forward, as one, respectfully. We recognise that historically First Nations peoples have been excluded from water and land management decision-making and practices, and we acknowledge these wrongs have left an enduring impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through a whole-of-organisation commitment to First Nations inclusion and engagement, we will support our RAP Working Group and our RAP Champions to ensure our vision and actions continue to be made a priority.

Through this work we will continue to develop meaningful partnerships to maintain and protect living culture and heritage, Knowledge and connection, and deliver economic outcomes for First Nations peoples all while incorporating a Caring for Country approach into everything we do.

Overview

Barwon Water is Victoria's largest regional urban water corporation, providing excellence in water, sewer and recycled water services to more than 300,000 residents across 8,100 square kilometres.

Our region of responsibility stretches over 8,100 square kilometres, from Little River and the Bellarine Peninsula in the east, to Colac in the west, and from Meredith and Cressy in the north, to Apollo Bay on Victoria's south-west coast. It takes in the traditional lands of the Wadawurung and Eastern Maar.

The Barwon region's drinking water is predominantly sourced from forested catchments on the upper Barwon and Moorabool rivers. During periods of drought, additional water can be sourced from the Victorian water grid via Melbourne and an underground aquifer in Anglesea.

We are a statutory corporation and our activities are overseen by an independent Board of Directors, appointed by the State Government of Victoria. With a turnover of \$250 million and \$2.6 billion in assets, we spend approximately \$100 million annually in capital and related infrastructure works. Our operations have a significant impact on the region's economy and liveability.

Building on our core business success, we have now entered a new phase. Recognising the challenges of climate change, population growth, rapid technology advancement and economic transition, we are shifting our mindset from water utility to being a leader of the region's prosperity.

As a major employer in the region we have more than 400 highly skilled employees from a diverse range of disciplines, including operations, engineering, strategic planning, finance and administration of which we have 8 employees who identify as First Nations people.

According to data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2022, the Barwon Water service area is home to 4,110 First Nations people.





Sphere of Influence

The Environmental Management and Aboriginal Values Team, which includes an identified Aboriginal Partnerships Advisor, First Nations Project Advisor, First Nations Cadet and Summer Intern met to discuss the broad scope of Barwon Water and Barwon Asset Solutions. We discussed the diversity of organisations, businesses and individuals that we engage with and more importantly, we discussed who we have the capacity to influence externally.

Barwon Water is a large organisation in regional Victoria that has the capacity to influence many different and unique stakeholders, examples of which include;

- Traditional Owners
- Customers (Residential and Commercial)
- Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Neighbouring Water Authorities
- Essential Services Commission
- Contractors
- Special Interest Groups
- Neighbouring Land Managers
- Local councils
- Regulatory authorities
- The broader community

We must recognise that Barwon Water has a large sphere of influence and it is our responsibility to lead by example and influence the organisations we work with and alongside day-to-day. As we work towards the actions we have within this RAP, we can share our journey, share our revisions and tell our story of what is working and what we could be doing better.

Arranyinha

Marsha Uppill, Director and Co-Founder of Arranyinha Pty Ltd, an Aboriginal-owned and operated business in Geelong, was engaged by Barwon Water to drive the development of our RAP. Marsha is a proud Adnyamathanha Woman living on Wadawurrung Country. Her ethos is cultural respect at the core which creates a foundation built on self-determination, collaboration and communication.

Marsha has been assisting Barwon Water on our RAP journey to “educate, inspire and empower”.

Marsha believes that “like all cultural journeys, reconciliation has its specific set of outcomes, expectations and desired learning, however, the most powerful change is that of the heart... the heart of an individual; the heart of the organisation; the heart of the community.”

We are grateful for the cultural insights and experience that Arranyinha has brought to enrich and deepen Barwon Water’s ability to strive to achieve reconciliation through this RAP. Throughout the RAP development, Arranyinha:

- helped ensure Traditional Owners could lead the way with their Cultural Authority, and that their contributions were heard and understood;
- helped ensure Barwon Water staff had the opportunity to participate, and contribute ideas and opportunities important to reconciliation;
- helped create a Reconciliation Action Plan that was co-designed and clear in its commitments to outcomes that lead to true reconciliation.



An illustration on the left side of the page features a winding river with a blue and white Aboriginal-style pattern. The background is a light blue with various circular and geometric patterns. Five black ants with white stripes on their abdomens are scattered across the scene, some near the river and others in the background.

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Our Reconciliation Action Plan working group during the development of this Stretch RAP included 16 Barwon Water people from the board, executive and senior leadership teams, and other staff from departments across the organisation. Nine members (close to 50 per cent) of the working group identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

The group was co-chaired by one Aboriginal staff member, Hayley Jones, and one Non-Indigenous staff member, David McKinnis, as a way of modelling reconciliation in the organisation.

Members met many times during the development of the RAP and committed to meeting at least four times per year into the future.

The RAP working group (RWG) reviewed and provided input into the development of the RAP and will monitor and review the implementation and progress of the RAP through ongoing collaboration, communication and positive relationships built during the RAP development process.

The group will also provide guidance and direction to Barwon Water on key decisions relating to the implementation of the RAP; and act as a RAP advocate and conduit of information to the rest of the organisation.

We have two RAP Champions, from Barwon Water and Barwon Asset Solutions. This will enable us to have leaders that represent the whole organisation. Our RAP Champions are senior management who value leadership, allyship and making impactful change. They will help the RWG and the Aboriginal Values Team to raise the profile of reconciliation as an organisational priority internally and externally. They will lead by example by actioning the commitments in the RAP.

The key objectives for the RAP Champions will be to workshop ideas alongside the RWG Co-Chairs and the Aboriginal Values Team and help raise the profile of reconciliation by assisting with progress of RAP actions. Our RAP Champions will model reconciliation in leading by example and help to embed reconciliation across all aspects of our organisation.

RAP Working Group Members

The composition of our RAP Working Group at Barwon Water and Barwon Asset Solutions is diverse, encompassing Board members, Executive and senior Leadership representatives, as well as First Nations staff across various departments and roles. We take pride in the fact that more than 51% of our workforce engaged in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) are First Nations employees.

Elaine Carbines	Board
John Gavens	Board
Seamus Butcher	General Manager Planning, Delivery & Environment
Brendan Windemeyer	General Manager Barwon Asset Solutions
Nicole Sexton	Manager Sustainability and Healthy Country
David McKinnis	Coordinator Environmental Management and Aboriginal Values
Will Buchanan	Manager Assets, Systems and Environments
Hayley Jones	Barwon Asset Solutions and RAP Working Group Co-Chair
Kiri Tawhai	Aboriginal Partnerships Advisor and RAP Working Group Co-Chair
Allison Toby	First Nations Project Advisor
Brody Nicholls	Technology Operations Support
Ruby Foley	Environmental Management and Aboriginal Values Student Intern
Aidan Davey	Treatment Operator Apollo Bay
Kirk Atkinson	Colac - Operator
Jackson Pavlovsky	Junior Analyst Programmer

The following employees have been a part of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan throughout development.

Kate Milburn	Senior Environmental Advisor
Michael De-la Warr	Trainee

Lead RAP Champions

To help us implement the RAP actions throughout our organisation we have a nominated RAP Champion within each department across Barwon Water and Barwon Asset Solutions. The RAP Champions will report to the Lead RAP Champions below.

Sue Noonan	Manager Communications and Engagement Barwon Water
Luke Vague	Project Delivery Manager Barwon Asset Solutions



OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Land back in Aboriginal hands

During 2019, we finalised the sale of a 54-hectare parcel of land near Ballan to Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. The landholding, which was no longer required for operational purposes, is in the heart of Wadawurrung Country at Bostock Reservoir, approximately 30 kilometres east of Ballarat.

Bound partly by the east arm of the Moorabool River, the landholding includes a large area of native woodland and a house previously used as the caretaker's residence.

The sale was celebrated at a special event at the reservoir, where Wadawurrung Women led a celebration with a moving Welcome to Country and Traditional smoking ceremony. Heartfelt words were shared about the importance of the site to Wadawurrung people.

It was a significant day in Barwon Water's history, and a proud moment for many Barwon Water employees.



Wadawurrung Traditional Owners performed a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country at the sale of land adjacent to Bostock Reservoir.

Awards for Barwon Water Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy

Our Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy gained state-wide and national recognition in 2022, when it won the Australian Water Association's Victorian and then National Organisational Excellence Award.

Our nomination for the Organisational Excellence Award explained how our Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy, a key commitment under our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, is structured around five key areas including: Recruitment, Induction, Inclusive Workplace Practices, Retention and Development.

At the heart of the strategy is understanding and embedding First Nations Cultural Values and the holistic wellbeing of First Nations Peoples. It provides the foundations for creating and delivering culturally appropriate, respectful and meaningful outcomes for First Nations employees.

We aim to attract increasing numbers of First Nations employees into career pathways that are diverse and inclusive, provide culturally appropriate support, and empower First Nations staff to progress and succeed professionally.

This strategy holds Barwon Water accountable for developing meaningful connections and employment opportunities with First Nations peoples in our region, to enable their knowledge, understanding and water values, to form an integral part of our water management and planning programs.

Two successful initiatives coming from this strategy include the 12-month traineeship program, developed in partnership with Wan-Yaari Aboriginal Consultancy Services and Gforce Employment Solutions, as well as an in-depth Connection to Country program for all employees, which includes cultural heritage education and visits to culturally-significant sites in the region.



Barwon Water Deputy Chair Elaine Carbines, Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens, Barwon Asset Solutions' Hayley Jones and former Barwon Water Managing Director Tracey Slatter with the state and national AWA awards Barwon Water won for its Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy.

Staff profile: Hayley Jones – first person account

I'm a Tasmanian Aboriginal from the Toogee people from the south west of the state.

At 40, after having kids, I decided to go back to work, which led to me applying for a Barwon Water traineeship through Gforce. I started with the Networks team and also completed my Certificate 3 in water operations at the same time.

I love Barwon Water. They've been really good to me throughout my traineeship and offered me lots of different opportunities.

When I finished my traineeship they didn't want to lose me and now I'm working with the Land Management team.

I love my bosses. Across all the teams I've worked in, I've enjoyed a welcoming, culturally safe environment.

They always make time for my work with Barwon Water's Stretch RAP working group, which has been a really positive experience.

As an Indigenous woman who was part of the Barwon Water workforce, the whole group made me feel welcome and appreciated my input. Working with Barwon Water has also given rise to the opportunity to work on the Geelong Aboriginal Employment Taskforce, working with local government and other organisations to increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to join the workforce.

Equality and inclusivity is a really hot topic at the moment, and Barwon Water is at the forefront of addressing those issues. I've been part of anything and everything, and the organisation has been very understanding while I've found my feet.

They've always made time for me to take time to do what I need to do both as a mother with a little boy at home and an Indigenous woman trying to make the most of the opportunities working with Barwon Water has given rise to.



Hayley Jones.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation agreement

Former Barwon Water Managing Director Tracey Slatter met with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) Chief Executive Officer Marcus Clarke in June 2021 to sign a new project agreement.

The signing took place at West Barwon Reservoir and the agreement will help the EMAC fund a review of their Country plan known as Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorreet.

Tracey and Marcus also inspected the dam wall before travelling to Forrest to examine artefacts found during a Barwon Water project on the East Barwon River.

During the meeting, Barwon Water and EMAC committed to continuing to work together on a number of projects and investigate future opportunities at West Barwon.

We continue to build our relationship with Eastern Maar and learn how to work collaboratively in caring for Country.



Former Barwon Water Managing Director Tracey Slatter with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation's Marcus Clarke at West Barwon.

Working with Traditional Owners to Care for Country

During the development of our first ever RAP, in partnership with Traditional Owners we explored how the principles of Caring for Country could be applied in the work we do at Barwon Water.

The 'Working with Traditional Owners to Care for Country' project is building our understanding of Caring for Country practices and exploring ways to integrate them into our business.

For millennia Traditional Owners have successfully Cared for and benefited from water sources, with a Caring for Country approach. Respecting land and water is intrinsic to their cultures, and they have significant knowledge, principles and practices we can learn from. This project is embedding Traditional Owner approaches to land and water management into our business, so we can protect the natural assets upon which we all depend.

The project scope allowed a flexible and adaptive approach to give our executive, staff and the Environmental Advisory and Customer Advisory committees the opportunity to spend some time on Country with Traditional Owners to learn first-hand about Caring for Country. On one such site visit, Barwon Water staff spent a day on Country with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corrina Eccles and Melinda Kennedy as part of the Caring for Country project.

Staff visited the Moorabool River reserve in Batesford, where they learnt about traditional land and water management practices, connection to land and water, and the significance of the Moorabool River to Wadawurrung people.

It was a great opportunity to explore the Moorabool River and learn more about an integral asset to Barwon Water and the broader community.

Themes collated from the site visits fell naturally into two categories: Connect to Country and Care for Country. We must have a connection to Country to be able to truly Care for Country, and in Caring for Country we continually build and maintain our connection to Country.

All the learnings from the project to date have been collated and are now being incorporated into our business through both strategic and operational works.

We will continue to work with Traditional Owners to learn and understand how we can better connect and Care for Country and incorporate these learning into our business.



Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation Partnership Agreement

We're strongly committed to facilitating increased Aboriginal participation in water management and learning from Traditional Owners in our region. In a big step forward for our RAP, in January 2019 Barwon Water signed a new partnership agreement with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, which was followed by a new agreement in 2022.

The original agreement set out our commitment to work together on key projects and further supported our commitment to creating many meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a provider of essential services. We work with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners on a range of projects, including the provision of advice on revegetation and rehabilitation, incorporation of Wadawurrung language and history into our business, Cultural Heritage training and the development of a "Caring for Country" approach to water resource management.

Before signing the first agreement, former Managing Director Tracey Slatter spent a day on Country with a visit to the area known as Porronggitj Karrong (Brolga Place). She was joined by former Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Paul Davis and Traditional Owners, Corrina Eccles and Melinda Kennedy. The signing was followed by a special gift exchange of the Cherry Ballart used in the Smoking Ceremony during the official opening of Ryrle HQ.

The Cherry Ballart has been framed along with a photo of Uncle Bryon Powell and special words spoken on the day. Wadawurrung are the Traditional Owners and Custodians for a large portion of the land on which Barwon Water operates. The corporation is a Registered Aboriginal Party, meaning they are responsible for the management of Cultural Heritage activities on their Country.

As the first Partnership Agreement was coming to an end, we held meetings with Wadawurrung to discuss what worked well in the first agreement and what we could improve in the next.

The second Partnership Agreement was signed in 2022.

The agreement again identifies a range of different projects across both organisations, in alignment with Barwon Water's Reconciliation Action Plan, that we will work together on as we continue to build a true partnership based on trust and genuine engagement. We will continue to strive to recognise and incorporate Traditional Owner values into our core business and strategic projects.



Former Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation Chief Executive Officer Paul Davis with former Barwon Water Managing Director Tracey Slatter.

Porronggitj Karrong

Our property realisation program, through which disused assets are put to a variety of uses to realise economic, environmental and social benefit, has presented a number of exciting opportunities to work with Traditional Owners, none more so than in the 66 hectares of land that surrounds a heritage-listed aqueduct in Breakwater.

The project will create a new cultural, recreational and community precinct in partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

The precinct, called Porronggitj Karrong (place of the Brolga), will acknowledge Wadawurrung culture and heritage alongside the European heritage values of the heritage-listed aqueduct structure at the site.

As part of exploring opportunities for opening the surrounding land to the community, we have been working together with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to identify their cultural values of the river and area.

In partnership with Wadawurrung, we are gathering information about the landscape and water, and engaging other interested stakeholders to develop a plan for the area.

Our aspirations are high. We see possibilities for Porronggitj Karrong to be a drawcard for the region and a source of pride in the community. We see the project being a major contributor to the economic, cultural, social and recreational prosperity of our region.

Porronggitj Karrong is a key action in Barwon Water's Reconciliation Action Plans.

Through the partnership with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, it is an opportunity to rediscover, trial and introduce traditional land and water management practices to restore the environment.



Salt Torquay

Rehabilitation of the open-air 5.4-hectare Torquay water basin, which sits within an urban environment on a ridge above Spring Creek, was identified for rehabilitation, redevelopment and realisation when it was no longer needed for operations.

In 2017, Barwon Water began engaging with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners on design elements for the Salt Torquay residential estate.

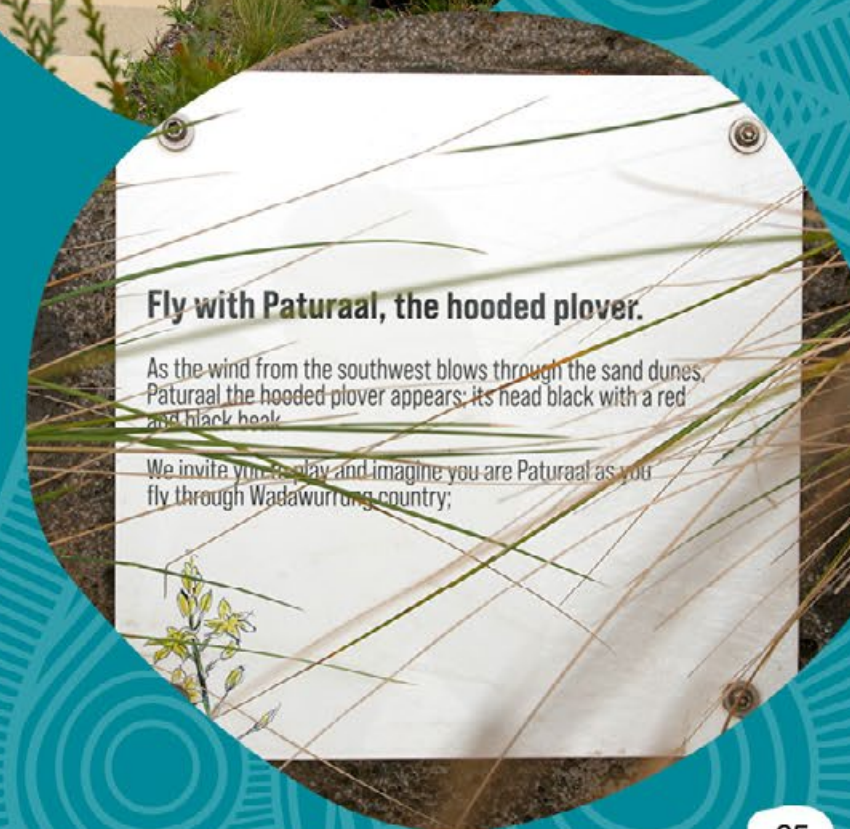
The design elements developed by and with the Traditional Owners have helped underpin a sense of place for the new residents and connects the site to Wadawurrung Country on which it sits.

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners endorsed the One Planet Living design framework used for the estate, which aligns with Caring for Country principles.

Streets are named after local plants in Wadawurrung language, which are also referenced and their traditional uses described in the streetscape landscaping. Sculptural artwork references the local vegetation such as Coastal Beard Heath and reflect the coastal winds. A public sitting area (Berring Tak Bannalwa) was created to overlook Spring Creek with wayfinding signage noting that the location was like a weather station where Wadawurrung ancestors could monitor the changing weather coming from the southwest.

It was also a good vantage point for Wadawurrung ancestors to spot kangaroo and fires of nearby clans – and then return to the food and fresh water available at Spring Creek and Deep Creek on the north of the ridge. Raingardens at Salt Torquay protect the water quality in these receiving waters.

A further message of preservation is included in a Hooded Plover-themed play space incorporated into the main raingarden. Hooded Plovers (Paturaal ngarrp kunang Kulnmatj), nest on the area's beaches and are now a threatened species. As Melinda Kennedy notes, "We should respect and preserve all bird and animal species, which are totems of our ancestors."



Murrk Ngubitj Yarram Yaluk

As with Salt in Torquay, the Bellarine Basin, located on the corner of Grubb and Swan Bay Roads, Wallington, is no longer being used for operational purposes.

This has presented an exciting opportunity to work with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, the local community and key stakeholders to reimagine this space, which is now called Murrk Ngubitj Yarram Yaluk, meaning "headwaters of continuously flowing river".

The basin itself was constructed over a portion of Yarram Creek, disconnecting the waterway, which is on a site of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

We are transforming the disused basin site into an area that enhances the unique and natural features of the Bellarine Peninsula, so that it becomes a place people, birds and native animals can enjoy for generations to come.

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners are playing a key role in the advisory committee of this project, overseeing and contributing to the overall design.

Barwon Water hopes to incorporate Wadawurrung cultural values and storytelling into the space, and establish Traditional Owner management roles in the long-term.

This project aligns with Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan values through converting government land into recreational space and, "land and waterway restoration" and management.

This allows for Barwon Water and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to achieve goals in a collaborative space, strengthening and enhancing relationships into the future.

With co-funding from the Victorian Government to support their Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Program, the scope of this project involves removing the redundant basin, reconnecting Yarram Creek flows, and rehabilitating and revegetating the landscape.



Deakin Water Fountains Provide Cultural Education

In partnership with Deakin University, we identified an opportunity to collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners on an educational piece to incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge, culture and living history around Deakin University's Waurrn Ponds campus.

This led to a joint-project that saw Deakin University install 23 new drinking water/bottle refill stations and rebrand 12 existing units in partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and Barwon Water.

As well as providing free drinking water to students, the water fountains act as cultural educational pieces that through First Nations artwork and inscriptions facilitate storytelling and Traditional Owner culture/history.

Discussions began between Deakin and Barwon Water in late 2019 to install new drinking water infrastructure around the campus for sustainability reasons. Barwon Water identified a further opportunity to collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners on an educational piece to incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge, culture and living history around the campus.

Throughout 2020, Barwon Water collaborated with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to develop content/Inscriptions and artwork to be displayed on the fountains, which has been laid out by an Aboriginal-owned graphic design company.

The water fountains contain Aboriginal artwork created by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners who aim to educate people about their culture and love for land through contemporary art. The educational inscriptions were developed by the area's Traditional Owners, Wadawurrung.

Wadawurrung and the project team developed six themes/topics:

- Journey across Country
- Marngrook/sport
- Reflection/scar trees
- Bundjil and sun/Caring for Country
- Truth-telling/language groups
- Handprints/waterways

Deakin installed the fountains in early 2021 and launched them later that year.



Wadawurrung artist Billy-Jay O'Toole with one of the fountains.

OUR ACTIONS

Focus area: We will not only look at our own goals and challenges but also the connections of these with the goals and challenges outlined within Traditional Owner Healthy Country Plans and other First Nations organisations' strategic objectives. Where there is alignment we will partner, if appropriate, to identify, plan and deliver high-value social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes.



RELATIONSHIPS

Barwon Water Acknowledges that the land and water of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar People was never ceded. Their knowledge and values helped Care for this Country for tens of thousands of years. We Acknowledge and accept the atrocities that have been committed against Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples across the region and Country. We are committed to strong relationships with Traditional Owners (Registered Aboriginal Parties) and First Nations organisations, businesses and networks within our region and appreciate their willingness to engage.

Through the development of honest, trusting two way relationships with Traditional Owners and First Nations groups we will create:

- An organisation that has a culturally safe workplace, which is free of discrimination at all levels.
- Partnerships that provide benefit for both parties including financial opportunities, high priority projects or actions, emerging issues.
- Celebrations, learning opportunities, sharing of diverse knowledge and other events with partner organisations and other stakeholders within our sphere of influence.
- Opportunities to involve/partner with other stakeholders within our sphere of influence in mutually beneficial projects that promote reconciliation.

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders, partners and organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with local First Nations stakeholders, partners and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement. • Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with First Nations stakeholders and partners. • Establish and/or maintain formal two-way partnerships with First Nations communities, organisations. Including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation; • Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation; • Seek additional opportunities to collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. 	<p>Monthly, Review - May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>Monthly, Review - May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>December 2024</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
<p>2. Build relationships through recognising National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff. • RAP Working Group members to participate in two external NRW events per year. • Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in two events to recognise NRW, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One internal event • One external event • Organise two NRW events, including at least one organisation-wide NRW event, each year. • Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website. • Support First Nations business with purchase of catering for events during National Reconciliation Week. 	<p>May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>27 May – 3 June 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025, 2026</p>	<p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategies and ensure all staff understand the RAP actions and are committed to driving reconciliation outcomes. • Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. • Implement strategies to positively engage our external stakeholders within our sphere of influence to drive reconciliation outcomes. • Collaborate with 3 other like-minded organisations (with their own RAP) to advance reconciliation, including City of Greater Geelong, Central Highlands Water and Geelong Cats. • Through National Reconciliation Week and other key dates we will provide opportunities for all staff to be involved in reconciliation activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uluru Statement of the Heart yarning circle • Hosting a screening and post screening discussion of a relevant First Nations documentary/movie; • Internal promotion of local events such as Reconciliation in the Park. • Engage staff and stakeholders around Close the Gap Day, National Sorry Day, Harmony Day (United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination). • Launch digital building projections celebrating local First Nations artwork and communities. • Engage with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners in advance for advice and leadership on events. • Continue to be a key partner in the Djilang Program with the Geelong Cats, Barwon Health and local First Nations community, through the provision of sponsorship and personnel involvement in the program and representation at community events. • Lead by example by inviting Traditional Owners and First Nations people to be part of committees, groups and meetings to showcase First Nations perspectives across the whole organisation, not just specific First Nations groups and committees. • Publicly announce our commitment to the national agenda, i.e. Closing the Gap, Uluru Statement of the Heart, Truth-telling and Treaty Processes. 	<p>September 2023</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>Review – May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>March, May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>May 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>Feb, Aug 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>July 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>June 2024, 2025, 2026</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>All department managers</p> <p>General Manager – Planning, Delivery and Environment</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Executive Leadership Team to advocate and influence the water industry and regional organisations, community and customers on advancing reconciliation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepting reconciliation-related speaking events. adding reconciliation to meeting agendas with water bodies to discuss Support staff to gain knowledge and understanding of First Nations stories and experiences of the historical and ongoing impact of colonisation by attending Truth-telling events such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yoorook Justice Commission Yarning Circles (First Nation staff only) The Voice to Parliament online training course External webinar events and training 	<p>June 2025</p> <p>April 2024, 2025</p>	<p>General Manager – Planning, Delivery and Environment</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
<p>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination. Engage with First Nations staff and/or First Nations advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy. Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism. Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism. Engage with our First Nations staff to empower their voices in improving culturally safe spaces. 	<p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>March 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>September 2023, 2024, 2026</p>	<p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability Healthy Country</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>5. Collaborate with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to strengthen Traditional Owner management/co-management of waterways on Country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Wannon Water and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water to fund a Water Officer position within Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation that will work across the three water authorities to create efficiencies and further enhance relationships. • Under Eastern Maar guidance, identify opportunities for collaboration and support which provide positive tangible outcomes for Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. 	<p>April 2024</p> <p>December 2023</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
<p>6. Ensure Traditional Owner Representation on Barwon Water’s Community advisory groups – EAC and CAC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity for both Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to have a representative on both the Environmental Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee. • Provide Cultural Safety and Awareness Training to all advisory committees. 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>



RESPECT

For Barwon Water to succeed in our core business of providing water services, we must understand and respect First Nations peoples and their cultures. Waterways are the lifeblood of our land and First Nations peoples have been managing the waterways we all have relied upon for thousands of years. By respecting and understanding the cultures and histories of First Nations peoples within our region, we can understand the perspectives of First Nations peoples and learn to Care for Country for generations to come.

Focus area: Traditional Owners water values and water resource uses are included in all water planning and management

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. • Consult local Traditional Owners and First Nations advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy for our staff that includes training on racism, unconscious bias, privilege and cultural safety and opportunity to hear First Nations stories. • Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff and embed into inductions. • Commit all RAP Working Group members, HR managers, senior executive group and all new staff to undertake formal and structured ongoing cultural learning. • 100 per cent of staff to have completed both in person Cultural Awareness training delivered by Traditional Owner Groups, and our online E-learn on Cultural Awareness. 	<p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>June 2025</p>	<p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p>
<p>8. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staffs understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. • Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. • Invite Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at two significant events each year, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership projects and key milestone events • Collaborations • Key staff events, e.g. all staff , Christmas gatherings, regional agency/organisation/committee events, water industry events • Annual Board Dinner • Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. 	<p>September 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>December 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>Monthly Review September 2023, 2024, 2025</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Health Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Health Country</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the direction of Traditional Owners, develop a working understanding of “tangible” and “intangible” cultural heritage to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist staff to increase their awareness of Traditional Owner Values 2. Create new opportunities for projects and operational activities to advance reconciliation and embed Traditional Owner values in our business operations • Staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events. • Display Acknowledgment of Country plaques in our office/s or on our buildings. • Display cultural inferences in gathering spaces at all sites (e.g. Country maps in tea rooms, flags, Acknowledgement of Country the site is on.) 	<p>December 2023</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>Monthly Review March 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>September 2024, 2025</p>	<p>Barwon Asset Solutions – General Manager</p> <p>Operations and Delivery Managers</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Operations Manager Operations Manager</p>
<p>9. Engage with First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Working Group to participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event. • Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. • Support all staff to participate in two NAIDOC Week events in our local area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one site visit to a key project/site on each Traditional Owner Country to learn site specific Cultural Knowledge – Traditional Language of plants and animals or learn Songlines from that area. • host a range of internal staff activities that are accessible to staff across all of our service region • seek out First Nations community events for allies to attend. • In consultation with First Nations stakeholders, support/host/ collaborate on two external NAIDOC Week events each year ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events are communicated through external media • a culturally safe and inclusive venue for regional showcase events is provided. • Identify opportunities to collaborate with local agencies and businesses to deliver an event for National Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC Week. 	<p>First week in July, 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>First week in July, 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>First week in July, 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>July 2023, 2024, 2025</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Health Country</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p>



OPPORTUNITIES

Through the development and implementation of opportunities for Traditional Owner groups and First Nations peoples, both Barwon Water and the community will benefit. These benefits include the strengthening of partnerships, better environmental and social outcomes and building capacity within Barwon Water to facilitate increased Traditional Owner participation in water resource management. Through the implementation of the opportunities outlined in the section below we will continue on our journey to facilitate greater outcomes for Community and Country.

Focus area: Strategic direction and opportunities will be guided by a range of internal and external documentation. Sustainable Water Strategies, Aboriginal Water Policy (Water is Life), and Traditional Owner Healthy Country Plans will all help in providing direction on the objectives we will strive to achieve.

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase First Nations employment each year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2023 – 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barwon Water to 3.5% • Barwon Asset Solutions 6.5% • Between 2024 – 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barwon Water to 4% • Barwon Asset Solutions 7% • Between 2025 – 2206 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barwon Water to 4.5% • Barwon Asset Solutions 7.5% • Percentage target for 2025 will be developed as part of the update of the recruitment retention and professional development strategy. • Engage with First Nations staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. • In consultation with Traditional Owner Groups and First Nations advisors, review and update our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing employment opportunities for traineeships/ apprenticeships within Barwon Water; • Develop a career enhancement program to support and assist in the transition to senior leadership roles for First Nations staff; • Develop a culturally appropriate coaching and mentoring program; • Provide external cultural supervision. • Explore the creation of scholarship and cadetship opportunities for First Nations students studying relevant courses for employment within Barwon Water; • Explore models of workforce planning that seeks to identify positions for Traditional Owners to work on their lands. • Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders. • Develop strong relationships with tertiary, community networks and educational training providers across the region to create stronger work pathways for First Nations people into Barwon Water. • Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Nations People’s participation in our workplace. 	<p>June 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>Review March, June, September, December 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>March 2025</p> <p>December 2023</p>	<p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – People</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>11. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a First Nations procurement strategy. • Investigate Supply Nation membership and Kinaway as the Victorian Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. • Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses to staff. • Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses. • Maintain commercial relationships with First Nations owned businesses, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arranyinha Pty Ltd 2. Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation 3. Little Rocket 4. National Indigenous Times Pty Ltd 5. Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation 6. Wan-Yaari Aboriginal Consultancy Services 7. Seeker Global • Continue to seek opportunities to develop relationships with new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. • Annual procurement spend target from First Nations businesses is \$190,000. • Train all relevant staff in contracting First Nations businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation. 	<p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>July 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p>	<p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p> <p>Manager - Governance</p>

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>12. Strengthen the health of our waterways by Caring for Country alongside Traditional Owners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the guidance and advice from both Traditional Owner groups, develop a Cultural Impact Assessment/s to be used in line with all other assessments when developing business cases for Barwon Water projects. 	December 2023	Manager – Asset Planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop practical opportunities for the application and management of cultural water through the implementation of the actions outlined within the Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy, and Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap. <p>https://www.water.vic.gov.au/planning/long-term-assessments-and-strategies/central-gipps-sws</p> <p>https://www.water.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/599504/WiL-Fact-Sheet-Traditional-Owners.pdf</p>	September 2025	Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and deliver an education program on the Caring for Country principles (developed previously with Traditional Owner Groups) to Barwon Water staff. 	June 2025	Manager – People
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities to empower Barwon Water staff with knowledge, awareness and connection to be active participants in respect to Healthy Country Plans developed by both Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners. Ensure that the work we undertake aligns with the objectives and actions within Traditional Owner Healthy Country Plan/Nation Building Plan. 	December 2023	Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the Caring for Country principles within the organisation. This will include (but not limited to): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a review of past practices and historical activities land management practices operational activities project planning and delivery potential remediation activities. Explore opportunities to work with or engage Traditional Owner NRM/Land Management/Consultancy teams at Barwon Water sites including Bostock Reservoir, Black Rock WRP, Bellarine Basin, Porronggtj Karrong and West Barwon Reservoir. 	September 2025	Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country BAS – General Manager Manager – Operations Manager – EPD Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country
		December 2024	Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country

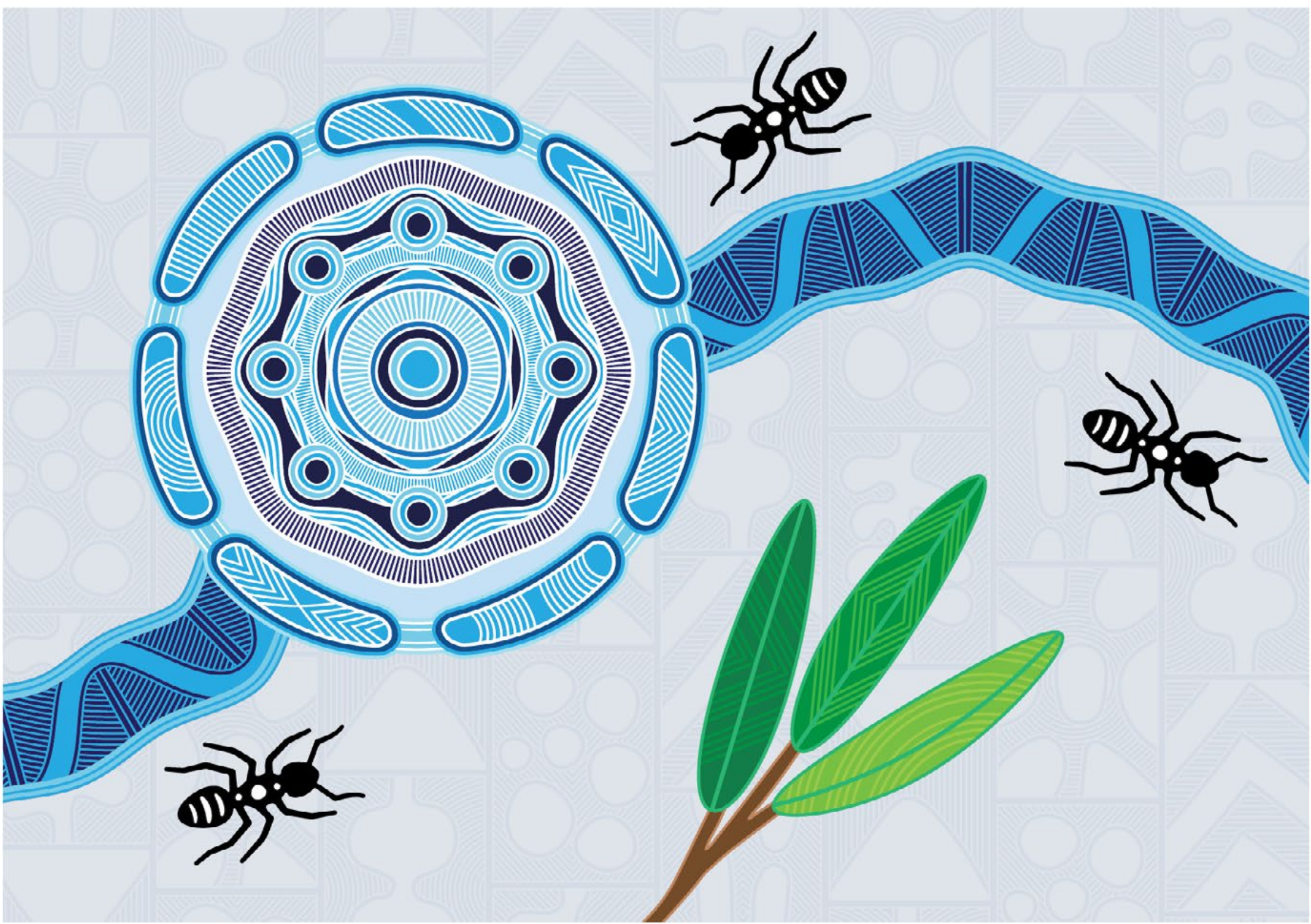


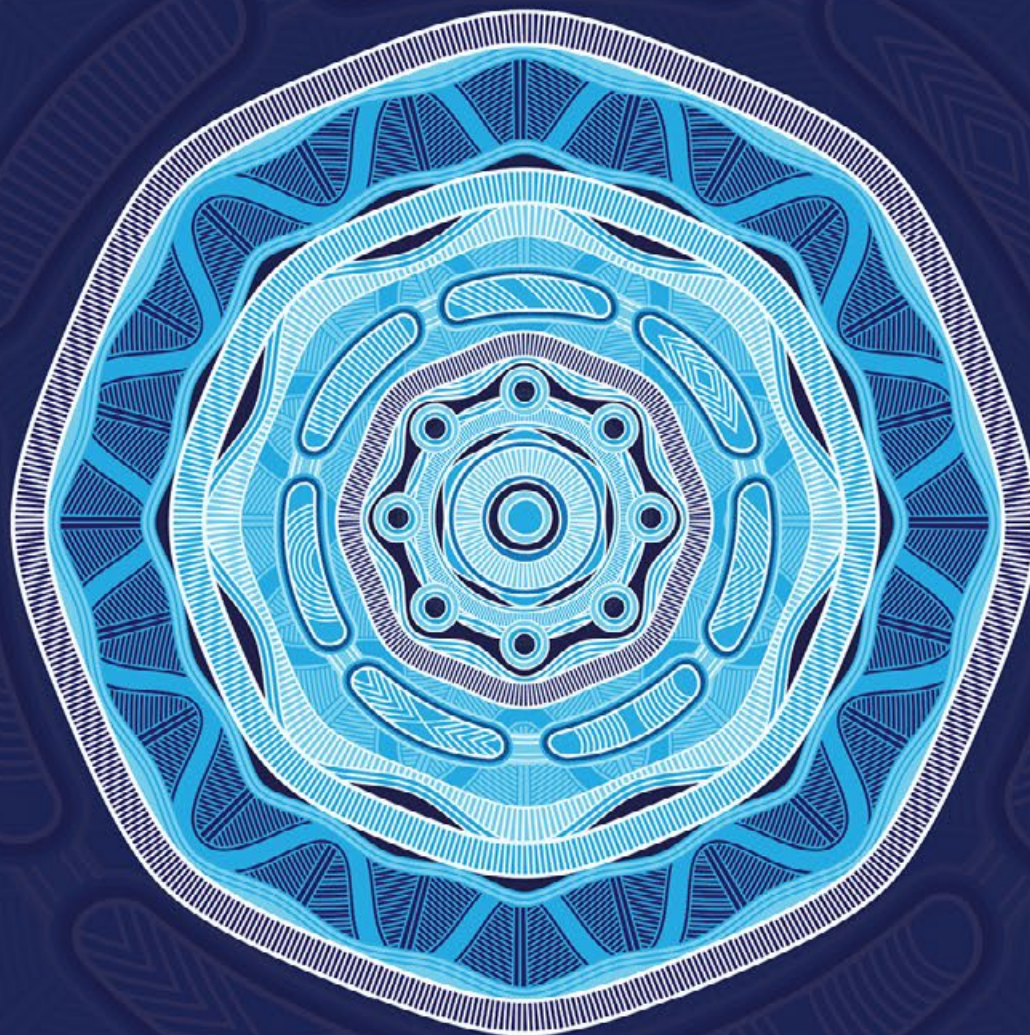
GOVERNANCE

Barwon Water is committed to creating opportunities within decision making structures to ensure the voice, truth and perspective of Traditional Owners is heard, acknowledged and actioned in respect to water on their traditional lands, being their cultural authority.

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain First Nations representation on the RWG. Apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG. Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation. 	<p>Dec 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>Feb 2024</p> <p>Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec annually</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed resource needs for RAP implementation. Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff. Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management. Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings. 	<p>June 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>Aug 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>Mar 2024, 2025, 2026</p> <p>Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec annually</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – People</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings. Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence. Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. Provide a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia to help inform the development of our next RAP. 	<p>Sep 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec</p> <p>Dec 2023, 2024, 2025</p> <p>Apr 2024</p> <p>June annually</p> <p>1 Aug annually</p> <p>Sept 2025</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p> <p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>
16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP. 	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>Manager – Sustainability and Healthy Country</p>







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