



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2021 to April 2024



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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.



About the Reconciliation Action Plan artwork

It is important that our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) represents both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The artwork includes Aboriginal dot painting and the Torres Strait Islands Dhari, the ceremonial headdress and motif on the Torres Strait Islander flag. The painting sends respects from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of Far North Queensland to farmers experiencing drought. The message is be strong and don't give up—there is hope.

About the artist

Douglas Tamwoy was born in Bamaga, Queensland. He is a proud Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal man. Douglas's grandfather is from Badu Island and his grandmother is from Darnley Island, Thumpul Clan. Douglas's artworks are inspired from his homeland of pristine waters and sunsets in Cape York, Far North Queensland.



Secretary's foreword



It is with great pleasure that I release our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021 to 2024.

This RAP will help us deliver on our vision for reconciliation through a practical plan of action. It identifies how we will support, maintain and build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

Our new RAP is ambitious, but achievable. It articulates our shared determination to advance reconciliation in our workplace and community.

We are a large, diverse department and much of what we do is about caring for country—from working with Traditional Owners in our jointly managed National Parks, to protecting against biosecurity risk, exploring more sustainable agricultural practices, supporting the productive use of water resources, advancing our environmental interests in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean or using a blend of traditional (Western) and cultural land and sea practices. to protect and conserve the unique biodiversity and cultural heritage of Australia.

We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities, which will provide us with a greater understanding of our country and allow us to develop policies and programs that align with government priority reforms.

This new clarity around Indigenous policy objectives is an opportunity for us to demonstrate the benefit we can provide as a significant remote area employer, community capacity development agent and provider of economic opportunity.

Following more than a year of consultations, the RAP highlights key action areas of focus:

- developing a greater understanding, connection and respect to strengthen our relationships
- creating and fostering a work culture that attracts, retains and identifies opportunities to a pathway of progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both internally and externally.

Advancing reconciliation is everyone's responsibility. I want to see everyone doing their part to achieve the successful delivery of our RAP.

I would like to thank all who contributed to the development of our new RAP—your engagement is a vital part of the journey to achieving our strategic direction for the next 3 years.

I look forward to working with you to implement the deliverables of our RAP.

Andrew Metcalfe
AO Secretary

Indigenous Champion's foreword



As the department's Indigenous Champion, I am honoured to work with our Executive Leadership Team to implement our policies and programs to foster greater engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As the lead department responsible for agricultural and environmental policy, we have a mandate to protect our biosecurity and environmental habitats and communities.

I am proud to lead our organisation's portfolio responsibility to deliver on our implementation of Indigenous business is everyone's business Framework. Our commitment to Indigenous business is reflected in our departmental responsibility to implement our Indigenous procurement policy. This is shown through our shared commitment to purchasing more

goods and services our department needs from Indigenous-owned businesses. We all have a role to play to help strengthen the economic capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

We recognise that workforce cultural capability is essential to delivering effective work outcomes. Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) actions support our staff to deepen their cultural understanding through building an environment based on respect, trust, positive relationships, equality and opportunities for all.

We have extended our commitment to support staff to undertake cultural immersion experiences such as Jawun secondments, and attendance at community-based cultural activities to further embed cultural learning and understanding in our workplaces. This enables us to have the right skills and awareness to develop and implement policies and programs that have a positive impact on outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our RAP delivers ambitious, strong and measurable actions that commit us to continuing our everyday business, while at the same time incorporating significant new initiatives and strong leadership and accountability.

Our department has opportunities to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and our RAP empowers all employees to make the most of those opportunities.

We must continue to work together to deliver on our RAP. I encourage you to be part of our reconciliation journey.

**Lyn O'Connell,
Deputy Secretary and Indigenous Champion**

Indigenous Co-champion's foreword



My vision for reconciliation is for all of us to be part of a society that honours, celebrates, and practises respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Reconciliation is about working collaboratively, sharing, listening, understanding, and walking together on a journey of healing and true partnership.

Our department has a proud history of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. We also have a longstanding commitment to celebrating events, developing our Indigenous staff, providing cultural capability opportunities and learning for our workforce, and supporting procurement of goods and services from Indigenous businesses.

The department's RAP showcases our reconciliation journey and how those deliverables will be shaped into tangible, measurable and achievable opportunities. It also highlights the importance of our shared values and contributions towards a reconciled Australia – for each of us as individuals, as colleagues, in our teams and in all that we do in our daily work.

Through our RAP, we will foster and promote ongoing engagement and relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and we will maintain our commitment to reconciliation by drawing on our cultures and shared experiences.

Our RAP is ambitious and its success lies with all of us. It has the potential to be the driving force to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and to contribute to true reconciliation.

As the department's Indigenous Co-champion, I will be working with our Executive and staff to implement, promote and report on our RAP. I look forward to working with you all over the next 3 years as we embark on this next chapter of our important journey together.

**Wayne See Kee,
Indigenous Co-champion**

Our vision for reconciliation

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is committed to taking practical actions to achieve reconciliation through our RAP activities, with a focus on strengthening connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and what is important to them.

We are determined to be an integrated, future-focused workforce and an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will achieve this by investing in and improving on the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the department.

Reconciliation supports various platforms for us to come together to learn about Australia's past and our shared history, cultures and achievements. We are continually developing and improving our key policies, principles and support networks to create a culturally safe workplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff feel valued and have access to clear career pathways.

We play a key role in protecting Australia's natural resources and way of life. Our commitment to Caring for Country means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are central to our work and is a fundamental value for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our Reconciliation Action Plan 2021 to 2024 (RAP) represents our vision to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our workforce, shape our business practices and ensure our people are culturally competent and engaged, and activities are appropriate in the journey to reconciliation.

We seek to understand, recognise, celebrate, value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their distinct and diverse cultures, and build respectful and lasting working relationships with them and their communities.

As we continue our journey with our RAP, our goal is to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for staff within the department to have a high degree of cultural capability. We aim to develop and implement policies and programs through collaboration and co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities.

We seek to improve the social, economic, wellbeing and cultural opportunities and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to sustain their culture, language, land and sea Country, waters and environments.

We aim to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander executive leaders in our workforce. This will strengthen cultural competency and cultural confidence, leading to stronger relationships and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff sharing their unique skills and backgrounds.

Our focus is on addressing community needs through our ongoing work with our national parks, including continuing to work on Country and employing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – including Traditional Owners – to support the work we do.

Our business

We partner and regulate to enhance Australia's agriculture, unique environment and heritage, and water resources. We protect Australia's natural resources and work with others to ensure our land, water and heritage are well-managed, protected and productive. Our portfolio is as diverse as our people, and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff work across many different roles. This includes in statutory and non-statutory bodies, as independent advisors and as industry representatives. We have 13 different agencies within our portfolio, including the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Wine Australia. We employ 7,246 staff, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representing 4.9% of our workforce.

The department has 207 offices across Australia and 15 offices internationally. We work in airports, national parks, mail centres, shipping ports, quarantine facilities, laboratories, abattoirs and offices in cities, regional centres and rural communities throughout Australia and overseas. Our people are spread far and wide – from capital cities across Australia to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait; Christmas and Norfolk Islands; Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Kakadu and Booderee national parks; Beijing; Washington; Antarctica and Mexico.



Our reconciliation journey

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment was established on 1 February 2020. Before this, we were the Department of the Environment and Energy and the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Environment and Energy had an Innovate RAP and the Department of Agriculture had a Stretch RAP. Our new RAP 2021 to 2024 draws on the strengths and successes of previous RAPs, showcasing how we will expand on these achievements.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

We place a high priority on ‘closing the gap’ through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. Our department plays a key role in achieving this outcome by harnessing traditional knowledge in our land, agriculture, sea and water management practices, decision-making processes and policy development. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff contribute and work in all areas of the department, with a particular focus on representation in areas that directly affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses

The department is committed to contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic capacity building through the Australian Government’s Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP). We provide economic opportunities to a range of suppliers. We contract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned cleaning businesses for departmental offices across Australia. We also engage cultural advisors; conference and cultural capability workshop facilitators; and community members to provide cultural immersion experiences, performances and localised expertise. The procurement of these services has established strong ongoing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, businesses and communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership

Our Indigenous Champions, Senior Executive officers and network members are committed to progressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ outcomes in all that we do.

The department has a key focus on the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. We offer a range of development opportunities including training and participation in the Milparanga Leadership program, and the Sir Roland Wilson and the Pat Turner scholarships. We enable staff to further enhance their skills to successfully undertake leadership roles within the department. The department continues to work towards increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in senior leadership positions, in line with the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020 to 2024 targets.

We offer a range of cultural immersion experiences for all staff, including on-Country visits and Garma Festival participation. These experiences provide the opportunity to connect at a deeper level with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and give staff an appreciation for the values and diversity of traditional knowledge. Staff who have undertaken these opportunities have brought their learnings back into the workplace and continue to share their knowledge with others to help build a deeper understanding of the culture.

Testimonial of on-Country experience

I thoroughly enjoyed the on-Country experience. Apart from the enormously expanded appreciation and understanding of the relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and their ancestors, I also gained a real insight as to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge presented opportunities in other areas of our departmental mission. Environmental stewardship is a concept everyone understands, but the on-Country experience highlighted to me that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples' knowledge can also create new domestic and trade market opportunities. In the workplace, that has reinforced the value of diversity.

Wayne Terpstra, Assistant Secretary

Community connections

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations are essential partners in the department's business. The department has a focus on developing formal and informal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, professionals and scientists. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working with us and having a say in the design and delivery of our policies and programs helps to drive our commitment to 'closing the gap'.

Workplace cultural safety and cultural competency development

The department is focused on making the workplace culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. We have established principles in our departmental values that place a spotlight on diversity and inclusion to build cultural capability. These principles highlight and reinforce the behaviours we want to see and give permission to staff to call out those behaviours that do not align to our values. We have mandated the CORE cultural awareness training for all staff and developed a guide for managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

We conducted an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff conference, which provided an opportunity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet and discuss common experiences and build networks. We are developing an action plan to deliver the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24. We facilitated language workshops for senior executives delivered by traditional Elders and celebrated key cultural events such as National Reconciliation Week, Mabo Day and NAIDOC Week. These events included guest speakers, awards acknowledging staff involvement in key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects, and cultural immersion experiences provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities.

Career development

We provide a range of internal and external career development opportunities, each promoting reconciliation and cultural awareness, supporting the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and providing immediate benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We were pleased to have:

- supported 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members since 2019 to participate in the Pat Turner Scholarship, continuing their aspirations to undertake further studies to progress their careers in their chosen fields of interest
- facilitated the department's annual Kevin McLeod Reconciliation and Development Awards – in memory of Kevin McLeod, a long-term employee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage
- enabled 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to participate in the Australian Public Service Commission's excELerate program
- supported 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to undertake the Milparanga leadership program since 2019.

These initiatives form just part of our journey so far. We are committed to achieving even more.

Learning and challenges

We have had many successes in our past RAP. Key learnings from our experience include the importance of:

- recognising that to achieve our stretch RAP goals we each have a responsibility to contribute
- acknowledging and celebrating our achievements, and commemorating these successes in future departmental RAPs
- continuing to develop strategies to support the employment, retention and career development goals of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- maintaining a culturally safe workplace.

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Stretch RAP 2021 to 2024 complements the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020 to 2024 focus areas– cultural integrity, career pathways, and career development and advancement.

Through the actions in our RAP 2021 to 2024, we aim to maintain our established reputation as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAP also endorses and promotes our commitment to the employment, retention and career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all policy and program areas. This commitment extends to supporting further education for professional development and career choices.

We aim to build on the successful relationships and strong partnerships we have established with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to deliver positive and enduring outcomes that are part of our everyday business.

Our RAP 2021 to 2024 identifies how we will support, maintain and build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

In implementing the RAP 2021 to 2024, the department will:

- be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by providing rewarding career opportunities and pathways for advancement across our national footprint
- increase the accountability and scope of reconciliation outcomes in the department’s strategic planning and SES and Executive Level performance agreements
- celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories
- collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities
- build and support our staff’s cultural competency through culturally immersive experiences and learning
- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses
- ensure our RAP has strong leadership
- ensure all policy and programs consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ input and outcomes
- be accountable for achieving the actions at the regional and divisional levels as well as at the departmental level
- encourage all staff to embed and live our core values of working together, courage, diversity and excellence, including by
 - creating an environment where people feel safe to bring their authentic selves to work
 - looking for opportunities to connect and collaborate across the department, and with our stakeholders, partners, and the community
 - engaging in authentic consultation processes with First Nations Australians and embrace and learn from their traditional knowledge
 - building relationships and championing diversity and inclusion
 - trusting and empowering each other.

Every employee has a key role to play in achieving reconciliation and our deliverables within our RAP 2021 to 2024, including through:

- improving cultural capability through education and understanding
- increasing the understanding of the APS affirmative measures - Indigenous employment and promoting and sharing available merit pools across the APS
- mentoring and providing ongoing development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- participating in activities and events that celebrate dates of significance at national and regional levels, including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- following cultural protocols and having a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country for meetings and events, including in language.

Our RAP 2021 to 2024 is supported by our Executive Leadership Team and our Indigenous Champion and Co-champion. It has been developed in consultation with staff through various channels, including RAP development workshops open to all staff and held across the country. The workshops were an opportunity to reflect on our reconciliation journey began, what we have achieved and what more we want to do.

The RAP 2021 to 2024 has been endorsed by internal committees, including the People and Culture Committee and Executive Board.



Governance: ensuring we deliver on our RAP



Various individuals and groups within the department have a key role in implementing our RAP.

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team drives and influences the implementation of achieving our RAP objectives, maintaining accountability across the department's leadership, culture, capability and performance.

Senior Executive Service (SES)

The SES demonstrate behaviours and set the tone for a culturally safe environment which builds cultural competency and ensures RAP responsibilities are met.

Indigenous Champions

The Indigenous Champion and RAP Champion, Lyn O'Connell, and Indigenous Co-champion, Wayne See Kee, provide senior leadership and support for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the department to bring about change within our agency. Our Indigenous Champions also connect with other Champions across the Australian Public Service and ensure the voice of our staff and stakeholders are heard when developing strategies in the Commonwealth public sector.

Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC)

The IAC is a peak consultative body that advises the Minister for the Environment on the operation of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (EPBC Act). They consider the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge of the management of land and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Meetings of the IAC have considered the Review of the EPBC Act and the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984, the 2021 State of the Environment Report and the next iteration of the National Environmental Science Program. The Chair of the IAC is a member of the department's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and provided guidance and feedback during the development of the department's RAP.

Managers

Managers play a crucial role in creating a culturally safe work environment and providing opportunities for career advancement.

Indigenous Staff Network (ISN)

The ISN is a staff-led network focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the department. The network shares information, views and experiences, provides advice on cultural capability and influences the culture of the department.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee and Ally Network (ATSIEAN)

ATSIEAN is an ally network of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and non-Indigenous staff to support implementation of the department's strategies and action plans to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters.

Diversity and Inclusion section

The Diversity and Inclusion section provides secretariat support to monitor and coordinate RAP implementation. The section also reports to the Indigenous Champions, Executive Leadership Team and Reconciliation Australia on opportunities to achieve outcomes.

All staff

All departmental staff will be involved in delivering the department's RAP 2021 to 2024 through RAP activities that are embedded into division, branch and section business plans.

RAP Action—Lead

Senior Executive or Executive Level staff of particular business areas will drive the development and implementation of actions within the RAP and will be responsible for delivering the outcomes.

RAP Action—Support

Various business areas, groups or networks will support the development and implementation of actions within the RAP. However, they are not responsible for leading the delivery of the action. The support roles include consultation points, co-developers or co-implementers, and reference or advisory bodies.

RAP Working Group

The RAP Working Group comprises of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous representatives from the department and the IAC. Their role is to oversee the development, monitoring and reporting of our RAP and to drive behaviours and action in their work areas in implementing the RAP.

The RAP Working Group consists of one Chair and 3 co-chairs, 24 members and a secretariat. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff represent over 60% of the Working Group membership.

RAP Working Group representative are:

- Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch
- Assistant Director, Corporate Communications and Media Branch
- Senior Communications Advisor, Corporate Communications and Media Branch
- Assistant Director, Policy and Portfolio Strategy Branch
- Program Officer, Environmental Projects Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Operations Branch
- Assistant Director, Waste Regulation and Stewardship Branch
- Executive Officer, Science and Surveillance Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Agricultural Forecasting and Trade Branch
- Program Support Officer, Southern Water Use, Aquatic Science and Community Engagement Branch
- Director, Parks Australia HR Division
- Director, Sustainable Water Branch
- Director, Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Branch
- Senior Work Health and Safety Advisor, Safety Antarctic and Parks Branch
- Director, Diversity and Inclusion, Capability, Planning and Change Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Agriculture Trade and Market Access Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Consumers Branch
- Assistant Director, Capability, Planning and Change Branch
- Deputy Secretary, Water, Climate Adaption, Natural Disaster & Antarctic Group
- Assistant Secretary, Science and Surveillance Group
- Policy Officer, Biodiversity Policy and Water Science Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Biodiversity Policy and Water Science Branch
- Director, Safety, Antarctic and Parks Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Animal and Biological Import Assessment
- Import Services Officer, Assessment and Client Contact Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Booderee and Business Services Branch
- Program Manager, Booderee and Business Services Branch
- Senior Inclusion Officer Capability, Planning and Change Branch
- Senior HR Advisor, Capability, Planning and Change Branch
- Executive Director, ABARES
- Technical Officer, Plant Import Operations Branch.



Relationships

Our department has a unique role in protecting Australia's environment and heritage and supporting agriculture and water resources. We are Australia's largest natural resource management agency and work closely with state and territory governments and communities.

We are spread over many locations in metropolitan, urban, regional and remote areas of Australia. This provides a unique opportunity to work with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to incorporate traditional knowledge and values into our work.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples around the country are custodians of the environment and vital partners in our business. We build strong relationships that help bring together diverse views and perspectives. We consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes in all that we do.

We will build on these strong relationships by collaborating, sharing and exploring new ways of working.

Case Study: Partnering with Indigenous organisations for a sustainable future

Incorporating the knowledge, experiences, perspectives and cultures of Indigenous peoples is integral to improving environmental outcomes. We have released [Partnering with Indigenous organisations for a sustainable environment](#) as a resource for non-Indigenous organisations looking to build effective and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

The benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or their communities, and the promotion of reconciliation in the department:

Recognition that incorporating the knowledge, experiences, perspectives and cultures of Indigenous peoples is integral to improving environmental outcomes.

Assisting non-Indigenous people to build effective and respectful partnerships with Indigenous organisations and communities, including the importance of Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

Communicating to our Indigenous staff and Indigenous stakeholders, that the department is committed to supporting respectful partnerships with Indigenous Australians and this product is a small step on that journey.

Strengthened communication around the agency and government on Indigenous partnerships – promoted in APS News, creating cross agency sharing.

Invited to present on Indigenous partnerships for the health sector.

Promoted by the Partnership Broker Association, global organisation supporting best practice partnering approaches.

Focus areas

The focus area of our business relationships aligns to achieving our purpose, objects and priorities through our values and behaviours outlined in the department's Corporate Plan; and the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24.



We will collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities

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

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>1.1 Ensure the ISN and ATSIEAN members are supported by the Enabling Services Group and Indigenous Champions and will be consulted on all policies and processes that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters. This support and consultation will be delivered through network meetings and appropriate working groups.</p>	February, May, August, November annually	<p>Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p> <p>Support: ISN/ATSIEAN, all managers</p>
<p>1.2 <i>Aligned to the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> and the respective National Park Management Plans, establish governance and communication plans to strengthen relationships between local communities and staff at Booderee, Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks.</p>	June annually	<p>Lead: The Director, National Parks</p> <p>Support: Parks Australia Division</p>
<p>1.3 Establish and cultivate relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders when developing and implementing the department’s engagement plan through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessibility of meetings • identifying items of interest that include stakeholder feedback and priorities • participation in working groups • demonstrated influence on a range of projects • ongoing communication and active engagement with all stakeholders. 	November annually	<p>Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p> <p>Support: RAP WG, all managers</p>
<p>1.4 Hold one Executive Leadership Team meeting per year on Country (where possible) to continue to foster relationships with Traditional Owners and our staff in regional locations by ensuring our leaders have experience and understanding at the local level.</p>	July annually	<p>Lead: Executive Leadership Team</p> <p>Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Parks Australia Division</p>
<p>1.5 Support and engage with the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) to deliver on the department’s business and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate as observers and present to the IAC.</p>	June and October annually	<p>Lead: IAC Secretariat</p> <p>Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>
<p>1.6 Increase representation of Traditional Owners on internal boards and assessment panels related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters, ensuring those members are remunerated appropriately for their expertise.</p>	June and December annually	<p>Lead: Executive Leadership Team</p> <p>Support: RAP WG, all Executive Level staff</p>
<p>1.7 Provide the opportunity for 6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff to attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, communities and cultural festivals.</p>	February, May, August, October annually	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, Communications and Media Branch</p>



We will celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, commit to truth telling and acknowledging the wrongs of the past on our journey to reconciliation

Action 2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Celebrate and participate in NRW by hosting 2 internal events and activities and public displays of individual commitments/pledges to reconciliation from staff in all departmental offices across Australia.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: Executive Board to nominate a division annually Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
2.2 Ensure that Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources are available to all staff.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, all managers
2.3 Ensure RAP WG Members participate in 2 external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: RAP WG Chair, all managers Support: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section
2.4 Encourage and support all staff to participate in one external National Reconciliation Week community event, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can access cultural leave to participate in these activities. Establish a baseline of staff participation at events in 2021. Record staff attendance in future years to enable reporting.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: All SES officers and EL2 staff Support: ISN/ATSIEAN, Diversity and Inclusion Section, Parks Australia Division and Communications and Media Branch
2.5 Senior staff to acknowledge NRW and its importance, encouraging support for departmental staff to participate in internal and external events, and communicate support available under the <i>Department of Environment and Energy Enterprise Agreement 2016–19</i> , <i>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Meat Inspection Enterprise Agreement 2019–22</i> and the <i>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Enterprise Agreement 2017–20</i> (biosecurity operations employees and veterinarians) for participation in those activities.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: All First Assistant Secretaries Support: all Executive Level 2 officers
2.6 Celebrate and participate in Mabo Day by promoting external events and hosting 2 internal activities that will include interactive traditional activities, guest speakers and Torres Strait Islander community members where possible.	27 May to 3 June annually	Lead: Executive Board to nominate a division annually Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
2.7 Register our events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website to allow external agency involvement in our activities.	March annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section



We will promote reconciliation to engage all staff in our drive towards reconciliation outcomes

Action 3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1 Reaffirm our ongoing commitment to our reconciliation journey by collaborating with other like-minded organisations, including our portfolio agencies and other public sector agencies, to implement ways to advance reconciliation.	August annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.2 Implement strategies to engage all staff to drive reconciliation outcomes.	Review December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.3 Develop and implement a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team, Communications and Media Branch
3.4 Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.5 Provide 10 reconciliation themed quiz questions for annual graduate fundraising function.	December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.6 Maintain our Reconciliation Action Plan intranet hub and promote internal tools to communicate our Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives and outcomes.	December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.7 Continue to display a Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation in our national offices with an emphasis on the important role of Country and its sustainability throughout Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.	December annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team
3.8 Promote our RAP with our portfolio agencies, collaborating and implementing ways to advance reconciliation.	August 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG, ISN/ATSIEAN, Executive Leadership Team

Action 4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1 Senior leaders to support internal communications, policies and initiatives relating to anti-discrimination in the department.	February, May, August November annually	Lead: Executive Leadership Team Support: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section
4.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	November annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
4.3 Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for the department.	November annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Integrity Branch Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section
4.4 Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerning anti-discrimination.	November annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
4.5 Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	November annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section



We respect and value the experiences, perspectives and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to embracing and improving our employees' understanding of their cultures, histories, knowledge and rights. We will consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes in all that we do and continue to provide a respectful and understanding environment. We will engage with and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories. We will support managers and supervisors to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, stakeholders and communities.

Case Study: Karen Loban, Maluiligal Woman

Karen Loban is a Maluiligal woman, a Senior Biosecurity Officer working in Townsville, Queensland and an Indigenous Inclusion Ambassador in the north east region.

Karen has played an active role in creating cultural safety in the workplace, a key pillar of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2018–2020* and the previous *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017–2019*.

Karen and Sarah Johnstone are the 2 Indigenous inclusion ambassadors in the north east region. Karen and Sarah plan and participate in diversity and inclusion activities and events in the north east region and nationally. Karen proudly represents the perspective of a Torres Strait Islander woman at these activities. She also encourages and assists her colleagues to participate.

Karen works tirelessly to ensure her culture is understood and celebrated within the department, including by:

- acting as a guide and mentor for many Torres Strait Islander staff
- acting as a translator between 2 cultures and a role model.
- actively participating in the development of the RAP 2021 to 2024 and in the 2019 Indigenous Staff Conference
- appearing in the department's inclusion video, where she shared her struggles to be recognised at work as a proud and strong Torres Strait Islander woman
- sharing her story during National Reconciliation Week 2020, which was published on the DAWE Intranet.

Karen initiated the department's first celebration of Mabo Day. This is an important event in Torres Strait Islander culture, which recognises the role of Eddie Mabo as the father of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land-rights movement. Karen worked tirelessly to organise Donald Whaleboat, (Eddie Mabo's uncle) and the Torres Strait Islander community to come to the Townsville office for a nationally broadcast event.

Karen was recognised with a Secretary's Award for her willingness to participate, can-do attitude, involvement and contribution in all activities.

Focus area

The focus area of our business regarding respect aligns to achieving our purpose, objects and priorities through our CORE 4 values and behaviours, the department's Corporate Plan, the Inclusion Strategy and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Capability Strategy.



We will build and support our staff's cultural competency and engagement

Action 5 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
5.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG
5.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	July annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG
5.3 All staff complete the mandatory modules (0-3) of the CORE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning through our online e-learning platform.	February, May, August, November annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: All SES, Diversity and Inclusion Section
5.4 Continue to develop, implement and increase the engagement of face to face cultural competency and creating awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by 5% each year.	August 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: All SES, Diversity and Inclusion Section
5.5 Develop an online collaborative platform/hub to communicate inclusion in the workplace, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources and information to support our staff and managers, and share our reconciliation journey.	October 2021	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, Information Services Division, Communications and Media Branch, RAP WG
5.6 Implement the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.	August 2021	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: All SES, all Executive Level staff, Parks Australia Division, ISN/ATSIEAN and Communications and Media Branch
5.7 Develop partnerships with traditional owners of Commonwealth Parks and Gardens to protect cultural heritage values, integrate Indigenous science and knowledge into management, and support aspirations for Indigenous management of sea country.	July 2021 annually	Lead: Director, Parks Australia Division Support: All SES
5.8 Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations on proposed science in Australian Marine Parks and where possible embedding Indigenous science and knowledge into project delivery.	July 2021 annually	Lead: Director, Parks Australia Division Support: All SES

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
5.9 Develop cultural heritage and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy over the coming year to further establish how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander science and knowledge will be integrated into marine park management.	July, August annually	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: Deputy Secretaries, RAP WG, Parks Australia Division, all SES
5.10 Graduate Development Program to continue including a project with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment, strategies and creating an inclusive culture. Increasing graduates understanding, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strengthening their cultural awareness.	July annually	Lead: Executive Leadership Team Support: All SES
5.11 Senior Executive planning days and conferences include at least one session with a focus on policy/program collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: Deputy Secretaries, RAP WG, all SES, ISN/ATSIEAN, Internal Communications Team
5.12 Update the department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Guidelines with integrated practices, principles and staff support and promote through an internal communication plan.	November 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: ISN/ATSIEAN
5.13 Display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through awareness and inclusion materials and merchandise including flags and artwork in public areas of all buildings in Australia.	June 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: All SES
5.14 Continue our long and established history of 9 staff to participate in the Jawun Secondment Program each year.	June 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Property and Security Services Branch Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section and ISN/ATSIEAN



We will demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way our organisation functions

Action 6 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6.1 Review and update the Cultural Protocol Guide with expert advice from key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in each location.	September 2021	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability Planning and Change Branch Support: ISN and ATSIEAN, Parks Australia Division
6.2 Continue to build staff understanding of Acknowledgment of Country by <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. displaying plaques in visible spaces in all our large meeting roomsb. recognition on the department's intranet, website, official social media accounts, meeting agendas and external publications where possible.c. arranging up to 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language workshops, conducted by local Traditional Custodians /Elders in as many regional offices as possible including National Office.d. providing online and hard copy resources to equip staff to undertake Acknowledgements of Country.e. continuing to include an Acknowledgement of Country in the department's email signature block.	October annually	a) Lead: Assistant Secretary, Property and Security Services Branch Support: ISN/ATSIEAN b) Lead: Assistant Secretary, Communications and Media Branch Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section c) Lead: All SES Officers Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section d) and e) Lead: Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: ISN/ATSIEAN
6.3 Commit to observing cultural protocols by inviting a local Traditional Owner to undertake a Welcome to Country for all national/large staff events each year.	Review participation September annually, 2021, 2022 coordinate at least two biannually, 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: All SES Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section
6.4 Develop induction materials for new employees about the supports, provisions and cultural protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and their managers including information about our ISN, ATSIEAN, National Reconciliation Week events and activities, Welcome to Country vs Acknowledgement of Country and our RAP.	November 2021	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: Biosecurity Operations Division and Parks Australia Division
6.5 Encourage the use of local Traditional Owner language and culturally significant wording to rename prominent meeting rooms including an acknowledgement of the Country you are on 'You are on Ngunnawal Land' in a range of our existing and new departmental managed buildings.	April 2021	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Property and Security Services Branch Support: ISN/ATSIEAN

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6.6 We will continue to equip all staff to undertake an Acknowledgement of Country through provision of cards, online resources and training relevant to Canberra and all office sites for staff use at meetings and events. This resource will continue to be available to all staff.	May and November annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: ISN/ATSIEAN and Parks Australia Division
6.7 Continue to promote our respect for traditional lands, custodians and culture using the department's official email signature block containing an Acknowledgment of Country. The signature block will continue to be updated as required.	Review August annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: ISN/ATSIEAN

Action 7 Recognise and commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of national significance

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
7.1 Develop a calendar of significant dates to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and publish to the RAP intranet page.	January 2022, 2023, 2024	Lead: RAP WG Chair Support: ISN/ATSIEAN, Diversity and Inclusion Section
7.2 Develop internal communications to educate staff about dates of national significance.	January 2022, 2023, 2024	Lead: RAP WG Chair Support: ISN/ATSIEAN, Diversity and Inclusion Section
7.3 Encourage all staff to attend external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance events.	January 2022, 2023, 2024	Lead: RAP WG Chair Support: ISN/ATSIEAN, Diversity and Inclusion Section

Action 8 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>8.1 Hold internal NAIDOC Week events and activities to acknowledge, increase awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storytelling • cultural immersion experiences where possible, open to all staff, and centrally funded • sharing of stories of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (in Canberra, regional offices and National Parks). 	July, annually (NAIDOC Week)	<p>Lead: Division nominated annually to lead volunteer staff working group</p> <p>Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, RAP WG, ISN, ATSIEAN and Executive Leadership Team</p>
<p>8.2 Senior staff to acknowledge NAIDOC Week and its importance, encouraging support for departmental staff to participate in internal and external events, and communicate support available under the <i>Department of Environment and Energy Enterprise Agreement 2016-19</i>, <i>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Meat Inspection Enterprise Agreement 2019-22</i> and the <i>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Enterprise Agreement 2017-20</i> (Biosecurity Operations employees and Veterinarians) department’s Enterprise Agreement for participation in those activities.</p>	July annually	<p>Lead: All SES</p> <p>Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section</p>
<p>8.3 In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support one external NAIDOC Week event each year.</p>	July annually	<p>Lead: Chair, RAP WG Members</p> <p>Support: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p>
<p>8.4 RAP Working Group members to participate in one external event to recognise and celebrate NAIDOC Week.</p>	July annually	<p>Lead: Chair, RAP WG Members</p> <p>Support: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p>
<p>8.5 Continue to support and acknowledge staff contributions by presenting NAIDOC Week Awards and the Kevin McLeod Reconciliation Development Awards.</p>	May and July annually	<p>Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p> <p>Support: Executive Leadership Team</p>

Opportunities

We are committed to being an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by creating a positive environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can thrive. We are committed to creating partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Each year for the life of this RAP, we aim to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representation to align at a minimum with the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24.

We will contribute to ‘closing the gap’ by ensuring we continue to recruit, develop and provide career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the department. This is critical to our department’s work in land care, heritage, protecting cultural sites of significance, water and the environment.

We have established economic relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, providing an opportunity to be involved in the delivery of our services in Canberra, regional offices and National Parks. Our business relationships allow us the opportunity to expand our services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities through acknowledging and utilising significant local knowledge and expertise.

We will build on the foundations established in our previous RAP and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy to continue to create opportunities to engage with communities, provide capability training for staff, and further embed practices in our everyday business.

Case study: Tia Evans—Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP) participant

We endeavour to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This commitment is highlighted by the participation and implementation of Indigenous entry-level programs such as the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP), the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program (IAGDP) and Graduate Program (Affirmative Measures). Commitment to delivering these programs and therefore increasing opportunities for Indigenous employment is a key deliverable in the RAP 2021 to 2024.

The IAP plays a pivotal role in increasing Indigenous employment opportunities across the APS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from differing backgrounds and locations.

In 2017 Tia Evans was accepted into the IAP and completed the program in 2018 with a Diploma of Government and ongoing APS4 level employment within the department. Tia continues her employment in the department as an APS5 and has reinvigorated her aspirations to help shape how the department attracts, recruits and trains our Indigenous workforce, particularly through our entry programs.

Before entering the program, Tia had worked in hospitality, where she admits her views of the government sector and its commitments to empowering Indigenous people to 'close the gap' were perhaps skewed. Upon entry to the department, Tia also had no desire to further her education beyond the diploma that she was going to complete as a part of the IAP.

Since completing the IAP, Tia has engaged in a range of different projects within the department – such as environmental projects, entry-level programs coordination, corporate engagements such as membership on the Indigenous Staff Network, RAP Committee, NAIDOC Organising Committee, Employee Support Officer, and buddy to incoming IAP participants. Tia has now established herself as a respected member of the Australian Public Service and her career aspirations are limitless because of her decision to accept the offer to join the IAP.

Tia has also chosen to undertake university studies, and a career in a mixture of environmental/natural resource policy and management.

As a result of the IAP, Tia has developed her confidence; professionalism; reading, writing and speaking skills; negotiation skills and professional engagement skills.

Focus area

The focus area of our business regarding opportunities aligns to achieving our purpose, objects and priorities through our CORE 4 values and behaviours department's Corporate Plan, the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*, our Procurement Policy and Indigenous Procurement Policy and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Engagement Guidelines.



We will be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Action 9 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>9.1 Develop and implement an action plan that addresses departmental deliverables and supports priorities identified in the <i>Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24</i>. Specifically, the action plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">strengthen processes and policies that support Affirmative Measure recruitment and practicesprovide staff access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander merit poolssupport annual entry-level program processesincrease Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retentionsupport professional developmentsupport cultural obligationssupport retention mechanisms, such as culturally appropriate employee assistance programs, mentoring, staff conferences, networks, study support, scholarships, leadership development (programs and job opportunities at higher levels – including management and senior executive positions), and job rotations.	August 2021	<p>Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section</p> <p>Support: Capability, Planning and Change Branch, ISN and ATSIEAN</p>
<p>9.2 Strengthen processes and policies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide a reference point for business areas to easily access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff merit lists.Develop an annual process for the recruitment of entry-level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent for the department across all locations and in line with the <i>Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24</i>.Provide a wrap-around support system for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entry-level program participants.The department's recruitment team and representatives from line areas, participate in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Careers Expos annually and attend at least two other outreach opportunities (for example, in universities, schools and career expos).Mandate staff completion of modules (0-3) of the CORE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning through our online e-learning platform.	November annually	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>9.3 Undertake processes to support affirmative measures and identified-position recruitment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member in the Recruitment Team to provide advice to business areas on Affirmative Measures and Identified Position recruitment requirements and processes. • Increase the number of Affirmative Measures recruitment activities and Identified positions throughout each division in alignment with our Action Plan to address the <i>Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24</i>. • Conduct a departmental Affirmative Measures recruitment round targeted at middle management roles (APS5/6, EL1) in line with the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy. Establish merit pools and make them available across the department and contribute to and draw on the APSC Affirmative Measures merit register. • All staff participating in Affirmative Measures and Identified Position recruitment panels undertake cultural capability training and are appropriately trained in how to conduct the process. Recruitment panels are to include an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member for these recruitment activities, to provide advice on the recruitment process, and questions and examples accepted. 	November annually	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>
<p>9.4 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Affirmative Measures roles to be advertised directly to internal staff, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets such as Facebook, Koori Mail and Indigenous Times.</p>	November annually	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>
<p>9.5 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. Review position descriptions to enable affirmative measures group to apply, speak/write in plain English, avoiding the use of public service or technical jargon.</p>	November annually	<p>Lead: Chief People Officer, People Division</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>
<p>9.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions through internal stretch campaigns providing short to long-term acting opportunities and secondment opportunities with our portfolio agencies.</p>	November annually	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>
<p>9.7 Establish 5% representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at APS4 to APS6 levels in the APS by 2022.</p>	December 2022	<p>Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch</p> <p>Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN</p>

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
9.8 Establish 3% representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at EL1 and EL2 levels in the APS by 2024.	April 2024	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN
9.9 Establish 3% representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at the SES levels in the APS by 2024.	April 2024	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: People Division, All SES, ISN/ATSIEAN
9.10 To build biosecurity capacity in northern Australia, up to 5 trainees to complete the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship program over 18 months. Delivering increased skills and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	December 2021, 2022 and 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Science and Surveillance Group Support: Director, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy Section
9.11 Up to 50 Indigenous Rangers from 2022 to 2025 undertaking Certificate IV in Tropical Biosecurity. The course aims to build the scientific, biosecurity and leadership capabilities of senior rangers and ranger coordinators working in biosecurity-related roles in remote northern Australia.	December 2021, 2022 and 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Science and Surveillance Group Support: Director, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy Section
9.12 Up to 40 rangers per year attending Biosecurity Fundamentals training from 2021 to 2023. The training enables rangers to better contextualise the importance of the data collection and activities performed by ranger groups for biosecurity. The initiative commenced in 2017 and is regarded as a strong contributor to increasing Indigenous Ranger biosecurity knowledge.	December 2021, 2022 and 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Science and Surveillance Group Support: Director, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy Section



We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and charities

Action 10 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
10.1 Strengthening our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy in line with the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy.	June 2021	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.2 Communicate opportunities promoting the procurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vendors to all staff.	June 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.3 Remove barriers when procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	January 2022	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.4 Training all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy.	Quarterly – Commencing May 2021 to December 2023	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.5 Maintain commercial relationships with 33 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	January 2022	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.6 Meet or exceed Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy targets for percentage of contracts, with a steady increase over the life of the RAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020–21 - target of 3% of total procurement contracts established • 2021–22 - target of 4% of total procurement contracts established • 2022–23 - target of 5% of total procurement contracts established • 2023–24 - target of 6% of total procurement contracts established. 	June annually	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES
10.7 Meet or exceed Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy targets for contract value, with a steady increase over the life of the RAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020–21 - target of 1.25% of total procurement contracts established • 2021–22 - target of 1.5% of total procurement contracts established • 2022–23 - target of 2% of total procurement contracts established • 2023–24 - target of 2.5% of total procurement contracts established. 	June annually	Lead: Chief Finance Officer, Finance Division Support: All SES

Action 11 Donate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander charities in line with Commonwealth Procurement practices

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
11.1 Continue to foster relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through the allocation of corporate funding (based on a selection process) to support one nominated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation.	Annually during NAIDOC Week July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: All staff
11.2 Develop and implement a selection process for corporate funding in line with Commonwealth Procurement practices.	June annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section

We will ensure our RAP has strong leadership and we will be accountable for achieving the actions in it

Action 12 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RAP WG) to drive governance of the RAP

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
12.1 Support the RAP Implementation Officers to oversee the implementation of the RAP and act as a central point of contact for business areas.	February, May, August November annually	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
12.2 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP WG.	July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: RAP WG co-chairs Support: RAP WG members
12.3 Our RAP WG will meet at least 4 times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Quarterly – March, June, September, December 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: RAP WG co-chairs Lead: Diversity and Inclusion Section
12.4 Appoint an Indigenous Co-chair to the RAP WG.	Rotation basis from July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: RAP WG co-chairs Support: Indigenous Champion, RAP WG and Diversity and Inclusion Section
12.5 Terms of Reference for the RAP WG reviewed and updated annually.	May 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: RAP WG co-chairs Support: Indigenous Champion, RAP WG and Diversity and Inclusion Section
12.6 The RWG to review, refresh and update the RAP based on significant learnings, challenges and achievements over the next 3 years.	October 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: RAP WG co-chairs Support: Indigenous Champion, RAP WG and Diversity and Inclusion Section



We will ensure our Executive are engaged in the implementation of our RAP commitments and embed RAP outcomes in the department's strategic planning and leadership performance agreements

Action 13 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
13.1 We will embed resource needs for RAP implementation including a RAP Implementation Officer.	July/August 2021	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
13.2 The department will maintain a Deputy Secretary to be responsible for driving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters across the department including successful implementation of the RAP.	May 2021	Lead: Executive Leadership Team Support: Indigenous Champion
13.3 Develop and implement a Monitoring, Measurement and Reporting Plan outlining how we will track, measure and report on our progress against the RAP's deliverables.	June 2021	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
13.4 The Indigenous Staff Network and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee and Ally Network to be consulted throughout the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the RAP.	Quarterly – March, June, September, December 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
13.5 All SES Performance Agreements include a commitment to drive uptake of RAP actions and detail how they will do that.	July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: All SES Support: Workplace Relations
13.6 Divisions to specify how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander science and knowledge will be considered, and incorporated into the development of policies and programs, and their divisional RAP Implementation Plan.	July 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: All First Assistant Secretaries Support: SES officers
13.7 All divisional plans include targets and actions which align with the department's action plan to address the <i>Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24</i> .	Template adopted by June 2021	Lead: All First Assistant Secretaries Support: SES officers
13.8 Update briefing templates to include an impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples/communities/ stakeholders to ensure any new initiatives are considerate of those matters. Consideration and consultation will be mandated through a template question on all committee/board/group papers in consultation with the Indigenous Advisory Committee.	October 2021	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: All SES, RAP WG
13.9 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	May 2021	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section Support: RAP WG
13.10 Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at the Inclusion Council and People & Culture Committee meetings.	May 2021	Lead: All SES Officers Support: Diversity and Inclusion Section, RAP WG



We will ensure our reconciliation journey is accountable, transparent and forward thinking

Action 14 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
14.1 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division
14.2 Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings in our annual report.	March 2022, 2023, 2024	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division
14.3 Participate in the Reconciliation Australia Workplace RAP Barometer Survey.	May 2022	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division
14.4 Conduct an annual survey for all staff to seek feedback on RAP implementation.	June 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
14.5 Resourcing and personnel will be provided to deliver and report on the RAP.	August 2021	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division
14.6 An annual report provided to the Executive Leadership Team and the 3 jointly managed Boards of Management on any issues, successes and barriers to the successful implementation of the RAP.	September 2021, 2022, 2023	Lead: Assistant Secretary, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs, Communications and Media Branch, Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Champion, Parks Australia Division

Action 15 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
15.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	March 2023	Lead: Director, Diversity and Inclusion Section, Capability, Planning and Change Branch Support: RAP WG members and co-chairs

