



Charles Sturt
University



Charles Sturt University Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2022 - November 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work together. Charles Sturt University and its staff pay respect to Elders within First Nations communities and acknowledge the continuity of cultures, languages, leadership and knowledge systems.

We acknowledge First Nations peoples' continuous connection to Country, recognising the unique, diverse identities and cultures of peoples in our communities, regions and nation. As such, we value the collaboration to strongly position First Nations peoples in our university, through languages, leadership, cultures, knowledges, research and ceremonies.



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Reconciliation Australia

CEO message



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Charles Sturt University to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Charles Sturt University joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to three million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Charles Sturt University to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Charles Sturt University, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Vice-Chancellor message



For many years, Charles Sturt University has communicated and demonstrated a firm commitment to working with First Nations peoples, communities and stakeholders.

We acknowledge the many Elders, community members, students, staff and organisations who have been part of the numerous stories of working together to build relationships, opportunities and respect in relation to Charles Sturt University.

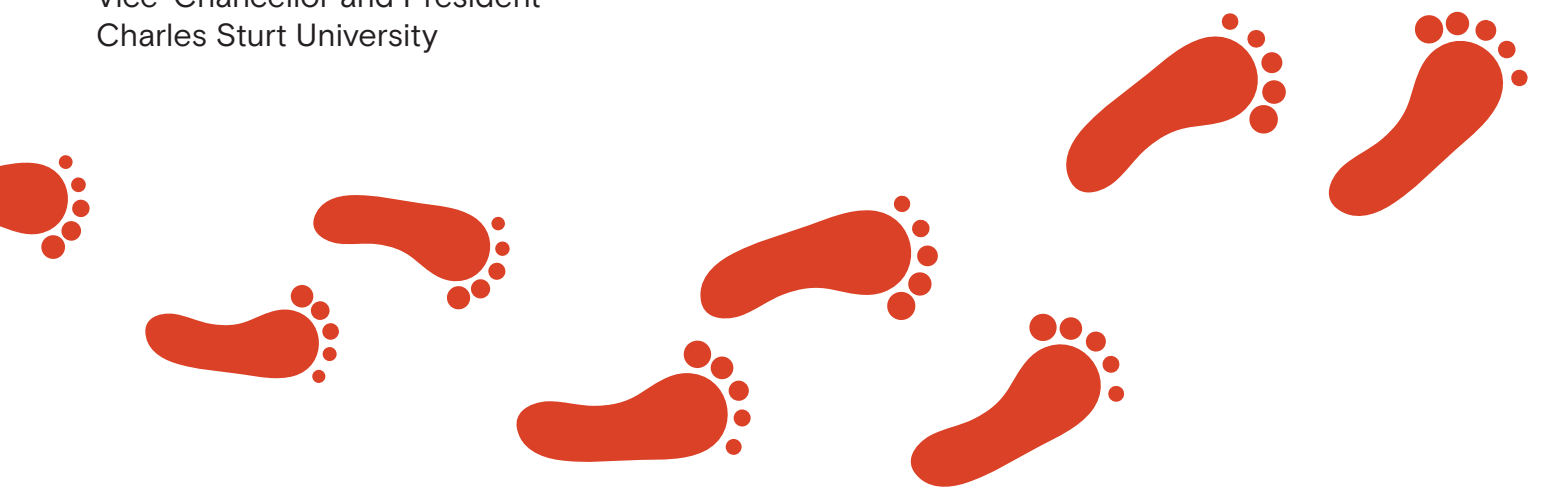
We take our formal reconciliation journey very seriously, investing time in considering the most appropriate way forward. Whilst we have a strong foundation to celebrate, we understand the importance of working with the key principles of Yindyamarra, which include honour, respect, gentleness, going slowly and being polite.

As such, we are starting with a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan to balance our eagerness to make a public commitment to reconciliation, with the need to allow time for ongoing dialogue with our local communities, staff and students.

We will also launch our First Nations Strategy 2023–2025, with our commitments helping shape our path towards an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. Each of these documents have a unique purpose but are interrelated and will evolve together and I thank those that contributed to their development.

At Charles Sturt, we look forward to moving through the stages as part of our long-term commitment to reconciliation. We are proud to be part of this journey.

Professor Renée Leon PSM
Vice-Chancellor and President
Charles Sturt University



Our business

Charles Sturt University is a public university established under the Charles Sturt University Act, 1989. The object of the university is the promotion, within the limits of the university's resources, of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence.

Charles Sturt University is the largest regionally based university in Australia, enrolling approximately 40,000 on-campus and online students from across Australia and more than 120 countries around the world. With campuses in Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Goulburn, Orange, Parramatta, Port Macquarie, and Canberra, the university also delivers programs onshore and internationally in collaboration with leading partner institutions.

We currently employ 2,037 staff in total across both academic and professional and general positions. We currently employ 68 (3.34%) First Nations staff; 49 professional (4.10%); 14 academic (2.31%) and 5 senior (2.15%).



Our RAP

At Charles Sturt University, our Reconciliation Action Plan champion is our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Renée Leon PSM.

Charles Sturt University seeks to formalise its reconciliation journey with the establishment of this RAP. We see this RAP as a means by which we can demonstrate leadership for tangible change in First Nations tertiary education, research, employment, and governance. We know that a lack of historical acceptance of the impact of colonisation and past policies on First Nations peoples is a significant barrier and a driver of racism, preventing us from progressing reconciliation and achieving full potential as a nation. This RAP will assist us to build understanding and respect, play a leadership role in transforming attitudes and create a workplace culture that values and respects First Nations knowledge, perspectives, and ways of knowing, being and doing.

The Vice-Chancellor is the sponsor and champion of all our First Nations commitments and activities. The Vice-Chancellor will establish a RAP Working Group (RWG) as a subset of the university Executive Leadership Team, including representation from our First Nations staff network.

The RWG will govern the coordination and delivery of the agreed RAP actions, and report regularly to the university Executive Leadership Team via the RAP chair.

The university will also appoint a senior First Nations leader that will report to the Vice-Chancellor and will have responsibility for leading key First Nations activities at the university with the support of their team. This will include participation in the RWG.

In 2017, Charles Sturt University commenced work on the development of an 'Innovate' RAP. This acknowledged the progress of the university at that point in time. Due to a number of factors, including organisational change, this work stalled. Since 2017, steps were taken to develop a stakeholder informed plan which included a survey disseminated to all students and staff in early 2018. From 2017-2018 there were a number of other activities designed to contribute to the development of this Reflect RAP.

The subsequent delays in momentum, some gaps in communicating themes from the consultation and survey back to relevant stakeholders, and staff turnover in many key roles means that contributions from current staff to developing a plan that is responsive to the organisation as it is in 2022 is limited.

There has been a clear theme of feedback that it is better to reflect on our current context and move forward slowly and with deep listening given the changes in our people and our overall environment. This is aligned to the university's ethos of *yindyamarra winhanganha* which means the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in. In view of this, our reconciliation plan requires us to stop and reflect on achievements to develop the next phase of our journey.

Our partnerships/current activities

The university has many productive working relationships in place with First Nations stakeholders in local communities and key organisations, and a clear intent to positively engage the wider student and staff body to build understanding of First Nations peoples, cultures and communities. After many years of collaborating with local Aboriginal Medical Services, the university has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW to develop Vocational Education and Training to higher education pathways and work together on health-related research. The university also works closely with Wiradjuri language holders on a range of initiatives. At a course and campus level there are many further examples of working together with local Elders, communities and community organisations.

The university has a proven track record in engaging with First Nations people as students, with one of the highest First Nations enrolment numbers in the country, and in recent years the highest number of First Nations graduates. The university is also a leader in the sector in regards to the incorporation of Indigenous content into courses. Members of local First Nations communities are regularly engaged to participate in initiatives and events, and the university has met its targets for increasing First Nations staff employment with a new target currently being negotiated.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan



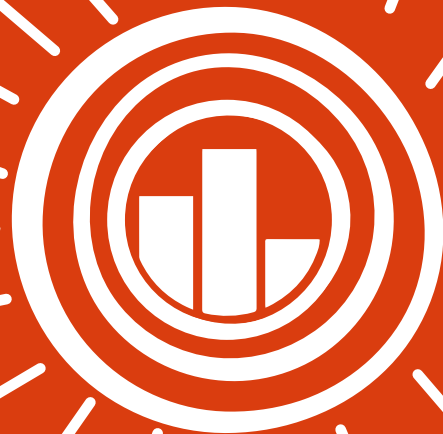
Relationships



Respect



Opportunities



Governance



Relationships





Relationships

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|----------------------|---|
| 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | Identify and seek to engage with First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our campus location footprint and sphere of influence in the regions in which we operate. | March 2023 | Executive Director, Enterprise and Engagement |
| | Be informed by best practice and principles that support partnerships and informed dialogue with First Nations stakeholders and organisations. | May 2023 | Executive Director, Enterprise and Engagement |
| | Develop and maintain a First Nations engagement framework to effectively work with these stakeholders. | May 2023 | Executive Director, Enterprise and Engagement |
| 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). | Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | May 2023 | Director, Public Relations and Communication |
| | Plan an NRW activity by major campus location and encourage all staff to participate in an internal or external NRW event. | 27 May - 3 June 2023 | Director, Public Relations and Communication |
| | Executive Leadership Team to participate in a planned event during NRW to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May - 3 June 2023 | Vice-Chancellor |
| 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | Communicate our commitment to reconciliation each year to all staff, students, researchers, and other university stakeholders. | November 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Identify and engage with external stakeholders that the university can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | February 2023 | Executive Director, Enterprise and Engagement |
| | Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | February 2023 | Chair, RWG |
| 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | Be informed by best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination and ensure all our policies and procedures include non-discriminatory language. | June 2023 | Manager, Policy and Records |
| | Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | June 2023 | Executive Director, People and Culture |



Respect





Respect

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| 5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning. | Develop and deliver a suite of staff development activities to support cultural safety. | June 2023 | Executive Director, People and Culture |
| | Develop and deliver a suite of staff development activities to increase understanding of First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing. | June 2023 | Executive Director, People and Culture |
| 6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols. | Develop a deeper understanding of the local First Nations communities within the university's footprint. | June 2023 | Chair, RWG |
| | Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, with guidance on how to participate in these protocols. | March 2023 | Chair, RWG |
| | Embed consistent Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, including updating the current Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Guidelines. | January 2023 | Director, Public Relations and Communication |
| 7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | Plan and conduct activities to celebrate NAIDOC Week on campus, online and in community. | July 2023 | Director, First Nations Student Success |
| | Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. | June 2023 | Director, Public Relations and Communication |
| | Actively engage our staff in NAIDOC Week by promoting internal and external events in and around our campus locations. | June, 2023 | Director, Public Relations and Communication |
| | Executive Leadership Team to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July, 2023 | Vice-Chancellor |

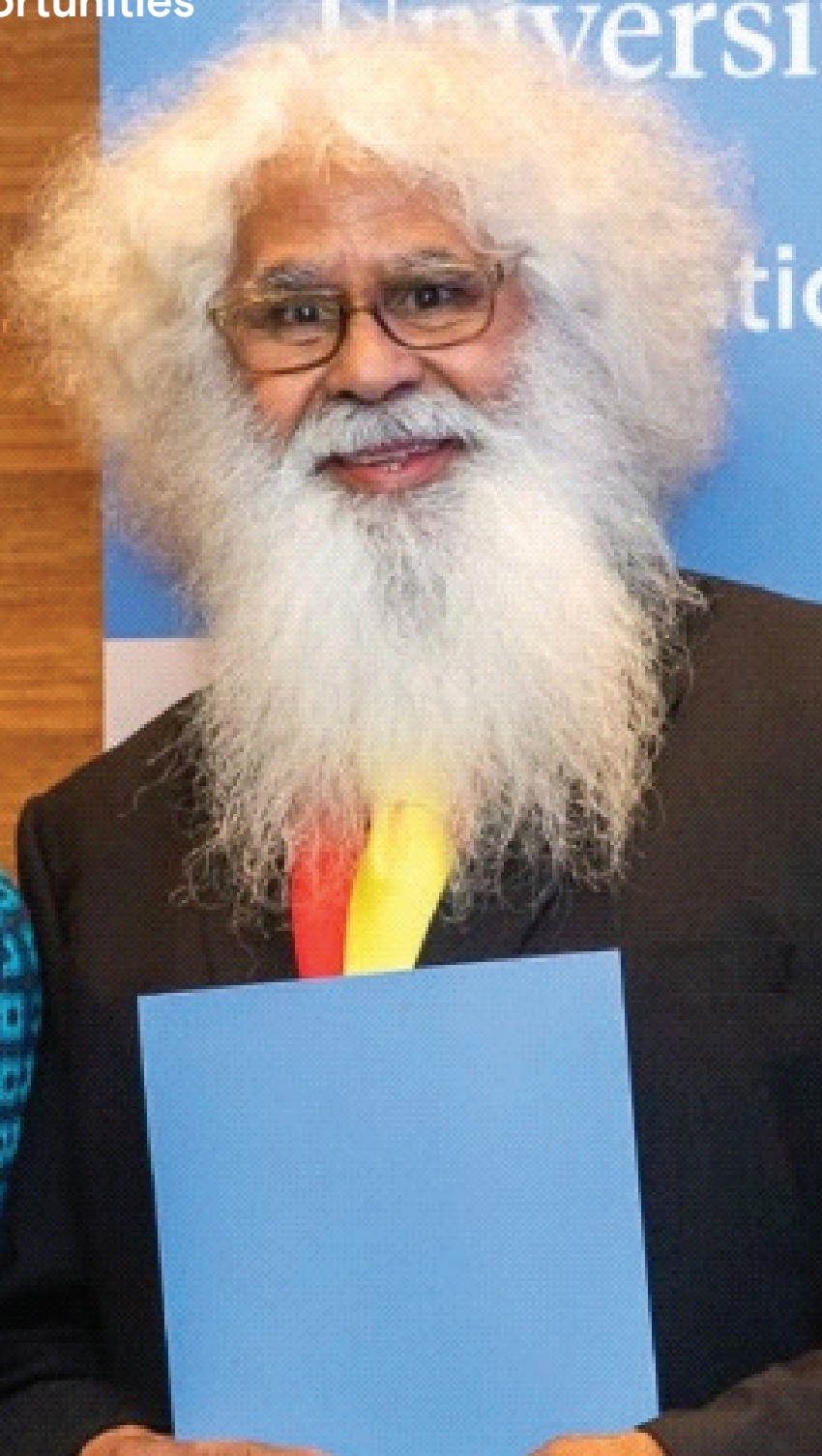


Opportunities



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Opportunities

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|--|------------|--|
| 8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development. | Update and implement the University's First Nations Employment Strategy, co-designed with the First Nations staff network, including recruitment, career progression, social and emotional support structures and mentoring. | July 2023 | Executive Director, People and Culture |
| | Build structured engagement with current First Nations staff network to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | July 2023 | Executive Director, People and Culture |
| 9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes. | Develop a First Nations procurement policy. | March 2023 | Chief Financial Officer |
| | Investigate Supply Nation and other First Nations supplier organisation membership, and commence negotiations. | March 2023 | Chief Financial Officer |



Governance





Governance

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| 10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Establish First Nations representation on the RWG. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| 11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. | December 2022 | Vice-Chancellor |
| | Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on our RAP commitments. | December 2022 | Chair, RWG |
| 12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally. | Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. | June annually | Chair, RWG |
| | Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. | 1 August annually | Chair, RWG |
| | Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. | 30 September, annually | Chair, RWG |
| 13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP. | Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | August, 2023 | Chair, RWG |



The artist

Lani Balzan is an Aboriginal artist and graphic designer specialising in designing Indigenous canvas art, graphic design, logo design, Reconciliation Action Plans design and document design.

Lani is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her family originates from Mudgee but she grew up all over Australia and lived in many different towns starting her business in the Illawarra NSW and recently relocating to Mid-North Queensland.

In 2016 Lani was announced as the 2016 NAIDOC Poster Competition winner with her artwork “Songlines”. This poster was used as the 2016 NAIDOC theme across the country.

Lani has been creating Aboriginal art since 2013 and has continued success across the country. One of her biggest goals and inspirations with creating Aboriginal art is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation; bringing people and communities together to learn about the amazing culture we have here in Australia.

The artwork

The artwork titled “Journey to Knowledge and Reconciliation” was created for Charles Sturt University's Reconciliation Action Plan. The overall meaning of the artwork represents Charles Sturt University as whole and the connections with staff, students, families, friends and community coming together to learn and grow and to close the gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people by taking the journey together for better understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The artwork is made up of five main elements:

The centrepiece which represents Charles Sturt University is known as a Gathering symbol to show all are welcome in one place. The Gathering symbol also contains symbols of people which represents staff, students, families, friends and community. The outer orange dots reflect the themes of relationships, respect, opportunities and governance.

The six circle symbols outside of the Gathering symbol represent Charles Sturt University values and core business. The four circle symbols coloured orange, green and blue represent the four values - insightful, inclusive, impactful and inspiring. The two circle symbols coloured orange and pink represent engagement and research with the third; education represented within the middle of main Gathering symbol.

Coming out of the centrepiece with the footprint symbols are pathways, these represent journeys and connection to the land with the blue and aqua dots representing our connection to the water.

The colours used throughout the artwork are Charles Sturt University branding colours with additional colours used to complement them.



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**Charles Sturt
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