



**Wildlife Health Australia Inc.**

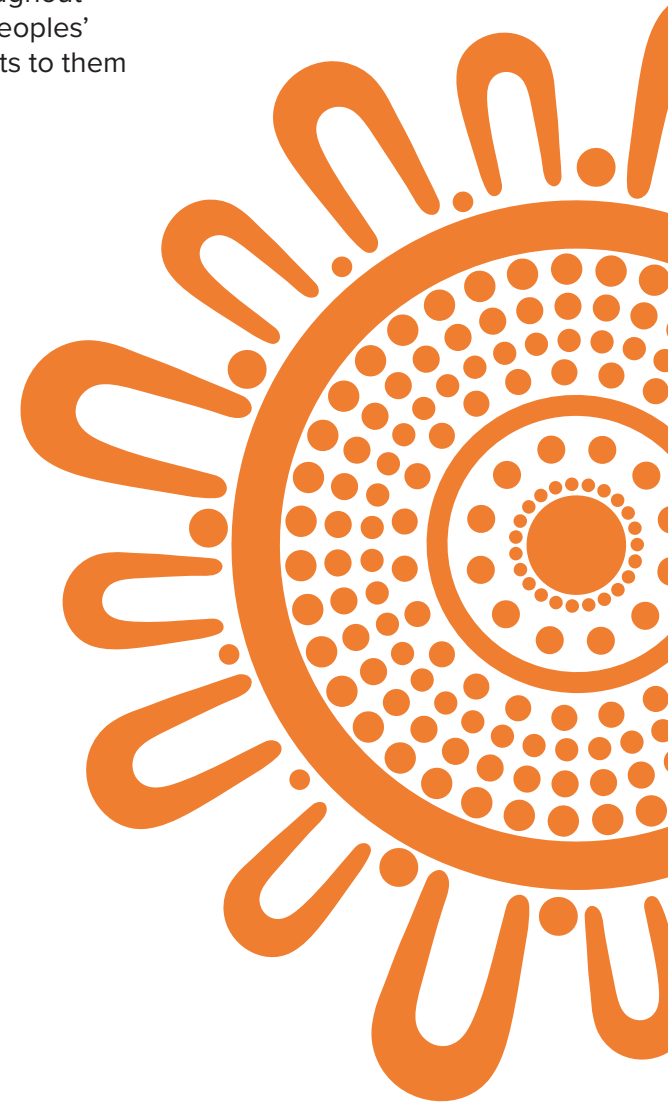
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2023 - November 2024



# Acknowledgement to Country

Wildlife Health Australia recognises the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, sea, wildlife and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past and present.



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# Artwork Story - “One Health: The Circle of Life”



In this Aboriginal Contemporary Artwork, the story of “One Health: The Circle of Life” unfolds to represent the vital connection between all living beings in Australia’s natural environment. The central motif is a mesmerising circle, symbolising the unity and harmony that exists among wildlife, people, and the land. Within this circle, intricate patterns and vibrant colours intertwine, representing Wildlife Health Australia as a whole.

## The Story:

At the heart of the artwork, the majestic wildlife of Australia takes centre stage, showcased in their unique beauty and magnificence. The artist captures the essence of these animals – from the striking kangaroo to the elusive koala, from the graceful emu to birds – each one representing the rich biodiversity found in Australia.

Radiating from the wildlife are lines and pathways that extend outward, symbolising the interconnectedness between wildlife, people, and the environment. These lines merge with symbols representing land use, climate change, and societal practices, signifying the challenges that threaten the delicate balance of nature.

The artwork features people standing alongside the wildlife, demonstrating the harmonious coexistence between Indigenous Australians and nature. These figures symbolise the profound knowledge and wisdom passed down through generations, emphasising the ancient connection between Aboriginal people and the land they have cared for for thousands of years.

The core values of Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) are woven into the artwork as vibrant threads:

- ⇒ **Wildlife health matters** - represented by the strong, unyielding tree trunks, signifying the support and protection offered to Australia’s wildlife
- ⇒ **Culture of respect** - symbolised by a hand print, reflecting diversity and unity

- ⇒ **Meaningful connections** - depicted by intertwining vines that signify the collaborations and trust between WHA, government agencies, Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders
- ⇒ **Responsive and visionary** - captured in flowing waters and land, representing our country
- ⇒ **Integrity and excellence** - depicted through the precision and intricacy of the artwork’s design.

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) journey of WHA finds its place in the artwork through a path of footprints. These footprints represent the steps taken towards respectful and meaningful relationships with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The RAP Reflect is represented throughout the artwork, guiding WHA towards building lasting and authentic partnerships.

In 2023, WHA’s new focus on two-way trusted partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island organisations is symbolised through different elements. This represents the sharing of knowledge, science, and lore between WHA and the Indigenous communities for the preservation of Australia’s iconic wildlife.

Overall, “One Health: The Circle of Life” celebrates the intricate web of life in Australia, where all beings and elements are intertwined and interdependent. It serves as a powerful reminder of the responsibility we all share to protect and sustain the health and harmony of the land, its wildlife, and its people. The artwork beckons viewers to embrace the principles of One Health and cherish the precious gift of Australia’s biodiversity, ensuring that it thrives for generations to come.

# About the Artist



## Aboriginal Artist and Graphic Designer - Lani Balzan

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

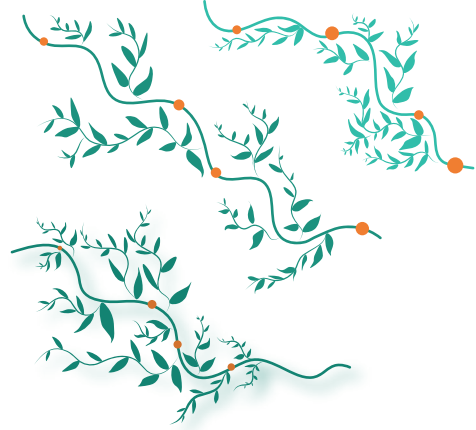
Lani has been creating Aboriginal art since 2013 and has continued success across the country. One of her biggest goals and aspirations with creating Aboriginal art is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation; bringing people and communities together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

[www.aboriginalartbylani.com.au](http://www.aboriginalartbylani.com.au)





# Statement from CEO of Wildlife Health Australia



Wildlife Health Australia is proud to announce the formal start of our journey towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2023.

The program creates a framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing our organisation to strategically set reconciliation commitments in line with our business objectives and functionalities, to achieve the most effective outcomes.

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

Through this Program, we understand that the four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow organisations to continuously develop their reconciliation commitments.

Our first RAP is bound to the objective to Reflect; involving a 12-month period where we commit to scoping our capacity for reconciliation.

Committing to a Reflect RAP means scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, deciding on our vision for reconciliation and exploring how our sphere of influence can mesh with our reconciliation aspirations.

Wildlife Health Australia aims to strengthen our surveillance of wildlife health and enhance our support for ecosystem health through collaborative work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

A vitally important part of our strategic and future-building is for Wildlife Health Australia to forge trusted, strong and productive two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and people.

We aim to learn from and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have cared for indigenous landscapes through millennia of active custodianship and conservation, and have a deep and abiding knowledge of caring for country.

During this period, we will also be taking steps to prepare our organisation for reconciliation initiatives in future RAPs.

In commencing our first Reconciliation Action Plan, Wildlife Health Australia is proud to be joining more than 2,200 organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Dr Rupert Woods  
Chief Executive Officer  
Wildlife Health Australia





# Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Wildlife Health Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Wildlife Health Australia 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 3 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 Wildlife Health Australia 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 Wildlife Health Australia, 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



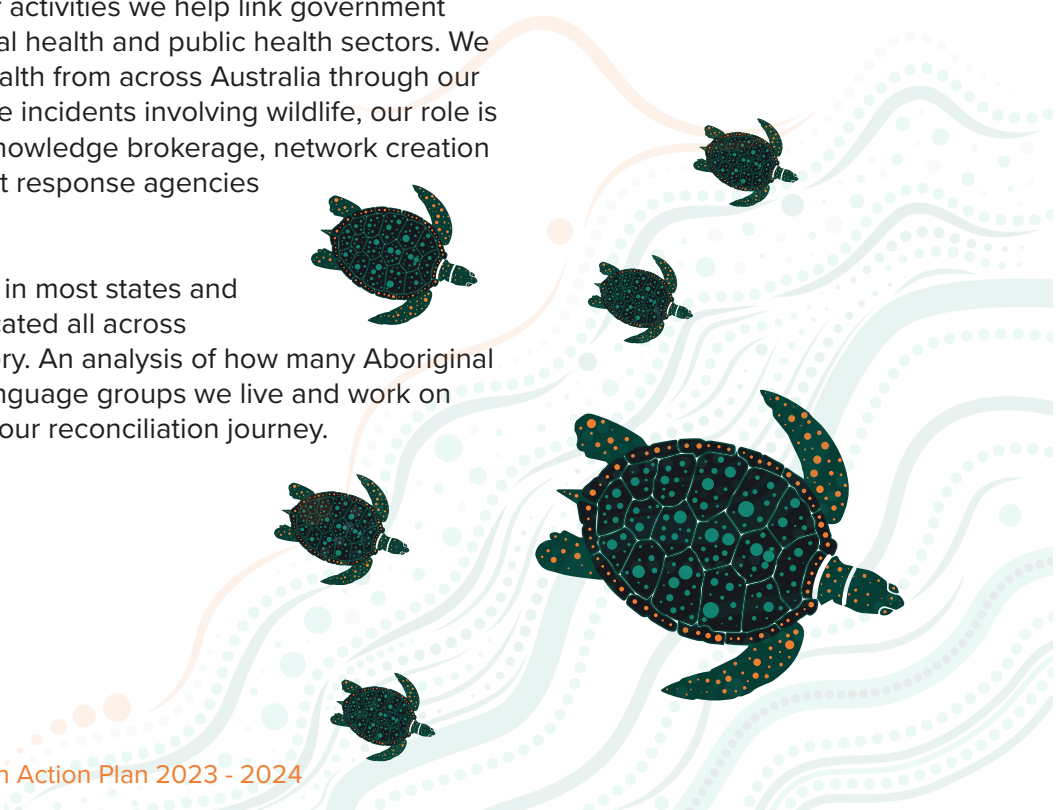


# Our Business

Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) is the coordinating body for wildlife health in Australia. Our principal objectives are the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. We link, inform and support people and organisations who work with or have an interest in wildlife health and provide leadership, coordination, technical advice, facilitation, communications, and professional support. Our members form a network of government and private stakeholders to help better manage wildlife health and its potential impact on Australia's environment, biodiversity, animal and human health, trade, and economy (and vice versa).

WHA has a strong One Health focus. Through our activities we help link government and non-government from the environment, animal health and public health sectors. We collect and disseminate information on wildlife health from across Australia through our programs and projects. During health and disease incidents involving wildlife, our role is one of communication, coordination, advocacy, knowledge brokerage, network creation and the provision of technical information to assist response agencies and stakeholders.

WHA's employees work remotely and are located in most states and territories, as are our 1,000 members, who are located all across Australia, including the Australian Antarctic Territory. An analysis of how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations' Country and language groups we live and work on has not been undertaken yet but will form part of our reconciliation journey.



# Our Business



Our principal objectives support:

- ⇒ A long-term sustainable wildlife health framework for Australia
- ⇒ Capacity building in wildlife health across Australia through communication, education, and training
- ⇒ A national wildlife health network of technical expertise, extending across zoos, universities, private veterinary practices, wildlife carer groups, hunters and fishers, coordinated across federal and state government agencies and non-government organisations
- ⇒ Australia's understanding of potential international wildlife health risks to our animals and people
- ⇒ Wildlife health intelligence and decision-making in Australia
- ⇒ Prevention of, preparedness for and response to wildlife health and disease issues
- ⇒ Maintenance of national wildlife health information datasets
- ⇒ The advancement of the natural environment and the natural ecosystems across Australia
- ⇒ Increasing awareness for One Health system thinking
- ⇒ Working with international partners through the Indo-Pacific Collaborating Centre.

WHA and our members are well positioned to assist in building national and regional capacity in these areas.

Our greatest strength is our ability to engage a large and varied group of stakeholders, many of whom may have valuable information, expertise, and experience with wildlife health issues, and can participate in discussions on these issues through WHA. WHA brings together people, groups and agencies working in these fields at many different levels of government, in the private and public sectors, and can facilitate improved collaboration and information flow.

WHA is a small organisation employing seventeen staff. The organisational structure consists of a Chief Executive Officer and National Coordinator/ Chief Operating Officer, a business unit, and four Program areas: Wildlife health surveillance, Emergencies, Collaborating Centre for wildlife health risk management in the Indo-Pacific and Capacity Building (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder development). Currently, our organisation has no known staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. While the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not known, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this.





## Our RAP and Commitment to Reconciliation

The journey for the development of our RAP originated from the leadership and support of ex-board member, Tamara Riley. Tamara is a proud Wiradjuri woman with family ties to Western NSW. Tamara is also a veterinarian and is currently undertaking a PhD within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University (ANU). Tamara has left the Board to undertake her studies overseas.

Our Board identified that we had a lack of diversity within the organisation and recognised early on that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were needed not just for the Board, but across the business and all our activities as well. As the national coordinating body for wildlife health in Australia, it was considered important to have a RAP to promote recognition of the knowledge and skills of First Nations peoples to better address wildlife health issues for Australia. A RAP is a formal recognition by WHA of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing custodianship of wildlife and wild environments with over 60,000 years of knowledge and experience that contribute towards wildlife health planning and decision-making.

WHA have a progressive and highly motivated staff who believe in social justice and reconciliation. We all feel that we need to do more and become more visible in this area. As the national coordinating body for wildlife health, it is also important that we should show leadership around this issue for the public and our partners.



# Our RAP and Commitment to Reconciliation



Our long-term aim is for WHA to be recognised as a culturally competent and culturally safe organisation to do business with which is evidenced by strong partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations and two-way learning that informs our work. We see the process of reconciliation as a journey, whereby, we as an organisation work together with our Board and key stakeholders to ready our workplace to be a culturally safe workplace and explore operationally how WHA can embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in all areas of our work including wildlife health, surveillance, preparedness, and management. It is also WHA's long-term aim to prepare our organisation for the employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander team members; and WHA as a culturally competent and safe workplace would attract, retain and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff; who in turn would feel proud to work with WHA.

We have only just started our reconciliation journey. All staff complete the inclusion and diversity training through the SBS Inclusion Program, and the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia course that have dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning modules. We have someone who self-identifies as an Aboriginal person on our Board and we will recruit staff with First Nations community engagement expertise to help bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our business, specifically around One Health and wildlife health and surveillance.



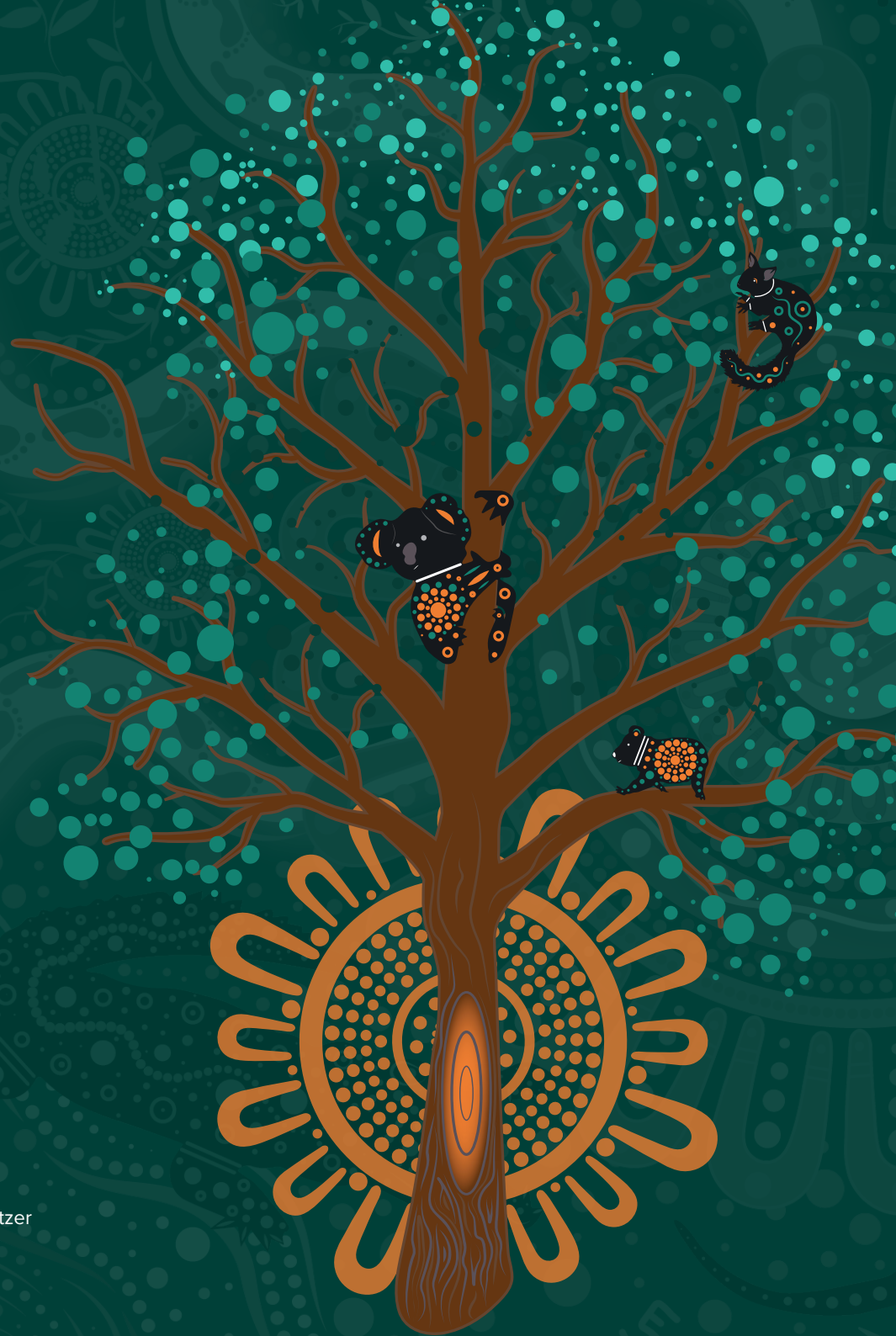
# Our partnerships/current activities

We work closely with the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) organisation, both of which have very close ties to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through their ranger program (for NAQS) and animal and people health (through AMRRIC).

Some internal activities we have undertaken already include:

- ⇒ Cultural Awareness training through the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia and Cultural Competence and Inclusiveness training through SBS (all staff complete this including a dedicated unit on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)
- ⇒ Recognition of NAIDOC Week each year
- ⇒ Acknowledgement of Country included in letterheads and email footers
- ⇒ Acknowledgement of Country before meetings
- ⇒ An Aboriginal voice on our Board
- ⇒ We are also actively scoping out ways that we can bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to our work. We have recognised the need for guidance on our Board and have recruited an experienced staff member to progress this work.
- ⇒ An informal Cultural Awareness sub-committee organised by staff has been active in sharing information about Indigenous issues and promoting events
- ⇒ We are working with one of our funders, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), to try to help develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander animal health program and identify our role in that
- ⇒ The Indigenous Voices in Wildlife project, undertaken by the former Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE), is an important first step in WHA's reconciliation journey.





**Photo Credits Page 7:**

- Powerful Owl, Akos Lumnitzer
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Eric Woehler
- Pink Cockatoo, Arthur Ferguson
- Frilled Lizard, Arthur Ferguson
- Echidna, Eric Woehler

**Photo Credits Page 14:**

- Black Cockatoos, Arthur Ferguson
- Common Brushtail Possums, Akos Lumnitzer
- Galahs, Eric Woehler
- Sugar Gliders, Eric Woehler



**Relationships**





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. <b>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	February 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Program Managers – Emergencies, Surveillance and Collaborating Centre; and the RAP Stakeholder engagement subcommittee Lead
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> RAP Stakeholder engagement subcommittee Lead
2. <b>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	November 2023 (ongoing)	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
	RAP Working Committee members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2024	<b>Lead:</b> RAP Communications Sub Committee Lead <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Chief Executive Officer <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
3. <b>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Chief Executive Officer <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> RAP Stakeholder engagement subcommittee Lead
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> RAP Stakeholder engagement subcommittee Lead
4. <b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead



**Respect**



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. <b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Develop a corporate policy outlining increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	January 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead.
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
6. <b>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	April 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> RAP stakeholder engagement subcommittee Lead.
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
7. <b>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	May-July 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager and the RAP Communications Sub Committee Lead <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager and the RAP Communications Sub Committee Lead <b>Support:</b> Communication and Marketing Coordinators
	RAP Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	<b>Lead:</b> RAP Communications Sub Committee Lead <b>Support:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager



Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.</b>	Review Wildlife Health Australia's recruitment policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	January 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
<b>9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Review and update Wildlife Health Australia's procurement policy to outline the process for business decisions for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Business Manager <b>Support:</b> HR advisor, Capacity Building Program Manager and RAP Policy Review subcommittee Lead



**Governance**



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Committee to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Form a RAP Committee to govern RAP development and implementation.	November 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Deputy Chairperson RAP Committee
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the Committee.	November 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Deputy Chairperson RAP Committee
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Committee.	November 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> RAP Champion
<b>11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Deputy Chairperson RAP Committee
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	November 2023 (ongoing)	<b>Lead:</b> RAP Champion <b>Support:</b> Chief Executive Officer
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	January 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Monitoring and evaluation RAP subcommittee
<b>12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	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 2024 (annually)	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2024 (annually)	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2024 (annually)	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager <b>Support:</b> Deputy Chairperson RAP Committee
<b>13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Capacity Building Program Manager



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