



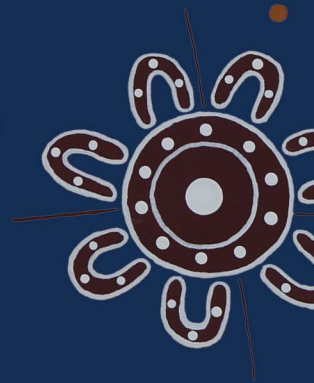
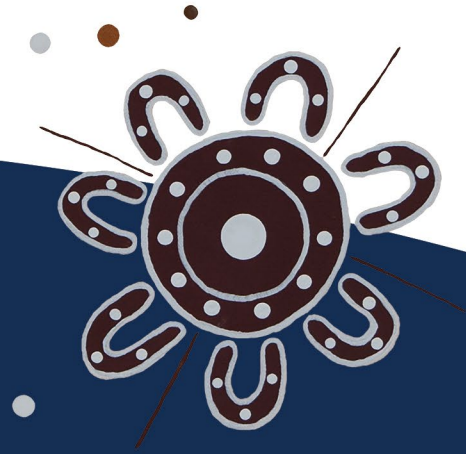
# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

FEBRUARY 2023  
– JUNE 2024



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## Artwork Details

Artist: Sharon Smith

About: *My father was born on the Lachlan River. I feel spiritually connected to Country when I paint. This painting is about connecting to land and water, listening to our Elders and working together. It is about collaborating with the community to create a better place. It is about creating connection to community, sharing our stories, and healing. Living and working on Gadigal land and traveling that journey helps us to become as one. The symbols represent men and women traveling the land.*

*I am inspired by my journey as an Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri Nation. I am constantly returning to my heritage and culture and my artwork, in its many forms, are a constant affirmation of my identity.*

## Acknowledgement of Country

**The Centre for Volunteering acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation as the traditional owners of the land on which our office stands. We recognise the importance of their connection to place and community on these lands and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.**



GEMMA RYGATE

## Message from the CEO

The Centre for Volunteering is pleased to share our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Our plan is built on the values of respect, integrity, excellence, collaboration and inclusivity. We are committed to building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We will build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. We recognise the importance of acknowledging the past and working together towards a better future for all Australians. Our Reconciliation Action Plan is an important step towards achieving this goal.

The Centre for Volunteering respects the traditions and Cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we understand their historical dispossession, and we actively work to eliminate racism and improve the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the community.

The Centre for Volunteering is working to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations peoples and using our sphere of influence to promote reconciliation and positive race relations. As we implement our RAP we aim to enhance opportunities for First Nations peoples within our sector, and to share strengths-based stories across our platforms.

Our RAP is underpinned by our commitment to reconciliation through engaging and involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the work of The Centre for Volunteering.

**Gemma Rygate**  
Chief Executive Officer

HELEN FREELAND

## Message from the Chair



The Board of The NSW Centre for Volunteering is proud of The Centre's ongoing participation in the Reconciliation Action Plan Program. We strongly support this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan as a public statement of The Centre's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples, communities and organisations.

We recognise that reconciliation requires engagement, genuine partnerships and collaboration as well as a willingness to listen and learn. The values reflected in this Plan – respect, integrity, excellence, collaboration and inclusivity - and which guided its development, are integral to the way The Centre operates.

Volunteering is about helping, giving and sharing, building connections between individuals and within communities. As the Peak Organisation for Volunteering in NSW, The Centre has considerable reach and influence across the volunteering sector and a mandate to build the capacity of volunteer involving organisations. Through this Plan and particularly through its partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations, we seek to bring benefits to us all.

At this significant time for our country, we recognise that reconciliation is a process that requires ongoing, long-term commitment to systemic change. Fundamental to this is our acknowledgement of the truths of racism, injustice, and dispossession, the impacts of which persist today for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, and which diminish us all. First Nations' communities and cultures have demonstrated great resilience and strength in enduring over two hundred years of adversity.

The actions set out in this Reconciliation Action Plan are our contribution to the work of many who aspire to Australia being a fairer and more just society in which opportunity is available and accessible to all.

**Helen Freeland**

Board Chair



KAREN MUNDINE

## Reconciliation Australia Foreword

Reconciliation Australia welcomes The Centre for Volunteering to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Centre for Volunteering 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 The Centre for Volunteering 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 The Centre for Volunteering, 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

The Centre for Volunteering is the peak body for volunteering in New South Wales. We promote and support volunteering and community participation.

The Centre for Volunteering is a not-for-profit organisation with almost 50 years' history. We provide leadership on volunteering issues in NSW and connect people and organisations to enrich the community. The Centre has a lead role in advocacy, volunteering support services and sector development.

We support volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations, to enhance volunteering, to benefit individual volunteers, and to build strong, resilient, connected communities through volunteering.

The Centre advocates for volunteering organisations and the more than 4.9 million volunteers in NSW. The Centre works with government and corporate organisations on Corporate Social Responsibility and employee volunteering programs. We reach thousands of individuals and organisations involved in the volunteering sector through our recognition program and traditional communication channels.

The Centre for Volunteering includes Volunteering NSW, a state-wide volunteer referral service, and the National School of Volunteer Management (SVM), a registered training organisation providing professional development and nationally accredited volunteering qualifications.

Our organisation has 22 staff members, both full and part time employees, and 13 volunteers. Currently our organisation has no known staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. 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 office is located on lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, in The Rocks, Sydney NSW.





**Our  
Current  
Focus**

**Strategic leadership  
and research**

**Systemic policy, engagement,  
advice, and advocacy**

**Sector capability building**



**Our  
Mission**

**To promote and support  
volunteering in the NSW  
Community. We do this through  
advocacy, policy development,  
leadership, engagement, sector  
training and development,  
recognition, and promotion.**

## **Our Values**

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### **Excellence**

We provide thought leadership and model best practice in volunteer management for volunteer-involving organisations in the sector and the wider community.

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### **Collaboration**

We value teamwork and seek opportunities to partner with stakeholders and external organisations to achieve positive outcomes in volunteering which benefits the sector and wider community.

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### **Integrity**

We act in the best interest of our valuable stakeholders and honour our commitments. We are accountable for our actions to maintain our reputation as a trustworthy and sustainable organisation.

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### **Respect**

We acknowledge different ideas and perspectives and embrace diversity. We recognise and value the contribution of others and treat everybody with dignity.

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### **Inclusivity**

We value diversity, equality, equity, cooperativeness, participation, community, and sustainability as fundamental for successful and inclusive communities.

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## Our RAP

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an important first step for The Centre for Volunteering. It demonstrates our commitment to reconciliation and the acknowledgement of the histories and systemic hardships faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Centre is committed to promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to our staff, stakeholders, business partners and the broader volunteering community. We understand that we have a lot to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the process of developing a sector that is culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive.

Our Reflect RAP is the beginning of our journey in creating a safer and culturally competent organisation that supports, respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Centre sees reconciliation as a genuine two-way relationship, our RAP is positioned around relationship building and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across NSW.

The Centre for Volunteering understands that the term volunteering is not widely recognised within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. We acknowledge that giving and sharing within community are forms of cultural practices and a way of life. The Centre for Volunteering supports and recognises these practices as volunteering.

As the peak body for volunteering in New South Wales it is vital we continue to build the cultural knowledge of our organisation to understand the experiences and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Through these learnings we can understand, promote participation, help to create opportunities, and formalise strong relationships for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the volunteering space.

The implementation of our RAP is governed by an internal team, known as the RAP Working Group which reports progress to the Chief Executive Officer and Board of The Centre for Volunteering. Our internal RAP Working Group is made up of staff at all levels of operation, including the Deputy CEO, Manager - Sector Development & Engagement, Coordinator – Sector Development and Director – Policy, Advocacy & Research. The working group sets the standard of accountability for our organisation.

The Centre for Volunteering's RAP Champion is the Manager – Sector Development & Engagement.

Our RAP Working Group has recently evolved to include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representation. These members will provide input on our progress and assist The Centres growth on our reconciliation journey.

In mid 2022 The Centre for Volunteering established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group for volunteering. The Centre will continue to work closely with this group sharing ideas, projects and partnerships with members, their networks and peers.

## Our partnerships/current activities:

**The Centre's vision is to increase the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our work and the volunteering sector.**

- Actively including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community in discussions on volunteering through committees, advisory groups, and consultation.
- Creating formal protocols for Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country processes at functions, events, and meetings.
- Including an Acknowledgement of Country in staff email signature, website copy and event collateral.
- Introduction of cultural awareness and diversity training for all staff, including sessions covering unconscious bias and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and histories.
- Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our organisation's governance through Board appointment.
- Attending events for culturally significant dates such as National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.
- Delivery of sector/stakeholder cultural awareness training targeted at volunteer leaders and volunteer-involving organisation staff.
- Amending and creating cultural safety statements to accompany human resources policies and practices
- Creating an Inclusion and Diversity Statement in relation to volunteering and community participation
- Sharing internally culturally specific information to staff regarding important dates, training and learning opportunities and information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speakers at our events, including Community lead organisations and peaks.
- Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviews and stories about volunteering, community giving, volunteer leaders and organisations, and resilience.

## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. 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 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	February 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Coordinator – Sector Development
	Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples stories when highlighting volunteering.	February 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement / Manager, Communications and Marketing
	Develop and formalise an organisational Position Statement on First Nations communities & volunteering, including acknowledgement of First Nations volunteering and contribution and our organisations reconciliation aims.	April 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Raise awareness and share information with staff and sector on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples volunteering or community contribution.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Encourage organisations within the sector to start their reconciliation journey through the promotion of cultural learning and identifying partner organisations within their sphere of influence.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement / Manager, Communications and Marketing
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	August 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement

## Respect

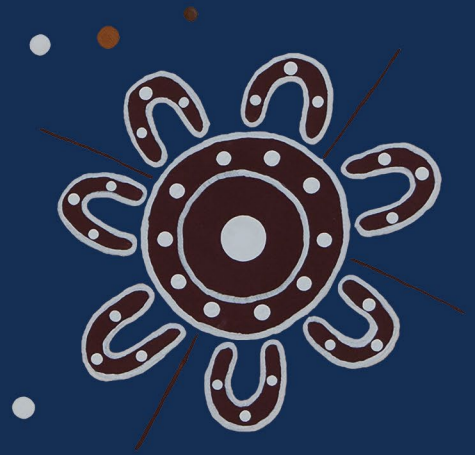
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	February 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>6. 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.	July 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	August 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Develop, amend, and implement policy allowing employees to take leave during culturally important dates, ceremony, and community meetings. Promoting the importance of cultural practices and continued connection to community and people.	September 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>7. 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.	June 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2023	Coordinator – Sector Development
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	Coordinator – Sector Development

## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	October 2023	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March 2024	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
	Adjust our volunteer and employee position descriptions to encourage recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	February 2024	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
<b>9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March 2024	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2024	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Maintain a RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation.	Review July 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2023	Manager – Sector Development & Engagement
<b>11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	April 2023	Director – Policy, Advocacy & Research
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	April 2023	Director – Policy, Advocacy & Research
	Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	April 2023	Director – Policy, Advocacy & Research
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2023	Director – Policy, Advocacy & Research
<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 annually	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy
<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.	April 2023	Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy



**Contact** – for public enquiries  
about our RAP

**Dr. Ben Hillier**

Director – Research, Policy and Advocacy

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