

November 2022 – November 2023

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan



nation
partners

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Statement from Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine

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

Nation Partners 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 Nation Partners 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 Nation Partners, 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

Statement from Nation Partners Managing Director, Matthew Nation

Nation Partners was founded in 2013 with a vision to create a purpose-driven business that places the wellbeing of society and the planet at our core. This is enshrined in our constitution, ensuring that all business decisions consider our broader impacts. Our B Corp certification recognises the many ways we have shaped our business around meeting the highest global social, ethical, and environmental standards.

Our first project as a business led us to work alongside Traditional Owners on the Cox Peninsula in the Northern Territory; the Larrakia People. Working closely with Government and local communities, we identified a strategy for rehabilitating the land and meeting the expectations and aspirations of the Larrakia People. Our work assisted in finding a resolution to the Kenbi Land Claim, one of the oldest unresolved claims in Australia, and in doing so; we supported the Traditional Owners in being able to care for their Country once more.

Our experience working with the Larrakia People provided us with an opportunity to learn firsthand, what damage and harm has been done and to better understand how First Nation land management practices that have been learnt over thousands of years, can shape contemporary land, water and fire management.

The first grant through the Nation Partners Giving Fund provided us with a further opportunity to better understand the use of cultural burning and cultural learning pathways to fire and land management. Our partnership with Firesticks, has been a natural fit and extension of the work we do to protect our environment and biodiversity.

Our reconciliation action plan is an important step for making stronger commitments toward building cultural understanding across the business and providing clear procurement pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation. We see the need to have a public voice that supports reconciliation and achieves a Treaty for First Nations people.



Matthew Nation
Managing Director
Nation Partners

Our Business

Nation Partners is an employee-owned professional services firm specialising in environmental advisory services, stakeholder relations and industry and business development. We provide leading skills for complex projects in the transport, water, energy and government sectors to deliver the best outcomes for business and the community.

At Nation Partners, we have always been a purpose-driven organisation. Our aim is to build a business that people want to be a part of – a business that is driven by a sense of purpose and connection with its people, communities and the environment. Being 100% employee owned, our people are committed to our future and the future of the environments and communities where we operate.

Nation Partners has been a B Corporation since the very start, using business as a force for good. We are a signatory to the B Corp Inclusive Economy and have committed to impact goals relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. We recognise the importance of equality and have created a flexible work environment that supports inclusion and we have created roles that are permanent part-time or casual roles, to provide flexibility to a more diverse team; whilst allowing staff to develop skills and progress their career.

We have also been developing improved recruitment and procurement processes, that will allow us to attract and build a more diverse team; including providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Being a purpose driven organisation is central to who we are, with a shared vision of doing more than just growing a consulting business and ensuring we can direct our collective energy (and profits) towards solving some of the planets most challenging problems.

We take our commitment as a profit with purpose business seriously and have donated more than \$100,000 to supporting environmental and social challenges facing society and the planet.



OUR PURPOSE

We work with *like-minded* clients to influence a *better* and more sustainable *future* for society and the *planet*.

Care



We value sustainable outcomes over everything else. Relationships are the mechanism that allows us to do great work.

Courage



We provoke the thinking of the ambitions people we partner with, who are trying to make real and lasting change.

Clarity



We're driven by outcomes, and use data and robust analysis to reveal the issue and set direction.

Our purpose

We work with like-minded clients to influence a better and more sustainable future for society and the planet

We believe

- We are free to create the life we chose
- Supporting each other's safety and wellbeing allows us to stay strong
- Diverse perspectives and collaboration are needed for exceptional solutions
- We have a responsibility to influence a better future
- It takes courage to do things differently
- Exceptional is worth the extra effort

The outcomes we strive for

- Keep each other safe and well
- Maintain a sustainable business
- Clients trust us and love our work
- Develop and support bright minds
- Positively influence a better future
- Shape new thinking across the industry

Our climate change strategy and giving framework aims to integrate our volunteering, pro bono and workplace giving and we are constantly looking at how we can make an even greater positive impact.

Nation Partners operates Australia-wide, and employs over 50 people, with offices located in Melbourne (head office), Sydney, and Canberra.

At the time of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) submission, Nation Partners has no employees who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Nation Partners first reflect RAP seeks to formalise our commitments to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We believe that building a business with a shared understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements is an important first step in furthering reconciliation. We recognise we have both a responsibility and obligation to take a positive and meaningful role in strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In support of our vision to **influence a better and more sustainable future for society and the planet**, we seek to make genuine and sustainable change within our sphere of influence.

The objectives of our first RAP are to:

- Build organisational awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and achievements.
- Ensure Nation Partners is a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, subconsultants, suppliers and clients.
- Understand more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups where we work and operate.
- Review our policies, processes and systems to ensure there are no institutional barriers to employment of people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Celebrate events significant in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote awareness of histories and communities.
- Maintain a RAP working group, with a cross section of the business to implement the initiatives outlined in our RAP (this document) and routinely review and update our commitments and plan.

Some of the reconciliation initiatives we have supported and initiated to date include:

- Acknowledgment of Country at internal and external meetings and within company email signatures
- Donations to support First Nations-owned not-for-profit organisations through the monthly B-the-change award, a monthly internal award for excellence within the businesses, where the recipient is able to nominate where a donation is made. Over the last 12 months Nation Partners has donated to:
 - BLAQ Aboriginal Corporation who seek to elevate the voices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ community (\$1000)
 - Country Needs People a not-for-profit working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landholders to protect nature, support culture, create jobs and more by supporting community-based Indigenous land and sea management across Australia (\$1000)
 - Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) who provide legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the State of Victoria (\$1000)
 - Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS), a Year 7 transition school on Wurundjeri Country for Indigenous students from remote and regional communities in the NT and Victoria
- Establishment of a RAP working group – The working group is made up of team members across the Nation Partners business from different work streams and levels. Details of the RAP group members are listed in the RAP implementation section of this document
- Nominated a RAP Champion – Erin McPherson, Senior Consultant – Stakeholder Relations and Communications
- Documenting our commitment to create sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through our responses to requests for proposals (where possible and relevant to the requested scope of work).

Our Partnerships

While the RAP is a first step for Nation Partners to formally recognise our commitment to reconciliation, Nation Partners has previously been involved in, and continues to be involved in, various engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through ongoing business activities.

Merri Creek Women's Walk, Water4Good

Nation Partners is an active member of Water4Good, an engineering and specialist services group, who have come together to create a positive legacy in the water industry. A percentage of Water4Good profits are directed to a collaboratively managed fund, to support social and sustainable initiatives that make a real difference.

Through this partnership, Nation Partners worked with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to share their stories of the Merri Merri as part of the Merri Creek Women's Walk. This included a donation, and pro-bono services to support funding Wurundjeri involvement, including a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony and purchase of artwork from a local Wurundjeri artist.

This was an opportunity to partner with like-minded organisations and work with Traditional Owners and promote their stories.

Giving Fund

In 2021, we partnered with the Australian Communities Foundation to launch the Nation Partners Giving Fund. Harnessing our desire to use business as a force for good, the fund's purpose is to support communities across Australia to design and lead interventions that address the injustices they face, while tackling climate change.

The first allocation of this fund was given to Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Company to support the planning and delivery of women's cultural fire workshops, a new initiative that will bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across each state and support them to fulfil their important roles in cultural fire – from being caretakers of women's-only areas and plants, to teachers and role models to inspire the next generation to care for Country.

Cox Peninsula

Nation Partners has formed successful partnerships with local stakeholders to optimise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and leadership on our projects where possible. For example, we worked extensively with the local Indigenous Ranger group on Cox Peninsula, NT to develop a socio-economic work plan and capacity building program that provided a roadmap for ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation was maximised (>32%) on the \$32M construction and remediation project.

Implementing our RAP

The Reflect RAP focuses on the three pillars of reconciliation.



Relationships

At the heart of reconciliation is the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. At Nation Partners we recognise the need to develop strong relationships, built on trust and respect, that are free of bias and racism to achieve reconciliation.



Respect

Understanding of First Nations cultures, rights and experiences underpins reconciliation. We cannot progress in a meaningful way without a shared understanding of the past. To us this includes establishing cultural awareness training, continue to promote and provide educational opportunities and engaging within the business in line with our iCARE feedback policies.



Opportunities

Equal participation across a range of industries is a benefit to all. We recognise that to be the best organization we must have diverse backgrounds and thinking represented.

RAP working group

A RAP working group, including RAP champion has been established to develop and implement the RAP.

Members of the RAP working group are self-nominated. A Terms of Reference will be established for the group, as noted in the RAP actions and deliverables table. Members of the RAP Working Group are:

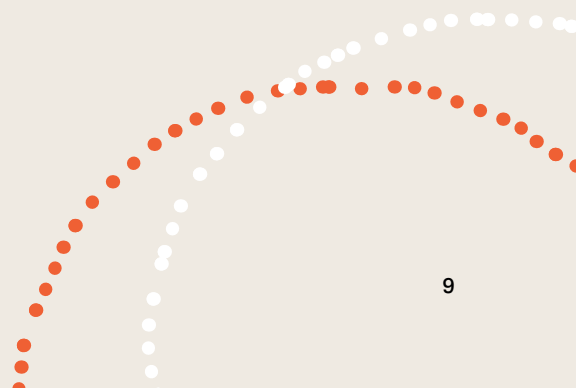
Name	Title
Erin McPherson	RAP Champion, Senior Consultant Stakeholder Relations and Communications
Matt Nation	Nation Partners Managing Director
Michell Bruce	Senior Principal, Environmental and Business Advisory
Liam Gooley	Principal, Environmental and Safety Advisory
Mason Wood	Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications
Sam Lindsay	Senior Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	November 2022	<i>(Victoria) – Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications</i> <i>(NSW) – Principal, Environment and Safety</i> <i>(Canberra) – Senior Principal, Environment and Sustainability</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	February 2023	<i>Managing Director</i>
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May – 3 June, 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May – 3 June, 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion</i>
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	November 2022	<i>(Victoria) – Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications</i> <i>(NSW) – Principal, Environment and Sustainability</i> <i>(Canberra) – Senior Principal, Environment and Business</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	November 2022	<i>Managing Director</i>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	February 2023	<i>Managing Director Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	February 2023	<i>Managing Director Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	November 2022	<i>Senior Principal, Environment and Business</i>
	• Deliver Cultural Awareness training for all staff.	April 2023	<i>Senior Principal, Environment and Business</i>
	• Conduct a review of Cultural learning needs within our organisation.	November 2022	<i>Senior Principal, Environment and Business</i> <i>Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational areas and raise awareness with all staff.	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion</i> <i>Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion</i>
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i> <i>Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	3-10 July 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i> <i>Consultant, Stakeholder relations and communications</i>
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	3-10 July 2023	<i>RAP Working Group lead</i>





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and update internal policies, procedures and materials to ensure they are culturally safe and appropriate, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and/or advisors.	December 2022	<i>Managing Director</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. The Employment Strategy should guide how Nation Partners attracts, supports and retains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	February 2023	<i>Managing Director</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2022	<i>Managing Director</i>
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	February 2023	<i>Managing Director</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2022	<i>Managing Director</i>



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion (Victoria) – Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	November 2022	<i>RAP working group lead</i>
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	December 2022	<i>RAP Champion Consultant, Stakeholder Relations and Communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. 	November 2022	<i>RAP Champion Managing Director</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	February 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August annually	<i>RAP Champion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September, 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	August 2023	<i>RAP Champion</i>



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