



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

# Reconciliation Action Plan

January 2023 – March 2024





# Acknowledgement

Umwelt acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing cultural and spiritual connection to land, sky, the waters of rivers, lakes and the sea, and community.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community Elders, past and present, and the Traditional Custodians of land on which our offices are located, the Yugara/ Yugarapul and Turrbal peoples, the Whadjuk Nyoongar people, the Awabakal people, the Cammeraygal Clan of the Eora Nation, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples, the Ngunnawal people, the Wiradjuri people and the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live in the areas in which we operate.



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# About the Artwork

## *Yapung Maryiyang*

(Pathway Forward)

This highly textured engraved artwork acknowledges traditional custodians and the pathway we travel together towards reconciliation.

A central gathering circle encompassed by traditional people symbols highlights respectful relationships, collaboration and inclusion, as we connect and work together around shared vision.

A backdrop of engraved songlines captures our diverse and beautiful country and waterways, connecting tribal groups across a national footprint. The flowing pathway rising on the canvas celebrates the pathway forward, as we journey together, in creating opportunities for a brighter future for generations to come.





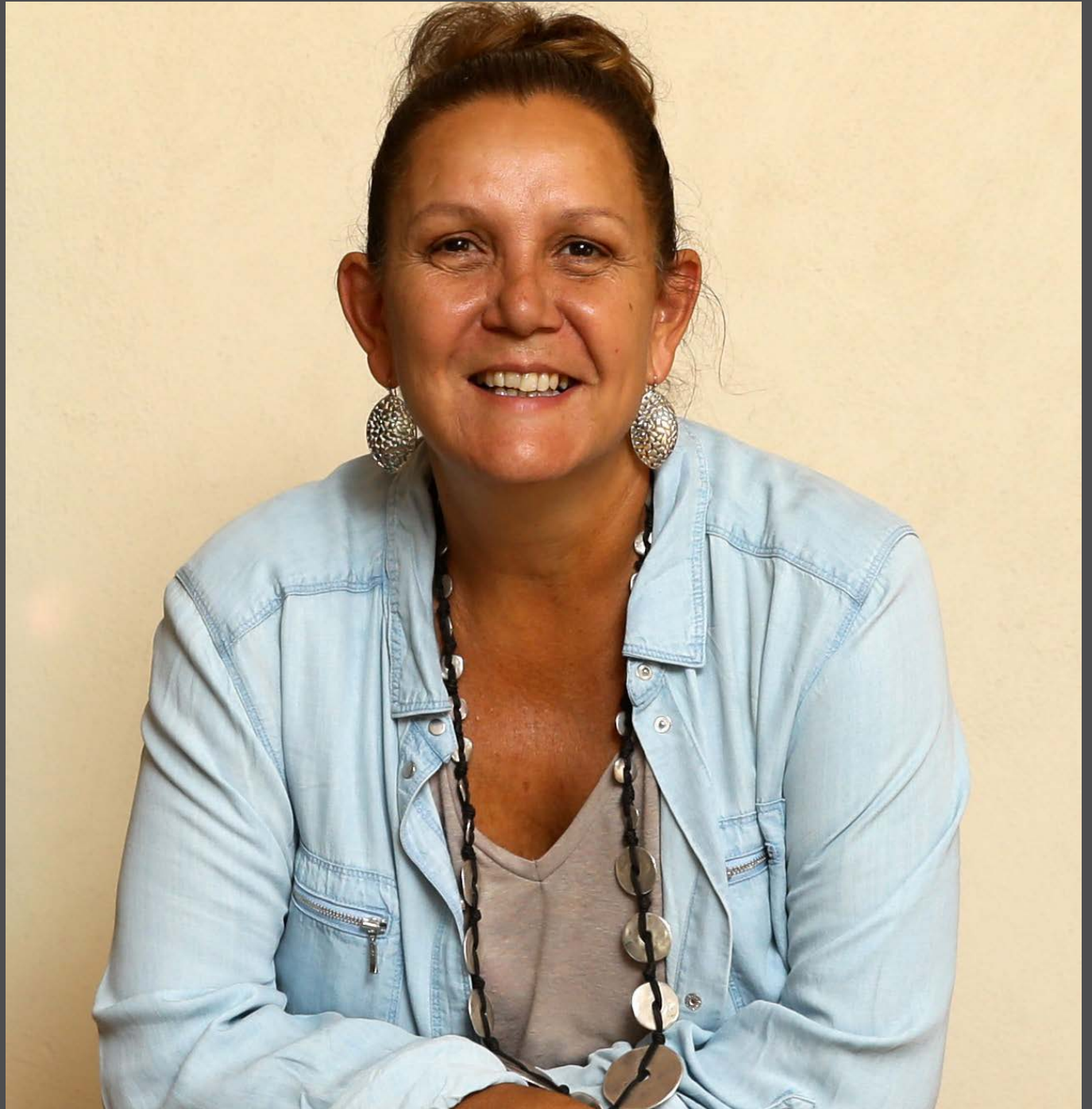
# About the Artist

## *Saretta Fielding*

I have enjoyed growing up on Awabakal Country with family members instrumental in commencing the Awabakal Co-op. Having the benefit of growing up within a large and close knit extended family and much of my work is influenced by my cultural values of caring for Country, family connection and relationships. I am connected across Country in the Hunter and often work in conjunction with Aboriginal LALCs, organisations and community on collaborative projects.

For me, growing up surrounded by Mob, sitting around listening to an Elder, Aunt or Uncle tell a yarn and having everyone come together for a meal was the best. I've had the privilege of learning and practicing my culture on Country, as the member of a proud Aboriginal family, who live by our cultural values and ensure we passed down our stories.

The Hunter is my home and I am greatly influenced by the beauty of Country in my artwork. Growing up surrounded by the bushlands of the Watagan Mountains, the shores of Lake Macquarie and the wonderful beaches of our NSW east coastline has given me pride in my identity and my homeland. I've grown up visiting traditional sites on Country, learning dreamtime stories and visiting significant places with my Elders.





# Our commitment to reconciliation

We recognise that over the last 230 years, the lives of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been impacted by land dispossession; ignorance and suppression of ancient and continuing cultures and of traditional knowledge and values; violence; removal from family; unequal opportunity; injustice and racism.

Umwelt acknowledges the grief and pain experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because of these experiences.

We acknowledge and celebrate the achievements, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and sovereign Nations, their knowledge and care for Country and their contribution to the Australian nation. We acknowledge their gracious willingness to walk together and share their understanding of Country, to create a better future for all Australians.

Umwelt supports reconciliation and believes that it is the responsibility of all Australians – as individuals, families, organisations, and communities. We value lasting and meaningful relationships, based on trust, respect and empowerment, and sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are committed to working towards a just and equitable future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, where the past is acknowledged, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are consulted about decisions that affect them, and there is continuing positive action for change.

Our desire to contribute to Australia's journey towards reconciliation aligns with our company's vision and core values. Our commitment to reconciliation centres on the three pillars of reconciliation – Relationships, Respect and Opportunity:

- We will promote and support meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and participation in the projects we deliver across our national practice, respecting cultural values and Country
- We will continue to seek strong, truthful and positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all locations in which we work
- Our aim is that through strong relationships:
  - We will build opportunities for all Umwelt employees to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures and what these cultures mean for sustainable stewardship of land and water
  - We will strive to create opportunities in our business for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned suppliers
  - Where relevant, we will seek to influence and work with our clients to enhance employment and supplier opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities





# Reconciliation Australia CEO Statement

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

Umwelt 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 Umwelt 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 Umwelt, 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**



# A Message from our Managing Director



Barbara Crossley  
Umwelt Managing Director

I am proud to introduce Umwelt's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which formally begins our reconciliation journey.

Our vision as a business is to make a difference to the world around us. Our aim is to contribute to a society where historical injustices are acknowledged, where diversity is celebrated, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are fully empowered to manage their own affairs and have access to the same opportunities as other Australians.

This Reconciliation Action Plan outlines our commitments and actions over the next 15 months. Over this time, we will establish our vision and unique strategy for embedding reconciliation in our business, by further developing our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, listening to and learning from their experience and perspectives, identifying gaps in our awareness and knowledge, connecting to a network of other organisations committed to reconciliation, and exploring our sphere of influence.

We will engage our whole organisation to build understanding, acknowledge the past and current challenges, promote respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures, and actively develop meaningful opportunities within our business for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I would like to thank the members of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group who have contributed to the preparation of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

We have appointed our National Social Practice Lead and Executive Manager as our RAP Champion. Together with our RAP Working Group, the RAP Champion will lead our people in the implementation of our RAP, embedding reconciliation practice across our business.



# Our Business

Umwelt is an environmental and social consultancy that has been providing services for a range of industry and government clients for 30 years. We have offices across the nation including in Newcastle, Sydney, Orange, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth and Melbourne and we operate in many regions of Australia.

Our core business is integrated assessment and management of environmental and social issues, in strategic and development assessment contexts. Our services support the Defence, renewables, resources, urban development, infrastructure, and policy and regulation sectors.

We have a team of more than 200 people with a broad range of knowledge and expertise, including project managers, environmental and social consultants, ecologists, archaeologists and cultural heritage consultants, hydrogeologists, water and noise engineers, coastal and natural resource managers and GIS specialists. Our technical specialists are supported by office managers, administrators, accounts, Human Resources, Work Health and Safety and procurement professionals.

Currently, 1% of our team across the nation has advised us that they identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. In our recruitment, we actively encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply for roles across the business.

We will work within this Reconciliation Action Plan to determine culturally appropriate ways to better understand the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and what will help to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our team.

Our values underpin the attitudes and character of Umwelt:



## Our People

We value our people. Together we seek to create an environment where our people feel valued and empowered.



## Integrity

We hold firm to our professional integrity.



## Quality & Innovation

We strive for excellence, being adaptable and providing fit for purpose solutions.



## Respect

Trust is important to us. We support each other. We are respectful.



## Communication

We proactively communicate – listen, ask questions, seek and give feedback.



## Commitment

We get it done and hold ourselves and each other accountable to our commitments.



## Create Value

We create value for our clients and our business.

We bring these values to our reconciliation journey.



# Our reconciliation journey so far

Over almost 30 years of operations, members of our team have built strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the areas in which we work.

We follow the 'Ask First' principle when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and always promote collaborative engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities we work with. We are building our capacity to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Country-led land use planning, design and land management projects.

*Reconciliation is part of our business commitment to diversity and equal opportunity.*

We have started to extend cultural awareness across our team by participating in NAIDOC Week celebrations in our office locations and recognising Closing the Gap and National Reconciliation Week with activities for our teams. In addition to working collaboratively with Aboriginal groups on relevant projects, we support Aboriginal businesses in supplying essential business services, such as our stationery supplies.

While preparing this Reflect RAP as our first step in our formal reconciliation journey, we have documented existing informal approaches to reconciliation that are part of our business practice. The process of developing the Reflect RAP has encouraged us to review our previous approach and raised our awareness of the scope of reconciliation. We have considered gaps in our approach and identified new initiatives we can undertake across our business to more effectively advance reconciliation.

During the preparation of the Reflect RAP, we have conducted preliminary staff awareness activities and working group focus meetings and commenced background research on how other organisations (in the environment sector and in regions where we work) have approached reconciliation.

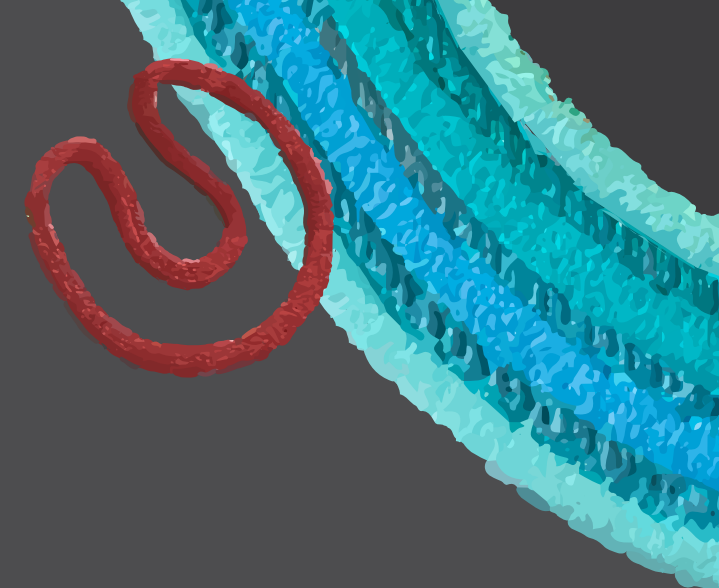




# Our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Umwelt established an internal Reconciliation Working Group in 2020. The Working Group has clear Terms of Reference to inform and guide the development of our Reflect RAP. They have met regularly over two years and have led initiatives across the business to raise awareness of the importance of reconciliation.

The Group includes a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10 representatives of different parts of our business, geographically and functionally. Members of the Working Group contribute knowledge and perspectives from their experience in diverse regional, sectoral, professional and cultural backgrounds.



Executive Champion



**Dr Sheridan Coakes**  
Practice Lead Social Assessment & Community Engagement

Convenor



**Jessica Anagnostaras**  
Principal Social Consultant

Members



**Tom de Silva**  
Senior Environmental Consultant



**Louise McCauley**  
Executive Assistant



**Clay Law**  
Archaeologist and Cultural Heritage Consultant



**Michelle Croker**  
Senior Social Consultant

Convenor



**Pam Dean-Jones**  
Senior Principal Consultant Communities and Landscapes / Associate

Alternative chair/convenor



**Karen Lamb**  
Social Work Area Manager



**Larissa Abbott**  
Senior Ecologist



**Jacob Manners**  
Senior Ecologist



**Luke Wolfe**  
Principal Archaeologist

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

By developing and implementing our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, we seek to do our part in creating a future where there is respect for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by learning about, reflecting upon and acting for reconciliation in all aspects of our business.

Through the Reflect RAP, we aim to build our team's knowledge and cultural understanding, foster respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and explore opportunities for employment and mutually beneficial partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.

Our commitment is to a reconciliation journey that challenges us and makes a difference. Our Reflect RAP and subsequent RAPs will be implemented across our business nationally.

Our Reflect RAP outlines practical actions to begin meaningful change towards reconciliation, through Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

In this context, Governance refers to:

- formal structures within our business to learn about and understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the work we do
- continuing to monitor, review and improve how we implement our RAP

To support our continuing focus and commitment to reconciliation across our business, we have nominated a member of our National Executive as our Reconciliation Action Plan Champion. Responsibility for driving progress towards reconciliation, raising awareness of opportunities to enhance reconciliation across all parts of our business, and ensuring our Board is kept informed, is now part of the role of our National Social Practice Lead and Executive Manager.

Our RAP provides focus and identifies clear actions and opportunities to strengthen our reconciliation efforts and connect us with like-minded businesses across Australia, who are working to achieve meaningful reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP Working Group will continue to inform and monitor Umwelt's implementation of our RAP and communicate progress with our staff and the communities in which we work. The RAP Working Group will prepare six-monthly reports on progress in implementing the RAP, which will be reviewed by our Reconciliation Action Plan Champion and presented to the Board of Umwelt. These reports will include actions completed, actions not completed and reasons why, results and lessons learned. Annually, these progress reports will also include a review of measurable changes in indicators of reconciliation outcomes that are relevant to our business.



# Our Reflect RAP Commitment Register

Our RAP Commitment Register identifies the actions we will take in relation to Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance. It identifies when actions will be implemented and who is responsible.





# Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline (post approval)	Responsibility (Leadership & support)
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	• <b>1A</b> - Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local areas or spheres of influence, across Australia.	March 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group
	• <b>1B</b> - Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, support from RAP Champion in Executive Management Team
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	• <b>2A</b> - Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group. Support from RAP Champion in Executive Management Group and Umwelt systems manager
	• <b>2B</b> - RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event (in person or online).	27 May - 3 June, 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group
	• <b>2C</b> - Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW (in person or online).	27 May - 3 June, 2023	RAP Champion in Executive Management Team Support from Umwelt Associates
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	• <b>3A</b> - Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Monthly presentations at company-wide staff meetings - Review practice August 2023	Managing Director
	• <b>3B</b> - Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey, for advice and support.	March 2023 and reviewed in September 2023 and March 2024	Chair of RAP Working Group. Support from RAP Champion in Executive Management Group
	• <b>3C</b> - Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey, to strengthen our capacity together.	March 2023 and reviewed in July, September and December 2023 and February 2024	Chair of RAP Working Group, supported by RAP Champion in Executive Leadership Group
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	• <b>4A</b> - Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2023	HR Leader
	• <b>4B</b> - Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	December 2023	HR Leader



# Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline (post approval)	Responsibility (Leadership & support)
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	• <b>5A</b> - Develop a strategy for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	March 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with RAP Champion and Chief Operating Officer
	• <b>5B</b> - Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, in consultation with RAP Champion and Chief Operating Officer
	• <b>5C</b> - Investigate cultural awareness training options in Umwelt office localities across Australia.	July 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, in consultation with RAP Champion and Chief Operating Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	• <b>6A</b> - Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the Country within our organisation's operational area.	May 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, with support from RAP Champion and Office Managers in each of our office locations
	• <b>6B</b> - Increase our team's understanding of the purpose and significance of cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, in consultation with RAP Champion and Chief Operating Officer
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	• <b>7A</b> - Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June and July 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with Manager of Umwelt Marketing Team
	• <b>7B</b> - Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June and July 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with RAP Champion and Umwelt Marketing Manager
	• <b>7C</b> - RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023 and then each year	Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with RAP Champion and Umwelt Marketing Manager

# Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline (post approval)	Responsibility (Leadership & support)
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8A - Develop a recruitment policy and process to support increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. This may include opportunities for trainees, work placements and other cultural diversity initiatives.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with HR Leader, RAP Champion, Managers and Chief Operating Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8B - Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	March 2023	HR Leader
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9A - Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li> </ul>	June 2023	RAP Champion and Chief Operating Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9B - Investigate Supply Nation Membership and prepare a briefing to the MD for approval.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Manager Administration Support, in consultation with Chief Operating Officer



# Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline (post approval)	Responsibility (Leadership & support)
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) and Terms of Reference to drive the delivery of the RAP	• <b>10A</b> - Form an RWG to manage RAP implementation.	Review RAP Working Group membership by February 2023 and update membership in June and December 2023	RAP Champion and Chair of RAP Working Group
	• <b>10B</b> - Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	Review February 2023	RAP Champion, with Chair of RAP Working Group. Updated Terms of Reference to be approved by Managing Director
	• <b>10C</b> - Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group.	September 2023	RAP Champion, with input from Chair of RAP Working Group and HR Leader
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	• <b>11A</b> - Define resource needs for RAP finalisation and implementation as part of the Umwelt Annual Plan and budget.	October 2023	Chair of RAP Working Group, with RAP Champion and Managers
	• <b>11B</b> - Engage senior leaders in the delivery of the RAP commitments.	Monthly briefings to executive leadership group and Board, from February 2023	RAP Champion, with Chair of RAP Working Group
	• <b>11C</b> - Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on progress in implementing RAP commitments.	February 2023	Manager QA, with Chair of RAP Working Group in consultation with Chief Operating Officer
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	• <b>12A</b> - Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up to date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June annually	Chair of RAP Working Group, with Manager QA
	• <b>12B</b> - Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1st August annually	Chair of RAP Working Group, with Manager QA
	• <b>12C</b> - Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2023 and annually in September	Chair of RAP Working Group, with Manager QA
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	• <b>13A</b> - Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Register in October 2023, with work commencing by January 2024	RAP Champion, with Chair of RAP Working Group, sign off by MD



# Contact details



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## RAP Champion

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