



Reconciliation Action Plan

REFLECT

Jan 2022 – Dec 2022





Meet the artist: Casey Coolwell-Fisher

Casey Coolwell-Fisher is a Nunukul woman of the Quandamooka people from Minjerribah/Terranjeri (North Stradbroke Island).

Casey has a creative background in Graphic Design and is co-founder, along side her husband Roy Fisher, of CHABOO, a home decor and design business specialising in hand painted Aboriginal art on wooden products, Graphic Design and customised murals.

This is one of the deep relationships that we have built, and we are so grateful that Casey has walked the path with us.

About the artwork:

Learning from our Connections

by Casey Coolwell-Fisher

We all live, learn and communicate differently.

This artwork represents different communities learning from one another and maintaining a strong connection through the knowledge shared.

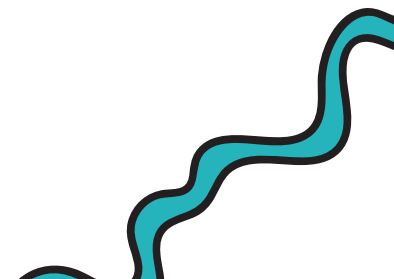
The connecting communities are represented in the circle motifs, with different community members around each circle.

The linking lines and dots are the travels we make to create a connection and the footprints we make on these journeys.

The outer two curved lines signify water, our life source, and the natural flow of forming relationships.

The inner dots represent the knowledge being shared amongst all of the communities and the line work are the tracks being made.

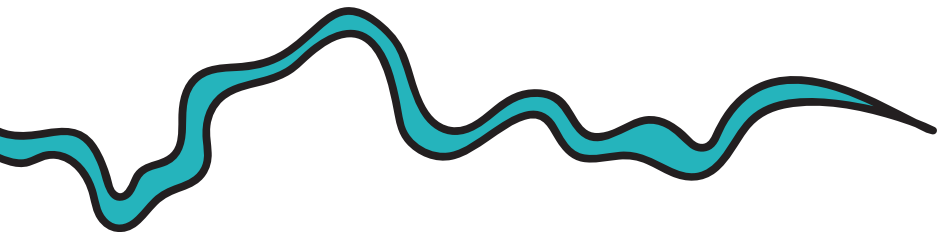
The outer dots are the stories, knowledge and wisdom being shared out into the wider communities.





This document outlines The Difference Incubator's (TDi) Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan for January 2022 to December 2022. We invite those reading this to join us on our journey as we work together to help create a more fair and equitable future for all Australians.

We would like to begin this document by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we write this RAP, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.



Message from the CEO: Anthea Smits



“I am proud to support and stand behind TDi’s journey towards a Reconciliation Action Plan, and to be more formally, intentionally and collaboratively working with First Nations peoples of Australia to create a harmonious and prosperous Australia for all.

Future generations will be the ones to inherit the decisions we make today, and I want our children and our children’s children to grow up in an Australia that has worked to heal wounds of the past, that has recognised the shared history that First Nations peoples have experienced, and that is working productively and respectfully to build a harmonious and fair future for all.

Here at TDi we have a deep driving belief in all that we do that businesses, when designed well, can be powerful agents for good. Part of our mission to help bring this to life is to support businesses to reclaim their mandate to not only create wealth and economic sustainability, which is of course a necessity, but to also encourage them to use their privilege and position to be an agent for positive social and environmental change.

One of the ways we are more actively engaging on this journey towards reconciliation, aside from our Reflect RAP, is by partnering with Indigenous Business Australia to deliver accelerators tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs.

Over the past few years we’ve been working to develop our method and really understand the best way we can support passionate people and innovative ideas to create sustainable change. We are thrilled to now be able to use what we have learnt to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs to support them to achieve financial success and economic independence, as they build and test their enterprises.

We are especially looking forward to be opening a deeper conversation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share learnings, and to learn how to best stand beside them as they speak their truth, and envisage their future, and are excited to offer what we can to help create a more unified, and empowered community of peoples across Australia.”

Foreword from TDi's Board Chair: Corinne Proske



“For Australia to reach its full potential we need to recognise both the unique qualities of First Nations peoples as well as the reality of their shared experiences as Traditional Owners of the land throughout history.

We have so much to learn and gain from First Nations peoples, as they hold unique knowledge of this land and their cultures and peoples, and we must see this as an opportunity for a two-way street of learning, reflecting and collaborating together to build a fair and just future for all.

Essential to this shared vision of prosperity and equality, as well as what we can best contribute as an organisation, is supporting further First Nations peoples’ economic empowerment and capability development through entrepreneurship.

The Difference Incubator exists to awaken the potential in entrepreneurs to reach their dream. We aim to, moving forward, provide a more concrete way to work with First Nations peoples and entrepreneurs to provide them with the support that they need to build sustainable businesses that create employment and a positive impact in the world. We look forward to exploring, in collaboration with First Nations Peoples, what this might look like.

Throughout this journey of reconciliation, we especially are looking forward to exploring how to best contribute to reconciliation and how to also incorporate, encourage and initiate reconciliation with the social enterprises, businesses, non-profits and the individuals we work with within our community and networks.”



Our Organisation

The Difference Incubator (TDi) is an Australian non-profit organisation that exists to awaken the possibility of both doing good and making money in organisations and individuals. We seek to build better businesses that are sustainable and have positive social or environmental impact, ultimately using business to address entrenched societal and environmental challenges.

TDi returns to the roots of business by building strong, high impact businesses where there is no compromise on either profit or purpose. We work with businesses at all stages of development; from the start-up phase to growing enterprises, right through to well-established businesses that want to have more impact.

TDi provides business modelling and social impact consulting for organisations looking to make a difference for people and the planet. As a group of creative practitioners, entrepreneurs and innovators we are driven by a deep belief in the power of business to achieve change.

We bring diverse voices together to generate and support new actions towards societal well-being. We believe that building more sustainable and equitable businesses not only addresses big societal issues, but also improves business performance.

We are here to help business leaders to make that happen. Through strong impact driven business modelling and powerful conversations between the business, government, and community, we demonstrate that it is not just possible to do good and make money, but that it makes good business sense.

We currently have a team of seven part-time employees, including our First Nations Lead.

We work both across Australia and across the South Pacific, and currently have one office in Richmond, Victoria. Our partners include The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI), the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and Indigenous Business Australia.

Our Mission

At TDi we fundamentally believe that if you are passionate about seeing change in the world, building businesses where social and financial returns are aligned is a powerful way to achieve it.

Through our method we seek to build better businesses with sustainable business models that ultimately help us crack entrenched social and environmental challenges. We know that on-going grant reliance is no longer the long-term strategy the social sector once thought it was, and all businesses need to explore their role in building a stronger and more sustainable world.

At TDi, we return to the roots of business by building strong, high impact business models and enterprises where there is no compromise on either profit or purpose. Whether it is a Business Model Workshop, our TDi Accelerator programs, our Bespoke Consultancy services, or our International Development work, we help businesses at all stages of development. From the start-up phase, to growing enterprises, right through to well established businesses that want to have more impact. We help them bring into focus their mission, the business and financial model that helps them deliver and the management team that makes it all possible.

TDi's mission from the start has been about bringing together both doing good and making money - we want to help others to shift their thinking about the possibility of combining both.

Our mission is to awaken the possibility of doing good and making money, helping to unlock resources for organisations delivering positive social and environmental outcomes.



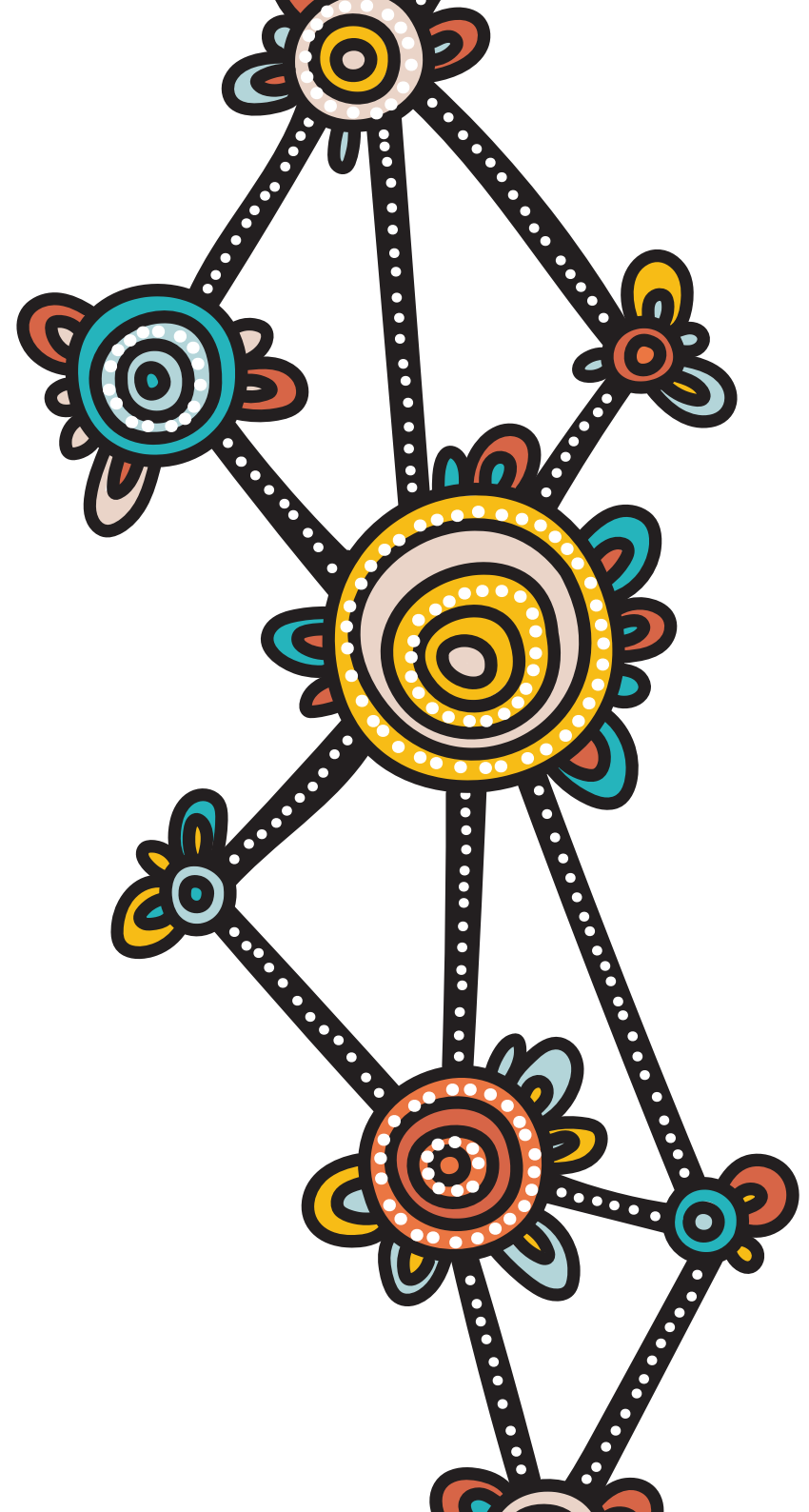
TDi's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Our definition of reconciliation

It's important to state upfront what our definition of Reconciliation is to set the context for our RAP. This may change as we deepen our own understanding of reconciliation in the year ahead.

For us, reconciliation is:

- Both symbolic and practical. On the practical side, we are committed to supporting First Nations entrepreneurs to improve the quality of life of their families and communities
- On the symbolic side we want to see (and we want to play our part in) celebrating the gifts and talents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also call for greater acknowledgement of the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both economically, culturally and spiritually, and their resilience and strength to withstand this oppression
- Building relationships with our First Nations friends and partners, built on truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, reparation, and love
- Understanding how our own unconscious biases, and fears, influence our ability to be an effective ally to the reconciliation movement, and taking action to overcome these.



Development of the Reflect RAP

The development of our Reflect RAP is to create a strong educational base from which to become an active part of reconciliation here in Australia. We are approaching this initial RAP as a journey to learn, understand and authentically connect. From this, we hope to contribute our team, skills and passion to reconciliation here in Australia.

Our RAP is championed internally by our CEO Anthea Smits, supported by our Leadership Team, and our internal RAP working group. All team members are deeply committed to this process, and each member has been involved in the development of TDi's Reflect RAP. The RAP working group consists of

- Anna Moegerlein, Deputy CEO
- Shannon Gibbons, Head of People, Culture & Process
- Ash Bartley, Board Member.

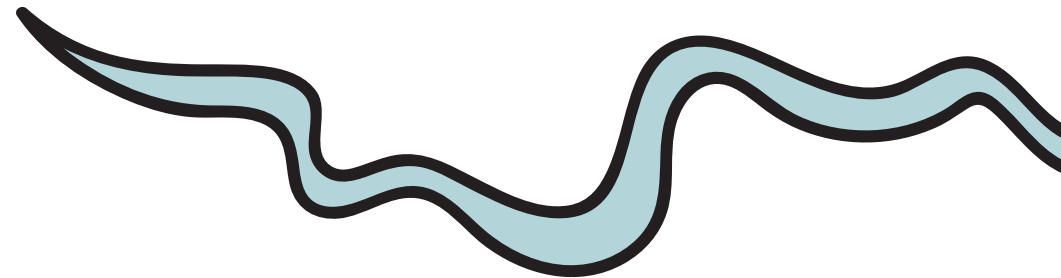
Our journey to date

In 2017 we began a partnership with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) to deliver Accelerate with IBA – an early-stage accelerator for Australian Indigenous entrepreneurs. This provided a rare opportunity to support and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners to strengthen their businesses. Many Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander business owners have had negative experiences working with non-Indigenous consultants and the business and finance sector. We wanted to create a space where participants could tell their own story, use their own definitions of success, social enterprise and build business on their own terms. Our aim is to support Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs to reclaim entrepreneurship, for themselves, and to dismantle some of the barriers they face in growing their businesses.

Since the initial accelerator we have delivered two (2) further programs. We are grateful for the ongoing support of IBA. Our partnership has been key to the success of the program.

‘Thank you for not only working on our business with us but also our personal story and journeys and how this influences us today.’

– 2019 Accelerate with IBA participant



Case Study - Accelerate with IBA

Opportunity

In 2018 Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) approached TDi looking for a solution to support Indigenous entrepreneurs build their business acumen and name their social impact. This was in line with IBA's mission to advance the commercial and economic interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Together with IBA, we have designed – and continue to iterate – a unique program that aims to provide a transformative journey while connecting them with a network of other Indigenous entrepreneurs.

As of 2020, we have worked with 3 cohorts of entrepreneurs to build their business skills and confidence. We are currently discussing taking this program online and making it COVID-19 responsive.

Nitty Gritty Details

What makes the program unique compared to other accelerators is the 'walking in two worlds' lens we apply. This considers not only the western business context, but also the cultural protocols, traditions, and stories of each entrepreneur. We work with the entrepreneurs to build businesses with this, not despite this.

The program runs annually, and each cohort consists of 8-12 Indigenous entrepreneurs from across Australia, in a range of industries and at different stages of business growth. This creates an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to connect and learn from each other. We spend 5 months with each cohort working with them on their impact model, business model and financial model. This is supported by ongoing one-to-one coaching from the IBA/TDi team and a showcase event at the end of the program, where participants 'pitch' their business to the social enterprise and investor ecosystem.

Learnings

TDi's biggest learnings through the partnership and program have been:

- Indigenous entrepreneurs need a program that considers cultural protocol not just business protocol
- There is invaluable strength in the entrepreneurs meeting 'other entrepreneurs like me'

- The importance of confidence building and mindset in driving business success
- The deep and relational way we work with IBA is what makes the program so successful, both of us bringing valuable pieces of the puzzle

Outcomes

We feel privileged to work with our partners at IBA to build a fit-for-purpose solution, responding to the needs of their customers. As of 2020, TDi have run 3 programs in partnership with IBA, and we continue to work in close partnership with IBA and iterate the program to be stronger and more relevant each time.

So far:

- We have worked with 29 entrepreneurs to advance their businesses
- 100% of participants who completed the program leave feeling more confident
- 100% of participants who completed the program believe that the program has saved them time and money in the development of their business
- 80% of participant who completed the program say they feel more supported and have increased their network
- 100% of participants who completed the program say they would recommend the program to their friends and colleagues



“These accelerators are a different way for us to help people with their businesses. We used to have quite a vanilla approach, but we've found these accelerators to be really useful for participants.”

– Rajiv Viswanathan, CEO
Indigenous Business Australia

In 2019, in partnership with the PNG-Australian Partnership program funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), we co-designed and delivered Laikim Sister: a business program that facilitated deep connections between 8 Indigenous Australian businesswomen and 10 Indigenous Papua New Guinean businesswomen. The program aimed to create a safe and celebratory space for women to share their story about their culture, business and personal life and to foster community and belonging across our two countries. Indigenous women are underrepresented in the business world and not often acknowledged for their significant contributions. We acknowledge that First Nations people have the oldest living culture in the

world and a resilience and ability to walk in ‘two worlds’ holding culture and business in both hands.

In the program difference and diversity were celebrated. Truth telling around historical dispossession, violence, oppression and cultural sharing from both Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Papua New Guineans also formed an important component of the program. Experiences of those in the room were drawn on for learning. We purposefully engaged an Indigenous colleague to work with us to deliver and liaise with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participants.

Case Study – Laikim Sister



Opportunity

In April 2019, TDi, Abt Associates and the Australian High Commission to Papua New Guinea (PNG) began to explore how a business exchange between PNG and Australian Indigenous women could be designed to further people-to-people links between the two countries, building on the thousand year history of trade and knowledge sharing.

Over two months, TDi and Abt ran a human-centred design process to

understand the needs of Australian Indigenous and PNG businesswomen, and the opportunities for collaboration. In July 2019, the Laikim Sister business exchange program was born.

The name – Laikim Sister – was chosen because it means to love, care for and look after your sister, and the word (Laikim) is used both in Tok Pisin and Torres Strait Islander language.

Nitty gritty details

Laikim Sister became a first of its kind. It brought together 10 Papua New Guinean and 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesswomen. It focused on re-igniting trade and knowledge sharing in three key industries: traditional foods and medicines, cultural tourism, and creative industries. The women met first in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and then again three months later in Cairns, Australia.

The program hoped to provide transformative journeys for the women and their businesses. The program took place over two exchanges, one in each country, so that the women were able to experience and understand the cultural and business contexts of their fellow sisters.

There were three key components to the program:

- Shared storytelling of their gender, cultural, and business experiences which enabled them to build trust and connect
- ‘Look and see’ excursions to other businesses in the industry which provided inspiration for innovation in their businesses and industries

- Using tools to get clearer on their business models and how to take them forward sustainably.

“[This has been an] inspiring program. Reminds me that I am not alone on my business journey. [I have] the love and courage and strength of all my sisters to draw from... the strength of my sisters’ stories will continue to give me strength on my journey.”

Outcome

Through the program the women built deep, people-to-people connections and trust which ultimately enabled trade outcomes. As our CEO, Annie, says “We don’t trade with strangers, we trade with friends.”

The best example of this is the ongoing trade discussions between program sisters Carol Vale of Game Enough?, who plans to buy green coffee beans from Nellie Vamari of Central Mamina Coffee.

The women connected when Carol shared the story of her great uncle who fought in the Owen Stanley Ranges, which is where Nellie sources her beans from.

In addition, some of the other trade outcomes for women in the program were:

- Delvene Cockatoo-Collins has asked to stock Lina Singu’s bilums at her studio in Stradbroke Island and has shared Nellie’s coffee with cafes on the island.
- Tabu Pelei has revalued her products and is revisiting her business model based on advice from Delvene Cockatoo-Collins and Rosie Ware as fellow artists and designers.
- Liz-Mary Saga has received interest from other cohort members to build and run a PNG-Indigenous Australia festival in Cairns. Several of the PNG cohort met in the month following the program to plan for the festival.

But beyond this, the program became a symbol of what is possible when Indigenous women unite. The women in the program were inspired by their sisters, encouraged to be leaders in their field and have a network of support for life.



In addition to these projects, we are actively building partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and run businesses.

Internally at TDi, we hold monthly team Meaningful Conversation hour where we often discuss reconciliation-based topics. This is a time to reflect deeply and share openly and honestly about what we are passionate about, or where we're still learning or where we feel we're falling short. We are looking at engaging an Indigenous organisation to work with us on a yearlong deep reflective process on our role in furthering a more just, equitable and unified Australia. This work would be led by an Indigenous Elder.

In 2021, the TDi team are also completing bespoke Mindset Training which we hope will assist us in being a more effective ally in reconciliation. The Mindset Training is equipping our team to better understand how our thoughts and beliefs about ourselves, others and the world can drive us to scarcity ('there's not enough') and lack ('I'm not enough', or 'they're not enough and need help'). We acknowledge that our own fears and insecurities stop us from building healthy relationships. We need to come from a place of health, in order to build healthy and healing relationships.

Our Approach

There are a few approaches and lenses that we will use to guide our exploration, as we aim to empathise with and to better understand First Nations peoples, as well as to test, pilot, learn and re-work our RAP until we find meaningful, impactful and mutually beneficial ways to contribute to the conversation.

The first approach we will use involves design-thinking principles that underpin our work of designing with, not for. Throughout our work, instead of doing work for a business or an individual, we aim to sit side-by-side the teams we work with to design and problem solve with them. A good deal of this involves actively listening to and working to understand and empathise with individuals and organisations that we connect with, which we vow to do throughout our Reflect RAP process. Empathy is the main mentality that drives this work, where we aim to deeply understand and connect with First Nations peoples as we create a dialogue for learning and sharing.

Secondly, we will use a design thinking methodology that underpins how we work to test and uncover new opportunities or approaches that can help us to discover ways that we can most effectively support reconciliation with our

networks, skills and assets. This approach recognises that the best solutions go through many tests and iterations before they earn permanence, meaning that our first ideas are unlikely to survive this process unchanged, and that through a continual process of learning and testing we will come to a more impactful and meaningful RAP.

Furthermore, there are two lenses that we will use throughout our RAP journey that we often apply to all of our work here at TDi and these lenses are: an asset lens and a power lens. When we use an asset lens, it allows us to see the strengths in a business or an individual, as well as in the operating environment we are working in and the community we are working with. What some people might see as 'problems' (and attempt to 'save' people), we view as opportunities to design solutions and pathways forward more creatively and innovatively.

And finally, a power lens goes hand in hand with an asset lens. This lens allows us to step back from the micro initiative we are working on and to view the broader environment it sits on, and to focus in on the power imbalances that might be present in any given context. When we bring in a power lens, we try to identify the set of invisible cultural norms and perspectives that shape how we and others might view the world, and how they, in turn, keep structural disadvantage locked in. This lens is specifically important to our RAP journey, as it will allow us to identify and be aware of our own in-built perspectives, biases and assumptions, as well as those that others might have.



Relationships

Relationships are an integral part of TDI's culture and values. These relationships allow for genuine learning, sharing of stories and understanding more about one another – either as individuals or organisations. When we think of our relationships with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities, we know that these connections allow for rich dialogue. It allows us to hear the stories of First Nations peoples across centuries and generations. It enables understanding and builds deep trust.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July 2022	Senior Consultant
	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	July 2022	CEO
	Find funding to support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2022	Deputy CEO
	Providing ongoing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alumni	December 2022	IBA Project Manager
2. Build relationships through advocating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW in a meaningful way.	27 May- 3 June, 2022	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2022	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2022	Senior Consultant
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	January- March 2022	Senior Consultant
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	January- March 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process

Respect

We understand that the culture and stories of First Nations peoples are important and we respect the path that was walked before us here in Australia. Social enterprise is not new in this country. It was here in the ancient trading ways and is still present today in how First Nations people do business. We want to continue to hear these stories, understand First Nations culture and perspective and be advocates for reconciliation. We want to work with First Nations people to reclaim entrepreneurship.

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.	February 2022	Senior Consultant
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation by engaging an external provider	September 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Develop projects that specifically benefit and work with First Nations people.	December 2022	CEO
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Explore writing a cultural engagement guide for our partners	October 2022	Deputy CEO
	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.		
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process



Opportunities

We fundamentally believe that if you are passionate about seeing change in the world, building businesses where social and financial returns are aligned is the best way to achieve it. Through our method we seek to build better businesses with alternative, sustainable revenue streams, ultimately helping us crack entrenched social and environmental challenges.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	July 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation and our contracting Associates.	March 2022	Deputy CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	April 2022 – June 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	October 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	January 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2021	Senior Consultant
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	January 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2021	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	January 2022 - December 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2022	Head of People, Culture & Process







Contact Details

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References

Reconciliation Australia. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/what-is-reconciliation/>



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