



REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

MAY 2023 - NOVEMBER 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land and acknowledge and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Tom Day, Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta
and Wemba Wemba**

Art Title: *Yarkeen Mirring* (Dreaming Country)



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ABOUT THE ARTWORK

We were very pleased to commission Tom Day to create the extraordinary artwork *Yarkeen Mirring (Dreaming Country)* used in the graphic design of this Reconciliation Action Plan. Tom's painting now hangs at Parliament House.

Artwork Statement

Capturing the essence of country is everything to me! As a younger Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba man, it is always the essence of country I remember most. The intricacy of it all, when the seasons are on the verge of changing and the effect it has on that place, everything changes except its essence.

Now as an older man, having lived my life on country, I have a greater understanding of it. The interaction of countless generations, leaving their mark on it, dancing on it, singing on it, hunting on it, living with it, the story it tells is our story. From the whistling winds singing its ancient song to the fire that comes, from which all life regenerates, it has a soul that is intertwined with ours.

I paint it like I see it, through Aboriginal eyes, imagining the spirits living in harmony with all things.

What do I intend this artwork to say?

A celebration of the collective Aboriginal identity and all they encompass, their vibrancy, their beauty, the tangible and the intangible, the undeniable identity.

The flowing designs throughout, a celebration of the spirit of ancestry flowing and touching all things, embedded deep within country.

Country has certain magic; its elusive quality can transform the landscape in just a matter of seconds. I have tried to strive to convey this sense of place by capturing this magical essence. I aim that this feeling be conveyed throughout this piece and is an ode to all countrymen and countrywomen.

- Artwork and statement by Tom Day, Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba man



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING OFFICERS

This Reconciliation Action Plan for our parliamentary administration is an important step towards ensuring that Victoria's First Peoples have the opportunity and support to participate actively in the day to day life of our Parliament.

Our three parliamentary departments play a vital role in delivering services to Parliament and the community it serves. Through this Reconciliation Action Plan, our parliamentary administration will ensure that First Peoples are recognised, respected and encouraged in the work the three departments undertake.

Reconciliation is often talked about as a journey, with many steps along the way. It starts with a commitment, to foster relationships, to build understanding and to recognise the actions that are needed.

We are pleased to support the parliamentary departments in the commitment to action being made through this plan.

We also pay tribute to the work of the former Speaker, Colin Brooks, and former President, Nazih Elasmr. This plan reflects their vision and leadership in making the Parliament inclusive and accessible for all Victorians.

The significance of reconciliation for our parliamentary administration is demonstrated through the work that has already been undertaken in preparing this plan. We encourage all involved to continue that work together towards meaningful reconciliation.

Hon Maree Edwards MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Hon Shaun Leane MLC
President of the Legislative Council

MESSAGE FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY EXECUTIVE GROUP

We join the Presiding Officers in expressing our pride in presenting the parliamentary departments' first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The three departments support the work of the Victorian Parliament and ensure parliamentary democracy remains robust and accessible to all Victorians. To ensure positive outcomes for Victorians, the departments continue to focus on engagement and consultation with the community.

Parliamentary officers across our organisation have sought to engage with First Peoples through various projects. These projects are valuable and demonstrate the passion and enthusiasm of our workforce. Our hope is this RAP provides clearer leadership and direction for our engagement with reconciliation. We want to raise awareness of reconciliation initiatives across our entire organisation and give support to the valuable work parliamentary staff are already doing.

The RAP has received support from all elements of our organisation. Initiatives outlined within the RAP are supported by our staff, who have overwhelmingly backed the push to drive reconciliation. Thank you to everyone who has worked to develop this plan. We value the work you have done to increase understanding and engagement around reconciliation across our organisation.

We recognise that we are at the start of a journey. This Reflect RAP is a first step in a stronger organisational focus on reconciliation. We have a lot of work ahead of us. We look forward to working with the Presiding Officers and staff of all departments to contribute to meaningful change.

Robert McDonald
Clerk of the Legislative Council

Bridget Noonan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Trish Burrows
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services

OUR BUSINESS

The three parliamentary departments deliver apolitical, professional services to support the Parliament of Victoria and its democratically elected members:

- The primary role of the *Department of the Legislative Council* is to provide highly professional and apolitical support to the President and the 40 Council members to carry out their functions in the chamber and committees. Headed by the Clerk of the Legislative Council, Council parliamentary officers support members in their elected roles by providing procedural advice, legislative support, accurate recording of proceedings, and information. The Department provides research and administrative support to the Council and joint committees, as well as supports the Parliament's community engagement activities.
- The *Department of the Legislative Assembly* supports its 88 members to fulfil their roles as elected representatives and enables Victorians to participate effectively in the parliamentary process. In support of this purpose the Department delivers apolitical, professional and innovative services to the Legislative Assembly and informs and engages with all Victorians. Headed by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, officers of the Department support the Speaker and the work of the Chamber, the operations of committees, and the provision of information and community engagement services.
- The *Department of Parliamentary Services'* mission is to enable members of Parliament to be the best possible representatives of their constituents through quality, apolitical and professional services and support for the institution of Parliament. Led by the Secretary, the Department is responsible for the provision of infrastructure resources and support services to members of Parliament and parliamentary departments, and operates as a service provider to, and in close cooperation with, the Department of the Legislative Assembly and the Department of the Legislative Council.

Parliamentary officers work at Parliament House and 55 St Andrews Place in Melbourne's central business district, while also providing support for members of Parliament and their staff in over 120 electorate offices across Victoria. As at 30 June 2022 there were 329 staff (head count) working across the three parliamentary departments. One staff member has identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Our commitment to developing a meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable Reconciliation Action Plan will allow the institution to develop relationships with Victoria's First Peoples and further explore its sphere of influence, enabling all three parliamentary departments and parliamentary staff to better understand and play their part in the reconciliation effort.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The Presiding Officers and parliamentary departments have made engaging with Victoria's First Peoples one of the organisation's highest priorities by making it a strategic priority in the organisation's Strategic Plan.

It is important that we recognise the diverse cultures and traditions of Victoria's First Peoples and all Australians. We also need to work to understand how our history and role affect our efforts to move towards reconciliation and respond appropriately.

By putting in place a formal plan to advance reconciliation by building relationships, opportunities and respect, we hope to contribute to the cultural safety of our organisation for all First Peoples. We want to build our organisation into a place where First Peoples' ideas, history, traditions and cultures are acknowledged and nurtured.

We are at the beginning of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) journey, and as such have agreed to a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan as described by Reconciliation Australia. This aligns with taking our first step in turning good intentions into actions. This Reconciliation Action Plan is actively supported and encouraged by all levels of the organisation. We have committed to establishing a working group comprised of staff from across the Parliamentary Departments who will ensure that emphasis is placed on this endeavour throughout the years to come.

We are appointing Legislative Council Deputy Clerk Anne Sargent as our RAP Champion. Anne has been instrumental in guiding our RAP development to this point, and will continue to advocate for the actions in this document as we continue our journey.

By creating this Reconciliation Action Plan: We commit to RESPECT for First Peoples and their traditions. We commit to developing our RELATIONSHIPS with First Peoples. We commit to providing OPPORTUNITIES for First Peoples. We commit to continuing the journey. We are committed to reconciliation.

OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

We have found while developing this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that there are many parliamentary officers within our organisation who are passionate about reconciliation. Our staff have been working creatively to establish activities and partnerships that contribute to the RESPECT, RELATIONSHIPS and OPPORTUNITIES pillars described in this RAP. We have learned that we as an organisation can do more to support this passion and creativity, that we can do more to drive reconciliation action across our entire organisation.

The activities and partnerships below are just some examples of the valuable work our staff have been doing. In committing to this RAP we are committing to supporting and developing efforts such as these.

Hosting First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

The inaugural meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria was held in the Legislative Council Chamber in December 2019. Parliamentary officers across the organisation worked hard with the First Peoples' Assembly to support this landmark meeting.

Hansard Aboriginal lexicon project

Hansard records the speeches made by members of Parliament. The Hansard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lexicon project aims to gain a better understanding of the word variants in use by First Peoples communities in Victoria. Through consultation with relevant Victorian First Peoples language authorities, Hansard has developed a common house reference of spellings to use in the first instance. However, Hansard respects all spellings in active use in communities and recognises the shifting landscape in language reclamation, so will never change a preferred spelling of a language speaker or authority.

Displays in Parliament House — including the Aboriginal Honour Roll

The Library's Heritage Unit provides ongoing support for the display and hosting of Aboriginal events, artwork and commissions. These include an Aboriginal art collection, Aboriginal Honour Roll and a pair of size 18, hand-painted sneakers gifted to the Presiding Officers to celebrate the success of Australian Indigenous Basketball teams in international competition.

The Heritage Unit works with First Peoples – State Relations to support and facilitate the display of a large book – the Aboriginal Honour Roll – that recognises the stories of Aboriginal people, past and present, who have made an outstanding contribution to our State.

Events at Parliament House

We have been honoured to host events including performances by Aboriginal artists at our youth concert Live at the Steps, our Open Day for Cultural Diversity Week and at the Deakin Oration.

Partnership with Worawa Aboriginal College

The Community Engagement Unit has partnered with Worawa Aboriginal College to develop a new learning resource that explores Aboriginal governance and leadership along with connections to Parliament. The College delivers a holistic program through an integrated academic, wellbeing and culture model and provides a rigorous education program within a cultural framework. The resource, Aboriginal Change Makers, was published in 2021 and is intended for use by schools and teachers. A representative from Worawa Aboriginal College is a member of the Parliament's education advisory panel, which provides advice on parliamentary education programs, resources and activities.

Flags at Parliament House

The Australian Aboriginal Flag flies permanently from Parliament House. The Torres Strait Islander Flag also flies from Parliament House on important days, such as National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly begin every sitting day with an Acknowledgement of Country, as do many parliamentary committee public hearings. Tour Guides at Parliament House start tours with an Acknowledgment of Country, and all Tours and Customer Service Unit brochures include an Acknowledgement of Country.

Cultural awareness training

Parliamentary officers have undertaken cultural awareness training. This has exposed our staff to the pride First Nations people have in their culture, the enduring impact of colonisation and the shared responsibility to work towards reconciliation. Our aim for this training is for our staff to gain a higher level of cultural competence, helping them to play a role in the reconciliation process.

Smoking Ceremony

The first parliamentary sitting day after an election is a large ceremonial event. An important part of this event is a Smoking Ceremony on the steps of Parliament House.

Gift shop

Our gift shop sells Victorian Aboriginal artist Mick Harding's products.



RELATIONSHIPS

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. Identify opportunities to engage with the First Peoples' Assembly. 	<p>June 2023</p> <p>August 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>Manager, Library & Information Services</p> <p>RAP Working Group Chair</p>
<p>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	<p>May 2024</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p>	<p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>RAP Working Group Chair</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p>
<p>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	<p>May 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p>	<p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community Engagement Manager</p>
<p>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	<p>June 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p>



RESPECT

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. • Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	<p>July 2024</p> <p>February 2024</p>	<p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p>
<p>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. • Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	<p>November 2024</p> <p>July 2024</p>	<p>Manager, Library & Information Services</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p>
<p>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. • Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. • RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	<p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>RAP Working Group Chair</p>
<p>8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by acknowledging additional days of significance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of National Close the Gap Day, Harmony Day, National Reconciliation Week and International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples'. • Create and communicate a calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance to all staff. 	<p>July 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p>	<p>Community Engagement Manager</p> <p>Community Engagement Manager</p>



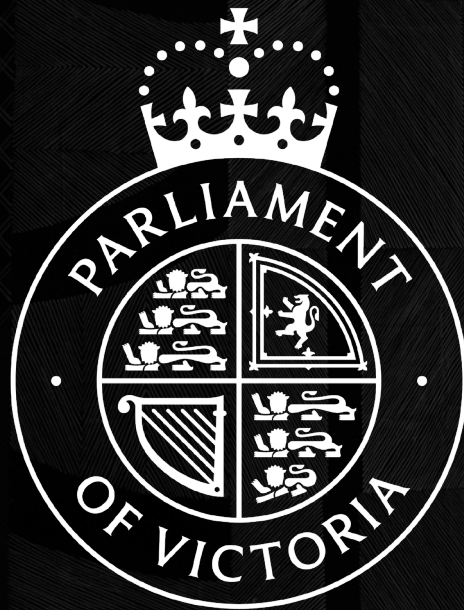
OPPORTUNITIES

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. • Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. • Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (traineeships/ internships/youth associates). • Review People Operations and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in the workplace. 	<p>July 2024</p> <p>February 2024</p> <p>July 2024</p> <p>July 2024</p>	<p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p> <p>Director, People and Capability</p>
<p>10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. • Investigate membership with Supply Nation and Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. • Encourage an understanding of the mutual benefits for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses throughout the workplace. 	<p>October 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>RAP Working Group Chair</p>
<p>11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement with Parliament.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the number of tour groups/site visitors to Parliament who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and how they currently engage with Parliament to inform the development of tailored events and programs to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. • Investigate partnership opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to encourage engagement with Parliament. 	<p>June 2024</p> <p>September 2023</p>	<p>Serjeant-At-Arms and Usher of the Black Rod</p> <p>Community Engagement Manager</p>



GOVERNANCE

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation. Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	May 2023 June 2023 September 2023	Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council RAP Working Group Chair RAP Working Group Chair
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. Make the implementation of the RAP as an agenda item for all staff meetings and other forums. 	May 2023 June 2023 May 2023 July 2023	RAP Working Group Chair RAP Working Group Chair RAP Working Group Chair Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council
14. 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 request a unique link to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	July annually 30 September, 2023, 2024	RAP Working Group Chair
15. 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. 	November 2024	RAP Working Group Chair



CONTACT DETAILS

For public enquiries about our RAP please contact us at rap@parliament.vic.gov.au
or call Anne Sargent, Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council, on 03 9651 8671

bayila
creative

