

# **The Work Health Group Reconciliation Action Plan**

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*October 2017 to October 2019*



WORK HEALTH GROUP



The Work Health Group acknowledges the  
Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia  
and recognises their continuing connection to land,  
waters and community. We pay our respects to them and  
their cultures; and to elders both past and present.

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# OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

As an Australian business built on unlocking people's potential through employment, the Work Health Group (the Group) is committed to being an inclusive organisation and promoting an inclusive society. The Group embraces its role in achieving this vision, creating this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2017-19 to:

- recognise the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories, knowledge and contributions within our business and the wider community;
- make a meaningful contribution to reconciliation, building respect, relationships and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- foster a corporate culture that values the health, wellbeing and knowledge of all peoples, ultimately helping Australians to build a better life.

With this plan and our actions, the Group will further its stated mission to optimise work and life participation for people with injury, illness, disability and disadvantage and bring life to our values.



*Tammy Cesana, RAP Working Group member on a Wirrpanda Foundation trip to Onslow in Western Australia.*



*Gandangara Aboriginal Land Council Board member Malcolm McColl welcomes Work Health Group guests to Country at a disability employment breakfast.*

# OUR BUSINESS

The Work Health Group provides occupational rehabilitation, advisory and employment services to Government, insurers and employers, both large and small. Working across both public and private sectors, the Group brings together almost 950 health, employment and support service professionals across more than 80 locations in Australia. We are committed to optimising work and life participation for people with injury, illness, disability and disadvantage; achieving this in myriad ways across our five core brands - atWork Australia, Cogent Thinking, IPAR, Kairros and WorkFocus Australia.

We proudly deliver Australian Government employment services including jobactive, Disability Employment Services (DES) and Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) programs. We are also the sole supplier of the JobAccess program on behalf of the Australian Government, which is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

Our brands and services are supported by a strong corporate services engine, the driving force behind investment in our people, technology, infrastructure and innovation.

The Group currently employs nine team members who have identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, representing one percent of our workforce. We face challenges in recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals as few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are entering these fields. As part of our RAP, we will examine how to build pathways from school to university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in these professions.

*“We are committed to maximising our impact through the services we provide and the way we conduct our business.”*

We are highly cognisant of the gaps that exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians in health outcomes, educational attainment and economic participation, and are committed to maximising our impact through the services we provide and the way we conduct our business.

Over the past two years, we have provided employment support services to more than 2,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Like many Australians of my era, I grew up in privilege, in a middle-class suburban enclave with next-to-no interaction with Australia's First Peoples, at a time when my schooling told me Australia's history started in 1770.

By the time I was a young adult, I was aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not given the good old Aussie 'fair go', but the issues didn't really intersect with my life. I did not have a strong connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or cultures.

It wasn't until I read the jaw-dropping and nuanced account of the 2004 death in custody of an Aboriginal man, "The Tall Man" by Chloe Hooper, that my eyes and ears opened. And it was a revelation.

I think many Australians have had, or are having, this moment. The generation behind mine may not need a wake-up call. They are learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories as they grow up.

Momentum is building. Many Australian organisations are committed to reconciliation, to understanding and building relationships, and ultimately to making a practical difference in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Organisations like Reconciliation Australia are leading the charge, providing a framework for business to make commitments and realise the benefits of reconciliation.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan is where my personal and professional interests around reconciliation intersect. While

I personally feel very strongly that there are wrongs to be acknowledged and addressed, I am also well aware of the business imperative to build strong links with and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In combination, this is powerful. The greatest impact can be made when both head and heart are committed.

The Work Health Group is uniquely positioned to make a real impact on the lives of some Australians. We can - and will - play our part in reconciliation. How? Our whole reason for being is all about getting people into work or back to work and helping them to build better lives. Our RAP has been written with this in mind... to make an even greater impact through our existing work, but, importantly, to also create opportunities and make a difference through our business practices and people.

At the Work Health Group, we are working very hard to build an inclusive and accessible culture; to become inclusive by reflex, to celebrate diversity. We know we are better for it. And we hope, with every extra opportunity we create for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, that Australia gets a little bit better for it too.



*The greatest impact can be made when both head and heart are committed.*

David Sagar

Chief Executive Officer

Work Health Group

# LETTER FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia congratulates the Work Health Group on developing its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

By adopting an Innovate RAP, the Work Health Group demonstrates its readiness to develop and test innovative approaches to reconciliation and champion reconciliation at every level of the organisation. The Work Health Group's commitments in this RAP see it well-placed to continue this progress across the key pillars of reconciliation—relationships, respect and opportunities.

The Work Health Group understands the importance of building and maintaining meaningful, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. It displays this commitment through its actionable goal to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business organisations by participating in its seminars and events for employers and job seekers.

Respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures is key to the Work Health Group's core values. It champions these values by committing to organise and display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in its office buildings.

*“Respect and understanding for  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
peoples, histories and cultures is key to  
the Work Health Group's core values.”*

The Work Health Group is committed to driving reconciliation through developing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It demonstrates this through its goal to support an Indigenous allied health scholarship.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Work Health Group on this Innovate RAP, and look forward to following its continued reconciliation journey.



Justin Mohamed  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





# OUR RAP

The Work Health Group was formed in 2016, bringing together two like-minded businesses – IPAR and the WorkFocus Group. The WorkFocus Group created and implemented its first RAP in 2015, developing awareness and building relationships along the way. This experience and knowledge will be built upon as the Work Health Group leaps straight into its first RAP, an Innovate RAP, aiming to contribute to reconciliation in Australia as soon as possible.

Our Innovate RAP will help us to:

- build stronger relationships and cultural awareness between the Work Health Group and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
- implement programs which promote cultural understanding and learning and to embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier diversity
- further develop and deepen our commitment from the WorkFocus Group's Reflect RAP

The Work Health Group understands that reconciliation is good for our business, the economy and the nation. Our commitment to the RAP process in the coming years will focus on long-term, sustainable activities that will achieve mutual benefits for business and community. It makes a great deal of sense to build on the work we already do, and the connections we already have, through employment services including jobactive, Disability Employment Services and the Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) we deliver on behalf of the Australian Government. We also operate occupational rehabilitation services with some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Our Board sponsor and RAP Champion is CEO of the Work Health Group, David Sagar.

*“Reconciliation is good for  
our business, the economy  
and the nation.”*

Our RAP Working Group comprises:

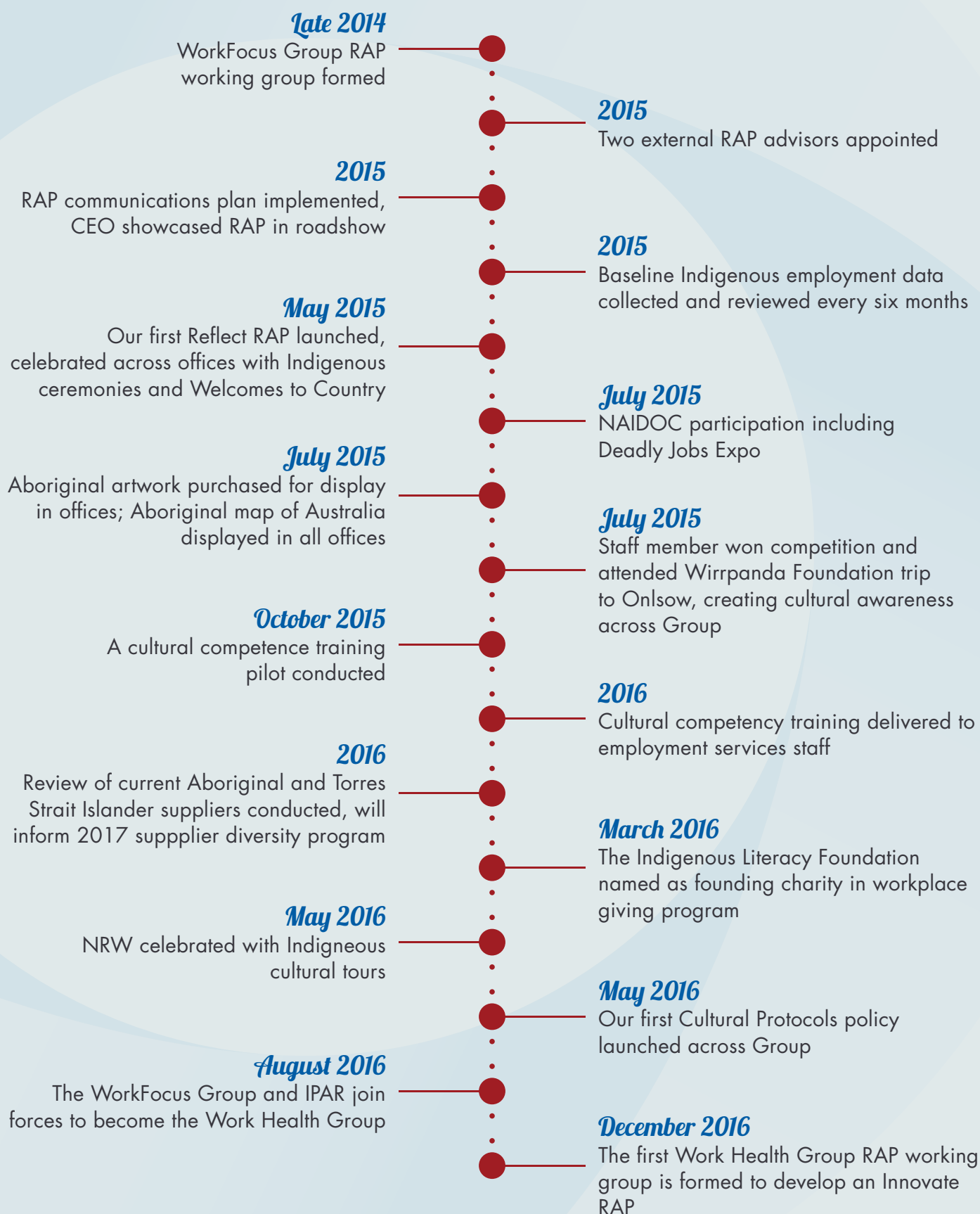
- Linda Collard, Group Manager Marketing Communications, Work Health Group (chair)
- Matthew Shepherdson, Northern NSW Manager, IPAR
- Andrew Yarran, VTEC Employment Consultant, atWork Australia
- Sharnie Ninyette, Engagement Consultant, atWork Australia
- Karla Fernee, Leader Employer Engagement, JobAccess
- Melissa Wilson, HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation, Work Health Group
- Laura Whiteley, Business Manager, Kairros (also representing WorkFocus Australia)
- Tammy Cesana, Client Support Manager, JobAccess

Its membership covers includes two Indigenous and six non-Indigenous Australians, across our brands and geographies. The development of our Innovate RAP included input and review from our Indigenous RAP Working Group members, as well as an external consultant, Dan Tyson.

Our other expert advisors are Michele Halse (Consultant, Aboriginal Workforce Development, South Metro TAFE) and Lennett Sandy (Indigenous Employment Consultant WA/SA, Australia Post).



# OUR RAP TIMELINE



# OUR LEARNINGS FROM 2015-16

As a result of implementing the first WorkFocus Group Reflect RAP and consultation with external advisors, the working group made the following recommendations for the Innovate RAP:

- Better defined deliverables (including naming targets), accountabilities and hard deadlines
- Ensure the RAP is acknowledged as a business priority for the Work Health Group and ensure RAP working group members have appropriate time and resource to work on its implementation
- Continue cultural protocol policy and raising awareness of the same
- Appropriate budget to be allocated for each year of the RAP to ensure deliverables
- Extend the length of the RAP to give at least two years to implement new programs, especially as these become more complex under the Innovate RAP
- Create longer-term strategies to contribute to professional workforce development, addressing the lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals
- Consultation with Group employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should take place at least annually, with ongoing feedback considered in the implementation of the RAP



*Jack Macale was nominated for a National Employment Services Association (NESA) Achiever of the Year Award 2017 by atWork Australia and became a finalist in the prestigious category.*

# RELATIONSHIPS

## *Strong relationships are an important part of our business*

Without relationships there is no business. Building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important to the Work Health Group. We also seek to build great relationships within our teams, and with our customers, job seekers and workers who we provide services to. Through our RAP, we seek to strengthen existing relationships with the communities in which we operate, and build new ones.

As part of our business, we provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment services, recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment that are best resolved via a specialist approach. Our staff and partners have substantial experience delivering services related to training, mentoring, support and employment in a culturally aware context. Our team works to deliver services that account for family networks and history, engage with the community surrounding the job seeker, and uncover true motivations and barriers to employment.

To deliver VTEC services, we have partnered with South Metro TAFE and Djinda Services (with Relationships WA) to support the program under the Generation One model. Generation One has established relationships with Employment Covenant employers such as Sodexo Remote Sites, Morris Corporation, CROWN Perth, Linkforce and Lend Lease. Our training programs include the retail and hospitality industries.

Similar partnerships and strategies are used to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers into work via the jobactive and Disability Employment Services programs. Other partnerships or working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across all our services include:

- Mogridge and Associates - for mentoring services
- Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service (AADS)
- Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services
- Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre

*We seek to strengthen  
our relationships with the  
communities in which we operate,  
and build new ones.*

## **Our approach aligns with our values and corporate social responsibility objectives**

There are already a number of internal events that the Work Health Group has involvement with in order to create awareness of reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across the entire organisation. Our Innovate RAP will continue to develop an awareness-raising focus as well as participating in and acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events both internally and externally.

The Work Health Group has started a workplace giving program in which 'Charities of Choice' have been chosen to reflect and align with our company values, mission and purpose. An Indigenous charity has been identified as one to support our vision for reconciliation, and we will continue to support the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

# RELATIONSHIPS



<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	RWG formed to oversee the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP	October 2017	Group Manager Marketing Communications
	Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG	October 2017	
	Meet at least once a quarter to monitor and report on RAP implementation	November 2017 February, May, August, November 2018 February, May, August 2019	
	Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG	November 2017	
	Explore whether to maintain existing RAP advisors or establish an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to provide cultural advice and guidance	October 2017	
	Define the scope of our RAP Advisors	November 2017	
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians	Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year	27 May - 3 June, annually	Group Manager Marketing Communications
	Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	May 2018, May 2019	
	Support an external NRW event		
	Ensure our Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW		
	Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences or stories		
	Download Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and circulate to staff		

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes	<p>Develop and implement a targeted engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders</p> <p>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement</p> <p>Explore possibilities for partnerships within employment support services and training organisations, pro bono support or secondment and community capacity opportunities in key service provision geographies such as Perth</p>	<p>November 2017, review in February, May, August, November 2018 and February, May, August 2019</p> <p>November 2017</p> <p>February 2018, review in August 2018, February 2019, August 2019</p>	Operations Manager, atWork Australia
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector	<p>Implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders</p> <p>Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders</p>	<p>November 2017, review in December 2018</p> <p>Review in April 2018, 2019</p>	CEO, Group Manager Marketing Communications
5. Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in delivery of events	Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business organisations to participate, where relevant, in our seminars and events for employers and job seekers	January 2018, review in April 2018, 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications

# RESPECT

The Work Health Group recognises that respect forms the core of all successful relationships - working together, tapping into diverse points of view and experiences creates better outcomes. This approach applies equally to nurturing our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations. Our core business includes placing people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, into employment via Australian Government employment services contracts, including managing a VTEC contract for Indigenous employment. To be successful, we have engaged specialist Indigenous staff who are able to quickly form strong relationships with Indigenous job seekers, and act as conduits with the non-Indigenous members of our organisation in their interactions.



<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
6. Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	Continue to implement a cultural competence awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersion)	Review March 2018	HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation
	Provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR leaders and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training	January 2018	
	Investigate further opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training	September 2018	
7. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning	Continue to implement and communicate the cultural protocol policy for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	Recommunicate in November 2017, review in April 2018 and April 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications
	Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important external and internal meetings	November 2017, review in April 2018 and April 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications
	Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships	November 2017	RAP working group member, JobAccess

<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Deliverable</b></i>	<i><b>Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibility</b></i>
7. Continued	Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country for at least one significant event, including JobAccess employer seminars held three times a year	November 2017	RAP working group member, JobAccess
	Organise and display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our offices or on our office building	January 2018	RAP working group member, JobAccess
	Encourage staff to provide an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings	November 2017, review in April 2018 and April 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications
8. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week	January 2018	HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation
	Contact our local NAIDOC Week Committee to discover events in our community, explore support of local events	May 2018, May 2019	Local RAP Working Group member
	Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week	First week of July 2018 and 2019	HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation



# OPPORTUNITIES

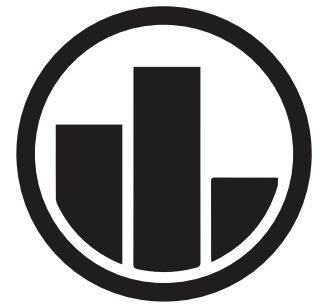
Supporting Indigenous communities and organisations provides the opportunity to improve quality of life and wellbeing. The work we do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers across our business provides us with a strong insight into the 'on the ground' unique challenges faced by Indigenous people, showing us the difference that positive action can make. Specifically, we are examining internship and supplier diversity programs.



<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and retention strategy	November 2017	HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation
	Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development	November 2017	
	Advertise vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media where relevant	January 2018	
	Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities	November 2017	
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace	November 2017	
	Include in all job advertisements, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply'	November 2017	
	Engage with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or consultants to advise on recruitment, employment and retention strategies, including professional development where appropriate	November 2017	
10. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation	Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services	December 2017	Finance Manager

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
10. Continued	Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services	November 2017	Finance Manager
	Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business	November 2017	
	Investigate Supply Nation membership	December 2017	
	Set a target for supplier diversity and track against this target	December 2017	
	Develop and pilot an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy	February 2018	
	Investigate opportunities to partner with our local Indigenous Chamber of Commerce	February 2018	
11. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and employment pathways	Investigate and assess Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships)	February 2018	HR Manager - Occupational Rehabilitation
	Engage with the university sector to promote allied health and employment services as a career path for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	February 2018	
	Investigate scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	February 2018	
	Support one Indigenous allied health scholarship	February 2018	

# TRACKING AND PROGRESS



<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
12. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually  Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer	30 September, annually  May 2018	Group Manager Marketing Communications
13. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings	August 2018 and October 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications
14. Review, refresh and update RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements  Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement	April 2019  July 2019	Group Manager Marketing Communications



*atWork Australia's Rob Beattie won the 2017 National Employment Services Association (NESIA) Excellence in Indigenous Employment Award and promptly and proudly presented it back to the Work Health Group's CEO David Sagar in recognition of the team effort.*



*Chair of the Work Health Group, Rob Gordon, with Generation One's Jeremy Donovan, launching atWork Australia's Perth-based VTEC in April 2014. Since that time, atWork Australia has arranged training for more than 400 and guaranteed employment for over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers.*



WORK HEALTH GROUP



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN  
**INNOVATE**