

# Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2022 — September 2023





### Acknowledgement of Country

Conservation Volunteers Australia respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and sea Country on which we work, including their rich and dynamic cultures and their continuing unique affinity and cultural obligations to land and sea. We pay respect to them and their elders both past and present.



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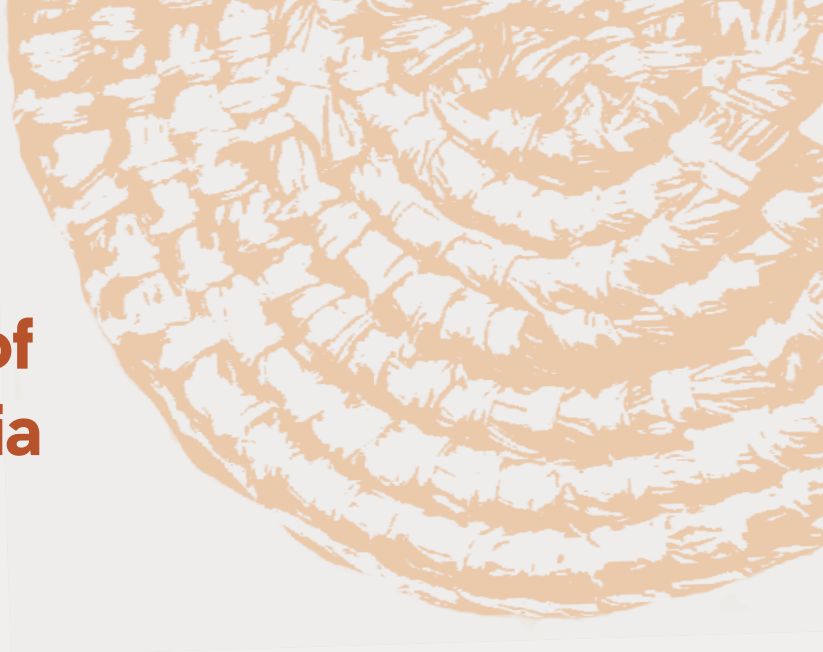
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# Conservation Volunteers Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Motif

The watermark used in this document was created from a photo taken by Emily Zhang, at an International Women's Day cultural knowledge sharing event, run by Conservation Volunteers Australia in partnership with 4 Kurna women from the Brodie family, in March 2022. Held on the banks of Barker Inlet Wetland in South Australia, the four women are daughters of the 4 Brodie sisters, who shared information on Kurna culture and hosted a weaving workshop.

# Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



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

Conservation Volunteers Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 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 Conservation Volunteers Australia 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 Conservation Volunteers Australia, 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



## CEO Message

**I am privileged to present Conservation Volunteers Australia's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, our first step on a journey of commitment to reconciliation with the Traditional Owners of the land and sea Country on which we operate.**

In our 5th decade of operation, CVA is taking this step because whilst we know where our strengths lie – in activating the community to care for the natural world – we are also cognisant of the areas in which we are not as strong as we would like. In particular, we believe that the rich knowledge that comes from caring for nature since time immemorial is something that cannot, and should not, be excluded from what we do today. We are committed to incorporating that knowledge and practice into our activities and we will achieve this by collaborating with Traditional Owners and cultural knowledge holders around the country, on the land and waterways where we work.

We know that by working together, we can help deepen all Australians' connection to nature and in doing so, give this land in which we live a more sustainable future.

We've had a small team of staff dedicating their time to develop a RAP that is both genuine in its intent and meaningful in its actions. Supported by the wider national staff group, our Reflect RAP builds the strong

internal structure and processes that will set us up to move through the RAP journey and drive our future efforts toward genuine reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We begin by ensuring that collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People is embedded in our business functions, project planning, and delivery. We know that ensuring our staff are aware of the value of input and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in what we do is crucial to our success, so have developed a RAP that facilitates learning and growth and that all staff have an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to.

I am excited to get this important work underway.



**Phil Harrison**  
CEO  
Conservation Volunteers Australia



# Our Business

**Conservation Volunteers Australia is a national, for-purpose organisation with a 40-year history of engaging volunteers to contribute to a sustainable future where people and nature thrive together.**

Our purpose is to strengthen the health of communities and ecosystems for mutual benefit, and our primary mechanism for achieving this is at-scale community engagement. We provide opportunities for our national community of nature stewards to engage in pro-nature activities and events, ranging from activities that take place on Country, to online opportunities for environmental learning and citizen science.

Conservation Volunteers Australia currently employs 64 staff in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, with many field projects in all those states. We rely on the support of donors, supporters and partners, including from government and industry.

Our current projects, events and other activities can be viewed at [www.cva.org.au](http://www.cva.org.au).



## REVIVE

Engaging communities in the protection and restoration of wetlands



## WILD FUTURES

Engaging communities in the quest to reverse the decline of threatened species



## GREENER CITIES

Engaging urban communities in rebalancing the loss of nature and its benefits in cities



## FUTURE STEWARDS

Engaging and empowering emerging leaders to be community voices for stewardship

**“Caring for Country plays a significant part in our lives as First Nations People, and we greatly appreciate CVA’s participation, support and involvement to allow for this to happen.”**

– Byellee Elders, Cecila & Tricia Eggmolesse





CONSERVATION  
VOLUNTEERS

TEERS



# Our vision for Reconciliation

**Conservation Volunteers Australia believes that reconciliation is a critical part of working towards our vision of a world where people and nature flourish together.**

We recognise that First Nations Peoples' custodianship of land and sea has shaped Australia's ecology, biodiversity and the sense of place that makes this continent unique. Working on and for these landscapes as part of our quest to conserve their natural values and to make those values more accessible to people all over Australia, we acknowledge that people and nature have lived interdependently here for millennia, and seek to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples so we can help nurture the connections between this land and all Australians.

Conservation Volunteers Australia affirms the special place and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians by:

- Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, along with its diverse and dynamic nature.
- Acknowledging the deep connections with and custodianship of the land since time immemorial.
- Valuing the contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures make to Australian culture and society.

Our commitment to working with communities to take action for both nature and people includes a commitment to actively pursuing reconciliation as an integral part of our work.



PLEDGE

Chg Hall  
DUVEER



# Our journey toward Reconciliation

**For over 40 years, Conservation Volunteers Australia has helped everyday people care for Australia's unique natural environments.**

Our work has taken us to all corners of the country, often working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ranger groups, on country with Traditional Owners, and involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in intensive field work, as advisors and as practitioners. The majority of our work, however, has been largely agnostic of the rich layers of lived cultural experience that cover our project sites, whether they be in remote locations, or in the suburbs of cities where we engage with people to improve their relationship with nature. Our efforts may have contributed to biodiversity conservation and community engagement in many places, but they have often lacked insights, practices and wisdom of the very cultures that have shaped the land we work on. We are committed to changing that, and to ensuring that the “people” part of our work is more than CVA providing a mere 40 years’ worth of guidance to people. The collective experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their living relationship with the land, is built on a time-scale a thousand times longer and deeper than ours. As an organisation that works in and for nature, we must actively seek out whatever wisdom and practice is appropriate for us to access, to help shift all Australians’ relationships with nature into a deeper, more sustainable place.

Although we have worked with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over many years, our commitment to the RAP process is our first real step towards making First Nations relationships, respect and opportunities part of our organisational DNA. It signals our desire to use our work to create tangible and substantive benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increasing economic equity and fully supporting First Nations self-determination. For some time now we have actively sought out and formed business relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses; we have been briefed and educated by Elders as part of our many on-site field projects; and CVA staff invariably bring a deep personal respect for Country, and the cultures that continues to shape it, to their work every day. These are important steps, but they are only the tip of what we are striving for. This RAP process is a way for us to formalise, expand and deepen that resolve. At the time of writing, CVA is not aware of any staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

We are nervous in our ignorance, encouraged by the existing relationships we hold and value, and emboldened by the knowledge that this is, put simply, the right thing to do.

Our RAP Champion is Renae Riviere, Campaign Director, Revive. The RAP Champion chairs CV's internal RAP Working Group, which progresses our RAP through planning and implementation.

# Making our Reflect RAP a reality

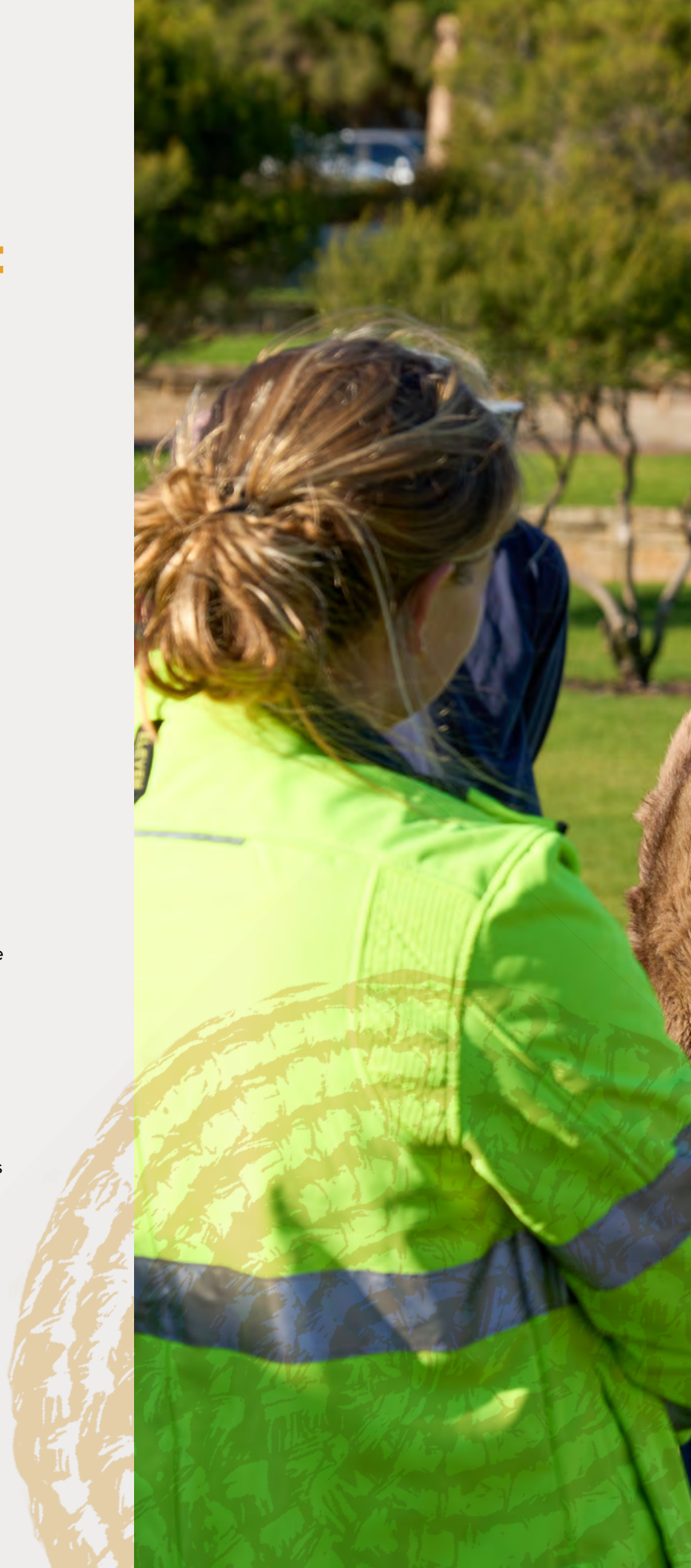
## Our partnerships and current activities

CVA Directors and Project Managers are now expected to consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples groups regarding what is correct name for places we are working on, and appropriate Acknowledgement of Country. Note that only Traditional Owners can give a Welcome to Country.

As part of CVA acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Traditional Owners and culture of the country we work on, CVA staff now provide an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of our events. Where no local information is available to inform a regionally appropriate Acknowledgement of Country, or there are contested claims, a generic Acknowledgement of Country now contains contain the following:

“Conservation Volunteers Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this land we are gathering on. We pay respect to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging, and to any First Nations peoples with us today.”

When developing new projects and initiatives, where possible, the relevant CVA Campaign Director will approach the local Traditional Owners or First Nations representative regarding the activities planned, and before the plan is finalised, confirm and document appropriate cultural recognition, practice and permission protocols. Where for some reason this is contested or not possible, we will use our generic Acknowledgement of Country (above) for public events.





# Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2022	Campaign Director Revive Campaign Director Wild Futures Campaign Director Future Stewards
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May 2023	Campaign Director Revive (Lead) Campaign Director Wild Futures Campaign Director Future Stewards Marketing & Communications Manager Strategic Partnerships Director
	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers in all places we work	September 2022	Project Officer Revive Project Officer Wild Futures Project Officer Future Stewards
<b>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Systems Support Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023	P&C Director
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2023	P&C Director
	During NRW, we will use our social media platforms to celebrate the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups we are working with and learning from as part of the Revive our Wetlands initiative, supported by Chevron Australia.	27 May – 3 June 2023	Campaign Director Revive
	Establish meaningful protocols for organisation comms and project comms for NRW	May 2023	Communications and Marketing Specialist
	Promote CVA organised NRW events to employees for local participation	April 2023	Systems Support Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	September 2022	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2022	Strategic Partnerships Director Campaign Director Revive (Lead) Campaign Director Wild Futures Campaign Director Future Stewards
	Develop a planning and budget resource for the inclusion of Traditional Owners at large events, including: Welcome to Country and where appropriate, as tour guides, subject matter experts and catering.	September 2022	Campaign Director Revive (Lead) Campaign Director Wild Futures Campaign Director Future Stewards Project Manager Revive Project Manager Wild Futures Project Manager Future Stewards Revenue Manager
<b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	November 2022	P&C Director
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2022	P&C Director



# Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Develop a plan increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	April 2023	Executive Manager, Engagement P&C Director
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation..	November 2022	Training Coordinator
	Engage local Traditional Owners to facilitate annual Women on Country events for Revive our Wetlands FY 22-24	September 2022	Campaign Director Revive
	CVA Induction Program to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning	September 2022	P&C Director
	Managers to ensure their team receives local area training, internally or externally as required	October 2022	Project Manager Revive Project Manager Wild Futures Project Manager Future Stewards
<b>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols and traditional place names.</b>	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	December 2022	Systems Support Coordinator
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2023	P&C Director Executive Manger, Engagement
	Consult with local Traditional Owners in the planning phase of projects to incorporate Men's Country and Women's Country where relevant	January 2023	Campaign Director Revive Campaign Director Wild Futures Campaign Director Future Stewards Executive Manager, Engagement
	Develop an event checklist to assist in the planning and implementation phase of projects. The checklist will include consulting with Traditional Owners, where possible, during the planning phase to identify any priorities and sensitivities regarding working on Country at our project locations.	March 2023	Executive Manager, Engagement

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Develop a 'How To Guide' for project staff to consult, plan and implement in collaboration with Traditional Owners	June 2023	Executive Manager, Engagement Communications and Marketing Specialist
	Demonstrate in the CVA Induction Program why cultural protocols are important to Traditional Owners and to CVA	June 2023	Executive Manager, Engagement P&C Director
	CVA to include Traditional Place names on the booking portal where possible	October 2022	Project Officer Revive Project Officer Wild Futures Project Officer Future Stewards
<b>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2023	Communications and Marketing Specialist
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local areas.	July 2023	Communications and Marketing Specialist
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023	Campaign Director, Revive
	Develop a communications plan regarding NAIDOC Week	June 2023	Communications and Marketing Specialist Executive Manager, Engagement
	Establish meaningful protocols for organisation comms and project comms for NAIDOC Week	June 2023	Communications and Marketing Specialist
	Revive team to plan and host at least one NAIDOC week event as part of the Revive our Wetlands initiative.	July 2023	Campaign Director Revive
	Encourage CVA staff to attend the Revive team NAIDOC week event.	July 2023	Systems Support Coordinator



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	September 2022	Campaign Director, Revive
	Draft and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2022	Campaign Director, Revive
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December 2022	Campaign Director, Revive Executive Manager, Engagement
	Investigate external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2023	Campaign Director, Revive Executive Manager, Engagement
<b>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2022	Campaign Director, Revive
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2022	P&C Director
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2022	P&C Director
	Align the Wellbeing Work Group's development of a Diversity Plan with the RAP commitments.	April 2023	P&C Director
<b>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June 2023 and annually	Campaign Director, Revive
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023 and annually	Campaign Director, Revive
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2023 and annually	Campaign Director, Revive

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly	September 2022 December 2022 March 2023 June 2023 September 2023	Campaign Director, Revive
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings annually	April 2023	Marketing & Communications Manager Strategic Partnerships Manager Campaign Director, Revive
<b>Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2023	Campaign Director, Revive



# Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Develop a plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	September 2022	P&C Director
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	September 2022	P&C Director Executive Manager, Engagement
	Advertise CVA vacancies on the Indigenous Employment Australia website <a href="https://atsijobs.com.au/">https://atsijobs.com.au/</a>	September 2022	P&C Director
	Identify employment agencies in our operational areas that specialise in employment support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples with a focus on traineeships	January 2023	P&C Director
<b>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	January 2023	Finance Analyst
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September 2022	Finance Analyst
	Conduct a review of current suppliers to see if we can substitute an equivalent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	January 2023	Project Manager Revive (Lead) Project Manager Wild Futures Project Manager Future Stewards CFO
	Identify current and potential Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander suppliers for each operational area.	September 2022	Project Officer Revive Project Officer Wild Futures Project Officer Future Stewards
	Implement a tracking and recording mechanism to identify and report on supplier engagement.	January 2023	Finance Analyst
<b>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at Board Level</b>	Appoint a suitably skilled and experienced Board Director who brings lived First Nations experience to CVA.	September 2022	CEO P&C Director





**“Weaving the voice, experience and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all we do is crucial to the success of CVA’s RAP.”**

– Renae Riviere, RAP Working Group Lead



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