

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)

October 2025 - April 2027





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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) pay their respects to First Nations peoples across Australia, to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the lands, skies and waterways across Australia.

We pay our respects to traditional Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the continuation of cultural, spiritual, educational, literacy and numeracy practices of First Nations peoples and their continuing connection to country.

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy recognises First Nations people as the traditional custodians of the land. This acknowledgment includes the right of First Nations people to self-determination and the importance of incorporating First Nations cultural practices into literacy learning and education decision making.

Artwork

Vicki is a Ngarrindjeri and Boandik woman and weaver, hailing from Tailem Bend, a town along the River Murray in South Australia.

Vicki has been weaving for over 30 years, a craft she was taught by Aunty Ellen Trevorrow, a renowned Ngarrindjeri weaver.

Weaving for Vicki, is a way of staying connected to her Ngarrindjeri heritage, every stitch taking her back to her family and community. Weaving is a reminder of the cycle of life; each step and each row growing and evolving.

Weaving also provides Vicki with an opportunity to slow down and reflect and be in the moment.

Vicki loves sharing and teaching others her craft. Sharing her culture and her stories with everyone she meets.



Photographs show a set of natural fibre woven artworks created by artist Vicki Hartman.



Message from the ACAL president

I am proud to introduce the Australian Council for Adult Literacy Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

On behalf of ACAL I pay my respects to First Nations peoples across Australia, to their Elders past and present. I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the lands, skies and waterways across Australia. I pay respect to traditional Elders past and present and acknowledge the continuation of cultural, spiritual, educational, literacy and numeracy practices of First Nations peoples and their continuing connection to country.

This acknowledgment includes the right of First Nations people to self-determination and the importance of incorporating First Nations cultural practices into literacy learning and education decision making.

ACAL was formed in 1976 on the traditional lands of The First Nations People who have lived in the Canberra region for tens of thousands of years, and who maintain a continuous connection to the land, waters, and cultural practices. The term Canberra comes from the Ngunnawal language and means meeting place. This reflects the area's historical significance as a gathering site for various Aboriginal groups. The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) continues to advocate for learners and

the teachers across all of the traditional lands of Australia.

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy promotes adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice. We provide leadership in Australian debate on adult literacy and numeracy practices and policy, build understanding of adult literacy and numeracy issues, and advocate on behalf of equitable adult literacy and numeracy provision for all Australians. We build links between people, organisations and systems; the participants and stakeholders in the adult literacy and numeracy field and we work with other organisations on issues of mutual concern.

The education system in Australia has not adequately met the needs of First Nations adults nationally. Many First Nations adults, and communities, have been impacted by historically inadequate educational opportunities as children that have not been addressed in adulthood. There is a significant and shameful lack of official information about the literacy barriers experienced by First Nations people and lack of data. In addition, educational decisions have seldom taken into account the cultural needs and the wishes of those with unmet literacy needs. It is with this knowledge that ACAL has advocated strongly for decisions about literacy provision, particularly for remote communities, to be made for First Nations people by First Nations people.

ACAL continues to support this approach.

Committing to a Reconciliation Action Plan is a step in providing appropriate and informed advocacy. We need to learn more about the truth of our national history and the educational opportunities offered, or not offered, both in the past and now. This will allow us to present a strong argument for increased opportunities.

We look forward to building stronger connections with First Nations communities across Australia. Our aim for this and future RAPs is to make ACAL an organisation that advocates for literacy in a manner informed and supported by First Nations people.

Jo Medlin

President

Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)



Statement from the Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

ACAL joins a network of more than 3,000 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 ACAL 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 ACAL, 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



Our Organisation

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) is a national peak body which serves a critical role in promoting adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice in Australia.

Our core purpose encompasses various activities aimed at providing leadership in the adult literacy field, building understanding, advocating for equitable provision, fostering connections, and collaborating with other organisations.

We take a leadership role in the national conversation on adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice, offering a platform for discussion through forums and annual conferences. Our advocacy efforts extend to promoting equitable adult literacy and numeracy provision for all Australians, emphasising the importance of recognising adult literacy and numeracy teaching as a profession.

Additionally, ACAL actively works to build links between individuals, organisations, and systems involved in the adult literacy and numeracy field, creating a network of participants and stakeholders.

Collaboration with other professional bodies is a key aspect of our strategy,

fostering research into adult literacy and numeracy to inform both policy and practice. Through publications, position statements, and occasional papers, ACAL contributes to the broader goal of ensuring accessible adult literacy and numeracy provision across the country.

Embedded in all our initiatives is the fundamental principle that literacy and numeracy are essential human rights, underscoring our commitment to social justice and equity in education. We advocate for the provision of free and impartial access to lifelong and comprehensive literacy education as a societal responsibility, promoting fairness and equality in the educational landscape.

As a national peak body, our geographic reach extends throughout the country. State councils operate in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. ACAL maintains representation in Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory through committee members. The ACAL national executive comprises volunteer positions of president, vice president, treasurer and secretary and a state and territory representative based committee. There is one paid part-time administration role.



OUR RAP COMMITMENT

Our RAP Commitment

ACAL believes in and is committed to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as an integral first step in recognising and addressing the unique adult literacy and numeracy needs of First Nations Australians.

As a national peak body, we are dedicated to promoting literacy and numeracy practices, acknowledging that the teachers, researchers, and students we aim to support and advocate for include individuals from First Nations communities. ACAL recognises the richness and diversity of literacy practices within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, encompassing aspects of languages, lands, the environment, songlines, dreamtime stories, ancestors, kinship and astronomy.

The development of a RAP is driven by our commitment to understanding and respecting these unique practices, and with the aim of celebrating and showcasing the richness of First Nations literacy and numeracy. Beyond honouring history, our focus extends to the present and future, emphasising the importance of literacy and numeracy in equity, accessing opportunities, success, and overall well-being. ACAL views literacy as a fundamental human right and acknowledges the critical role of literacy and numeracy in fostering social justice and educational equity.

To advocate effectively,
we recognise the need for
deep understanding

and strong relationships with First Nations organisations, leaders, and educators, ensuring a culturally respectful and responsive approach that considers intersectionality in addressing literacy needs, barriers, and gaps. Through the development of a RAP, ACAL aims to contribute meaningfully to reconciliation efforts and promote inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive literacy education for all Australians.

In addition, "Literacy as a social practice" refers to the understanding that literacy is not just a set of isolated skills but is deeply embedded in the social and cultural contexts of individuals and communities. It emphasises the idea that literacy is not only about reading and writing but is a dynamic and multifaceted activity that is shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors. In the context of teaching and learning, this perspective recognises that literacy skills are acquired and applied in real-life situations and are influenced by the social interactions and cultural practices of individuals and communities.

When working with First Nations people in the field of adult literacy, acknowledging and promoting the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language, literacy, and numeracy practices becomes crucial. This involves recognising and respecting the unique ways in which language and numeracy are used within these specific cultural contexts. By doing so, educators not only honour and respect these practices but also tap into the strengths and rich cultural heritages

of First Nations communities.

Incorporating First Nations language, literacy, and numeracy practices into teaching and learning programs is a two-fold process.

First, it recognises the intrinsic value of these practices in preserving cultural identities and heritage. Second, it enhances the effectiveness of literacy education by making it more relevant and relatable to the learners. This approach fosters a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment, promoting a sense of belonging and engagement.

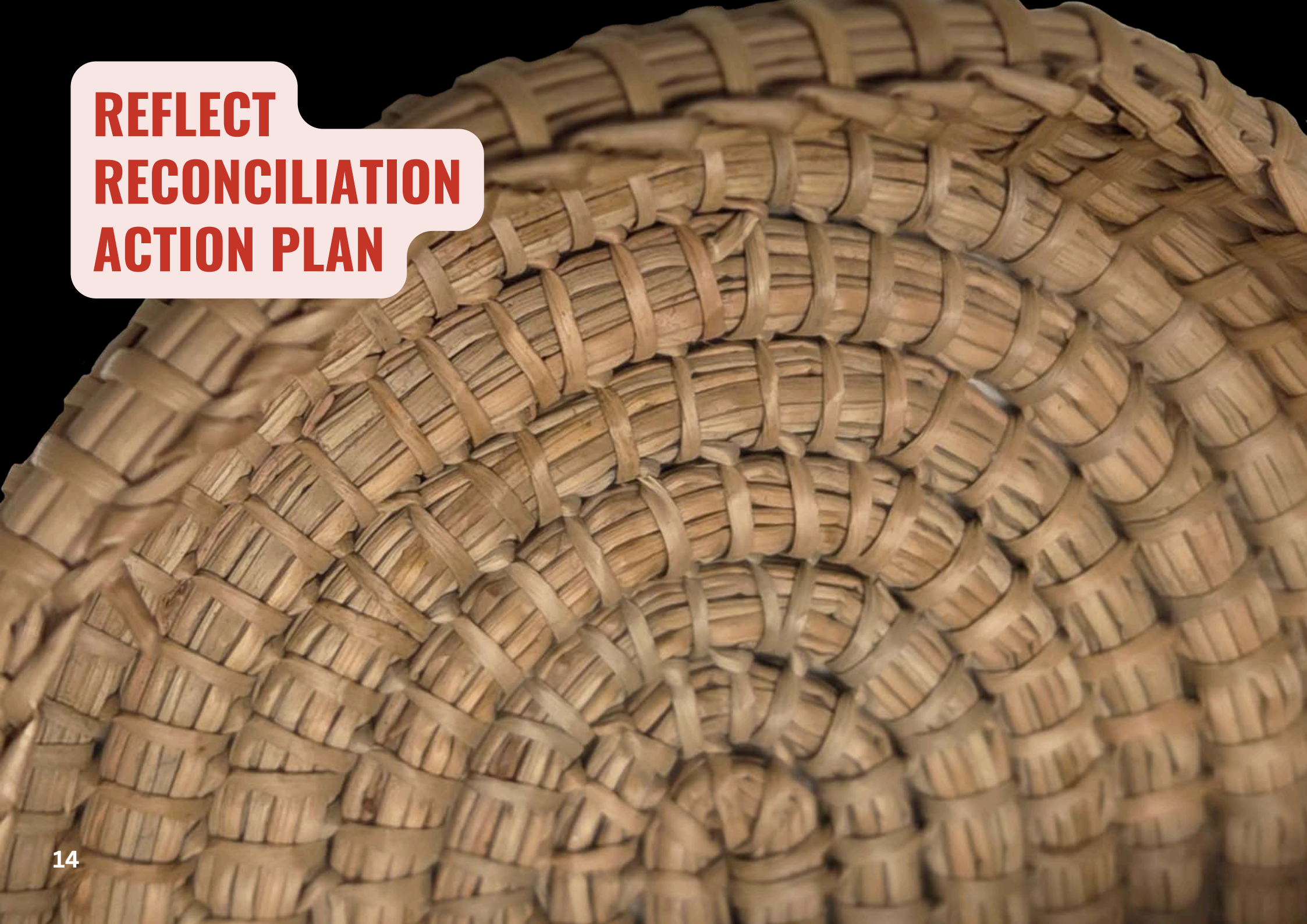
Ultimately, it contributes to development of a holistic and empowering approach to adult literacy education that goes beyond the acquisition of skills and integrates cultural identity and community relevance into the learning process. Furthermore, we believe that everyone can benefit and learn from these diverse perspectives and literacy practices.

RAP working group

Lorraine Sushames
Linno Rhodes

RAP Champion

Lorraine Sushames



REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



RELATIONSHIPS

Outcome	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence and begin engagement activities where indicated.	October 2025 ongoing	RAP Champion & RAP Team
	Research good practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	October 2025	RAP Champion & RAP Team
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate links and information about relevant Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our membership base through the ACAL e-Newsletter.	Monthly from October 2025	RAP Champion & RAP Team
	Ensure RAP Working Group member participation in an external NRW event.	27 May-30 June 2026 annually	RAP Champion & RAP Team
	Encourage and promote participation in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW to our membership base.	27 May-30 June 2026 annually	RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Provide updates on our commitment to reconciliation to our membership and stakeholder base through the ACAL e-Newsletter.	Monthly from October 2025	RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer
	Continue to identify and engage with relevant external stakeholders as part of our reconciliation journey.	October 2025 ongoing	RAP Champion & RAP Team
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Continue to uphold and promote best practice in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	October 2025 ongoing	RAP Champion & RAP Team



RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Investigate the cultural learning needs for our Executive, Committee and Administrative Officer and engage in cultural learning opportunities where indicated.	October 2025 ongoing	RAP Champion & RAP Team
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	- Continue to observe cultural protocols such as Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country in our activities and events. - Display Acknowledgement of Country statements on the ACAL website and other communication channels.	October 2025 monthly October 2025 ongoing	RAP Champion & RAP Team RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	- Inform our membership and stakeholder base about upcoming opportunities to participate in, recognise and celebrate NAIDOC Week through the ACAL e-Newsletter. - RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. - Promote external NAIDOC Week events.	June and annually 6-13 July 2026, annually 6-13 July 2026, annually	RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Admin Officer



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional development opportunities	• Offer scholarships for First Nations educators to attend ACAL events.	Annually	RAP Champion & RAP Team, Conference Secretariat
	• Encourage First Nations educators to become actively involved in ACAL activities.	Monthly from October 2025	RAP Champion & RAP Team
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• When quotes are sought, give first preference for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses where price and quality are competitive.	October 2025	RAP Champion & RAP Team, ACAL treasurer and ACAL Administrative Officer
	• Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and producers to promote their work through having a display or sponsoring an event at ACAL conferences.	Annually	ACAL President, RAP Champion & Conference Secretariat



GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Ongoing	RAP Champion & ACAL President
	• Draft Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Established	RAP Champion & ACAL President
	• Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Annual AGM event	RAP Champion & ACAL President
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	October 2025 and monthly	RAP Champion & ACAL Executive
	• Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP at public events and among our membership.	October 2025	RAP Champion & ACAL President
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	October 2025	RAP Champion & ACAL Executive
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Administration Officer
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2026	RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Administrative Officer
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2026	RAP Champion, RAP Team & ACAL Administrative Officer
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP as appropriate to ACAL.	November 2026	ACAL President, RAP Champion



Contact Details

Public Enquiries

Name ACAL Administration Officer

Email info@acal.edu.au