

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2024 – July 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) acknowledges and pays respect to the original Custodians of this country. We are fully committed to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and all other Australians.

Accessibility

If you need this information in an accessible format, telephone (03) 9825 7200 or email: enquiries@is.vic.edu.au

This document can also be found on our website www.is.vic.edu.au

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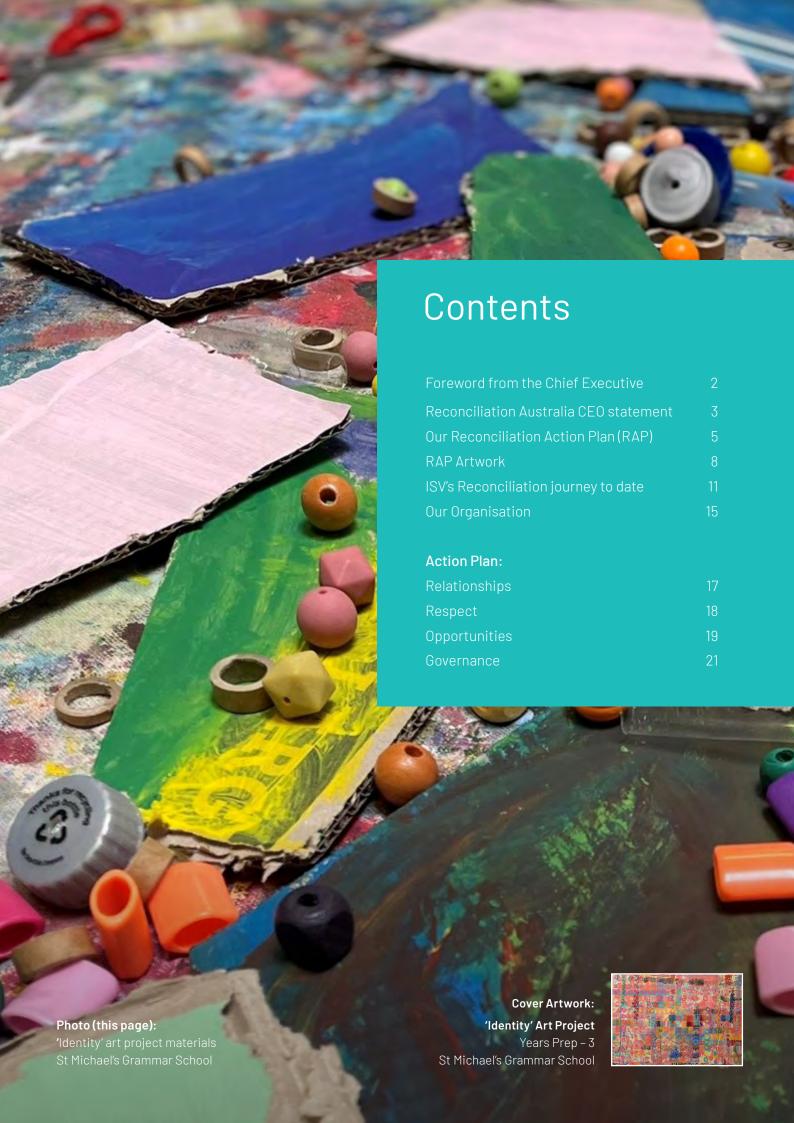
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Foreword from the Chief Executive

ISV welcomes the opportunity to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for our community. We hope that this will result in a closer connection with our First Nations People and a deeper understanding of the lands on which we work.

The plan captures our initial steps to engage more fully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture. We encourage our ISV community to take to heart the importance of acknowledging those who came before us and who continue to live alongside us in this beautiful part of Australia.

The RAP invites each of us to embark on a personal journey to embrace the richness of Indigenous culture. It provides practical ways to engage with our member schools and support them in their work to provide excellent education for young people. By working together, we embed respect into our activity and ensure we always recognise we have the privilege of being on Aboriginal land.

My thanks to the ISV RAP committee for their continual work as we embark on our reconciliation journey.

Rachel Holthouse
Chief Executive

Independent Schools Victoria



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Independent Schools Victoria to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Independent Schools Victoria joins a network of more than 2,500 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 Independent Schools Victoria 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 Independent Schools Victoria, 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 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

ISV is committed to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all other Australians. ISV is a thought leader in education and has an obligation to lead from the front. As a model organisation, ISV can play an important role in leading and positively influencing the Independent school sector.

Recognising and acknowledging First Nations peoples is an obligation and a sign of respect; it also helps address historic and current injustices and inequalities. To achieve this and build the understanding of ISV staff as well as Member Schools, it is important for ISV to build relationships, understanding and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will also support the cultural safety of our First Nations staff and students in Member Schools and further strengthen the focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency in the Australian teacher workforce.

The Child Safe Standards require that organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, ISV will use this RAP to ensure that strategies are embedded to equip all Member Schools to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people. The RAP will also help ISV ensure that policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

ISV's interest in reconciliation will also further support teaching staff across Member Schools to grow and develop their classroom practice, particularly in relation to focus areas 1.3, 1.4, 2.4 and 4.4 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers¹ that explicitly support reconciliation initiatives.

The ISV RAP will also support focus area 5 of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals to help school leaders lead inclusive organisations that promote understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Consolidating ISV's commitment to reconciliation will also support schools with advice and professional learning, with the general capabilities identified in the Australian Curriculum, particularly Intercultural Understanding, as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority.

The RAP deliverables will be delegated to various individuals and teams across ISV, as outlined. The RAP Working Group will continue to exist as the 'RAP committee' after the launch of the RAP in October 2024. The group will liaise with individuals and teams identified and report back to ISV staff on the the RAP's progress. The implementation strategy is also articulated in this plan.



Each of us owns
part of the story of
Australia. We should
state publicly our
beliefs about the
rights of First Nations
peoples. We should
be modelling best
practice in all of our
external and internal
activities.

ISV staff member

^{1.} Focus area 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

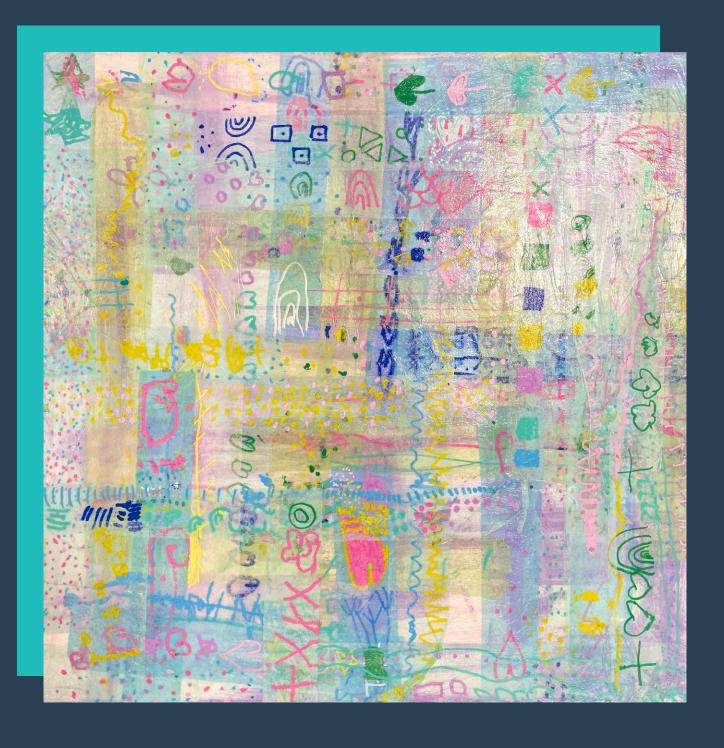
Focus area 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Focus area 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.



RAP Artwork: St Michael's Grammar 'Identity' art project

The St Michael's Grammar 'Identity' art project undertaken by students from the Early Learning Centre to Year 3 and Year 12, is a profound example of how art can serve as a bridge between cultures and generations.



Bronwyn David (left) and Jade Turner (right) guiding students during the St Michael's Grammar School 'Identity' art project



Guided by First Nation's Artist Bronwyn David, a Palawa-Trawlwoolway woman, and Art Teacher Jade Turner, the students embarked on a journey of self-exploration and cultural education.

Through the art-making process, they engaged in meaningful conversations about identity, expressing what was significant to them, what represented them, and what they cherished.

Bronwyn's sharing of her cultural symbols and the emphasis on the connection to Country not only enriched the students' understanding of Indigenous heritage but also highlighted the importance of acknowledging and respecting the diverse narratives that shape our society.

The students had paint pens, tissue paper and gel medium available to create their individual thread. The collaborative nature of the project symbolised the interweaving of stories and experiences, fostering a sense of unity and collective growth. This initiative exemplifies how educational institutions can play a pivotal role in nurturing an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect through creative expression.





ISV's reconciliation journey to date

In 2021, Independent Schools Victoria identified the importance of acknowledging First Nations peoples perspectives and pedagogy across all aspects of the organisation. This led to the development of our group. The role of the RAP Working Group is to formalise this commitment, and support educators to engage with the document and embed First Nations peoples practices into their daily work.

We have acknowledged that educators, children and families are on different reconciliation journeys.

As an organisation, we will strive to embed meaningful, authentic and culturally safe knowledge, practices, training and curriculum decisions into all our services. ISV's commitment to reconciliation is acknowledged formally through an Acknowledgement of Country, displayed on the ISV website and staff email signature. The acknowledgement is also made at all ISV learning events, Member School briefings and whole-staff meetings.

ISV aims to strengthen the support and guidance we provide Member Schools on their reconciliation journeys. We recognise that we are also on a journey and have greatly benefitted by the strong relationship with Worawa Aboriginal College and Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS) as ISV Member Schools. ISV continues to prioritise ongoing support to the schools through a dedicated consultant of the School Improvement Team.

Staff from ISV have been active participants in a growing number of cross-sectoral reconciliation initiatives as well as Victorian-based and national networks. In 2022 an ISA/AIS Reconciliation Working Group was established between the Independent school member associations of all states, in partnership with Independent Schools Australia. The Working Group meets regularly throughout the year to share reconciliation strategies and actions. ISV has been an active participant of the Working Group, which has led to an evolving and strengthening relationship with Reconciliation Australia (particularly the Narragunnawali team).

In November 2023, ISV representatives attended a national forum on reconciliation entitled 'Reconciliation and education: Past-Present-Future' as well as the Reconciliation in Education Awards in Canberra. Consultants from ISV's School Improvement Team also attended the Australian Reconciliation Convention in November 2021. ISV staff are planning to join the ISA/ AIS Reconciliation Working Group in attending the 25th annual Garma Festival in Arnhem Land in August 2025.

ISV's commitment to reconciliation transcends the Independent school sector. The Koorie Education Working Group (KEWG) was established to support the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (SPFAC) in its priority for Koorie students. The group collaborates on raising aspirations and achievement for Koorie students, including implementing the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy. The KEWG provides a forum for members to collaborate across sectors. ISV is also an active participant of the KEWG, leading aspects of the group's workplan, which identifies KEWG's key priorities for 2024.

In partnership with the Department of Education and Victorian Catholic Education Authority, ISV will lead a pilot 2024 program connecting 12-15 schools as 'communities of practice', with a focus on developing a unit of work that embeds the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The program will draw on ISV's established and emerging partnerships with external partners, including the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), Reconciliation Victoria, the Ngarrngga team at the University of Melbourne and 'Australians Together'.

ISV staff also attended the Schools Education Programs & Support Group Curriculum Working Group meetings through 2020 and 2021, contributing to the design of a cross-sector professional learning day to provide practical support for teachers to support AITSL Standard 2.4. ISV and Member schools are also supporting a cross-sectoral working group with a focus on Child Safe Standard 1, involving Melbourne Indigenous Transition School and Worawa Aboriginal College.



For me reconciliation means coming together. In Australia it is bringing together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with other Australians. This coming together is an ongoing journey.

- ISV staff member

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To model best practice to our Members, so ISV staff can improve their understanding of Reconciliation, Indigenous culture and the challenges experienced by Indigenous people in their everyday lives and also so we can better support staff and students in our Member Schools.

- ISV staff member

These projects build on a growing repertoire of professional learning experiences that have been co-designed with partners for the benefit of ISV Member Schools. ISV representatives regularly meet with a team at VAEAI to provide support for broader reconciliation initiatives such as the Koorie Year 12 Yearbook and artwork competition as well as feedback to programs being developed by ISV.

VAEAI has presented interactive webinars for ISV Member Schools through our isLearn platform on Protocols for Koorie education in Victorian schools. The Narragunnawali team has also run sessions for ISV Member Schools in partnership with ISV staff, with a focus on embedding reconciliation in our ECCs, schools and classrooms. ISV has also collaborated in the development of an innovative new program to improve hearing health and education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, through the Listen to Learn program. Members of the ISV School Improvement Team are part of the Victorian Listen to Learn working party. ISV staff also work with Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) applicants and various teachers/ curriculum leaders in Member Schools around evidencing the AITSL Standards and implementing the Australian/ Victorian Curriculum requirements.

Over the last three years, ISV has also developed a partnership with AJ Williams-Tchen, founder Director & Lead Consultant at Girraway Ganyi Consultancy. AJ works extensively with Member Schools on reconciliation initiatives and is working with the ISV RAP team as a consultant. He ran a cultural competency session for the ISV School Improvement Team in November 2020 and has run regular webinars for ISV Member Schools.





Our Organisation

Since 1949, Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) has been dedicated to diversity and choice in education. Through advocacy and support, we help families access schools that match the needs and values of every student.

ISV's mission is to:

- support Independent education for the benefit of students and the wider community
- advocate on behalf of our Member Schools
- promote the importance of Independent education.

We champion Independent schools as an essential pillar of the school education system, alongside government and Catholic schools. We offer programs, products and services that benefit everyone and are focussed on building a robust civic society.

ISV employs 66 staff, as 18 October 2024

ISV currently has no staff members who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

ISV works on behalf of 222 Member Schools operating on 372 campuses that educate approximately 165,000 students – representing some 16 percent of students in Victoria. Membership is voluntary and open to all registered non-government schools in Victoria.

ISV respects and promotes the autonomy of Member Schools by providing the services, support and advocacy they need to deliver the best possible education for all students. We work constructively with all levels of government. ISV is a not-for-profit organisation and a member of Independent Schools Australia (ISA). We are members of the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council which provides advice to the Victorian Minister for Education on issues affecting all schools – Independent, Government and Catholic.

ISV's office is located at 40 Rosslyn Street, West Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country.







Action Plan: Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal	 Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations across Victoria to support our advocacy and support for Member Schools, families, and students to promote diversity and choice in education. 	August 2024	Principal Consultant (member of the School Improvement Team)
and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	August 2024	Principal Consultant (member of the School Improvement Team)
2. Build relationships through celebrating	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resources and reconciliation materials to ISV staff.	May 2025	Innovation & Learning LeaderChief Financial Officer
National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2025	Innovation & Learning LeaderChief Financial Officer
	Encourage and support ISV staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2025	Innovation & Learning LeaderChief Financial Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of	Communicate ISV's commitment to reconciliation to all staff, partners, Member Schools and external stakeholders.	July 2024	Chief ExecutiveCommunications & Marketing Manager
influence.	 Identify ISV Member Schools and peak bodies for the school sector in Australia that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	August 2024	Principal Consultant (member of the School Improvement Team)
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-	Research best practice and policies and increase understanding in areas of race relations and anti- discrimination within ISV.	July 2024	Research OfficerDigital Project Manager
discrimination strategies.	 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs as part of a cultural audit. 	August 2024	Chief ExecutiveEmployment Relations Officer

Action Plan: Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and	 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within ISV. 	October 2024	Chief ExecutiveChief Financial Officer
Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through	 Increase understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety, and competency to support our Member Schools through isComply and isConnect platforms and isLearn events. 	January 2025	 Head of School Services Head of Innovation & Learning
cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within ISV.	February 2025	Head of Innovation & Learning
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within ISV's operational across Victoria and Australia.	October 2024	Innovation & Learning LeaderPrincipal Consultant
by observing cultural protocols.	 Increase ISV staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	October 2024	Innovation & Learning LeaderPrincipal Consultant
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures	Raise awareness and share information amongst ISV staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	First week in July 2024	Innovation & Learning LeaderPrincipal Consultant
and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Introduce ISV staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July 2024	Innovation & Learning LeaderPrincipal Consultant
	ISV staff to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	Innovation & Learning LeaderPrincipal Consultant



Action Plan: Opportunities

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8.	Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within ISV (after review of HR policies and procedures).	June 2025	Chief ExecutiveLead, Employment Relations
		Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities at ISV.	June 2025	Chief ExecutiveLead, Employment Relations
9.	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses to support ISV and Member Schools.	October 2024	Head of Finance
		Investigate membership for ISV with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce.	August 2024	Head of Finance
	Promote Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education to staff and external stakeholders.	Promote Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program across ISV and to all schools in our network and encourage these schools to develop their own RAPs via the Narragunnawali platform.	July 2024	Communications & Marketing Manager
		Encourage ISV staff and Member Schools to engage with the professional learning (including webinar) resources available via Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education online platform.	July 2024	Principal Consultant (member of the School Improvement Team)
		Encourage all staff/all early learning services in our network to sign up to the Narragunnawali News mailing list.	July 2024	Communications & Marketing Manager

Opportunities (continued) <u>Timeline</u> Action Deliverable Responsibility 10. (Continued) July 2024 Host appropriate links to Reconciliation Communications & **Promote** Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation Marketing Manager Narragunnawali: in Education platform from the ISV Reconciliation website. in Education to staff and external Collaborate with Reconciliation Australia's September Head of Innovation & 2024 Narragunnawali team to identify Learning stakeholders. opportunities for strengthening the Innovation & Learning connections between Narragunnawali Leader professional learning/RAP development processes and ISV's professional learning program. Nominate Member Schools/early learning June 2025 Principal Consultant services within our network who have (member of the School shown exceptional commitment to Improvement Team) reconciliation for a 2025 Narragunnawali Award. July 2024 Communications & Help promote and encourage schools/ early learning services within our network Marketing Manager who have shown exceptional commitment to reconciliation to apply for the Narragunnawali Award



In our hopefully just, equitable and reconciled Australia the First Australians will not only be respected but championed. Their children will have the same life chances and choices as non-Indigenous children and we will ensure the wrongs of the past are never repeated.

ISV staff member



Action Plan: Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group	Form a RWG to govern ISV's RAP implementation.	July 2024	Chief Executive
(RWG) to drive governance of the	Draft a Terms of Reference for the ISV's RWG.	July 2024	Chief Executive
RAP.	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on ISV's RWG.	July 2024	Chief Executive
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of	Define resource needs for (ISV's) RAP implementation.	July 2024	Head of Finance
RAP commitments.	Engage ISV's section leaders in the delivery of ISV's RAP commitments.	July 2024	Chief ExecutiveHead of Finance
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2024	Head of Finance
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on ISV's RAP commitments.	August 2024	Head of Finance
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both	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	Principal Consultant
internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Principal Consultant
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	December 2025	Principal Consultant
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing ISV's next RAP.	March 2025	Principal Consultant



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