

June 2025 to May 2028





Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of Western Australia. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders, both past and present, and the ongoing connection between people, land, waters and community.

We acknowledge those who continue to share knowledge, their traditions and culture to support our journey for reconciliation. In particular, we recognise land and cultural heritage as places that hold great significance for Aboriginal people.

*Disclaimer:
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons.*

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Message from Reconciliation Australia



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and fifth overall.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise. With the responsibility for plans, land and heritage management for all Western Australians, the scope for the Department to lead and influence transformative action is significant.

With this Stretch RAP, the Department demonstrates its commitment to fostering strong relationships with First Nations people, building knowledge and understanding amongst all its employees, and encouraging ownership of the RAP at all levels of the organisation. It will build on its past lessons and successes to strengthen respect for First Nations knowledge and implement initiatives that advance economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through its new RAP Commitments, the Department will ensure the continuing recognition of Traditional Owners, working collaboratively with First Nations communities to drive reconciliation outcomes, ensuring there is respect for the self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal communities and enhancing the connections to people, places and histories for all Western Australians.

By placing respect and relationships at the centre, the Department will engage meaningfully with Aboriginal communities, listening deeply and respecting the knowledge and traditions of First Nations leaders, and in turn enabling better understanding of past injustices and implementing initiatives to increase the protection of Aboriginal lands and heritage in Western Australia.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage has the potential to drive considerable reconciliation outcomes throughout its sphere of influence. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Department on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from the Director General – Vision for Reconciliation



I am proud to present our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch RAP), which builds on the solid foundation we have established on our reconciliation journey.

Our Stretch RAP sharpens our focus on delivering high-impact commitments with clear, measurable targets and goals. It emphasises the importance of strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples, engaging our staff in meaningful reconciliation and delivering solution-focused strategies that benefit Aboriginal communities.

At its heart is our commitment to embedding Aboriginal voices in mainstream planning and development initiatives, embracing the richness and diversity of their perspectives.

We are committed to working alongside the Traditional Custodians of the land, by caring for and protecting the country that sustains us. We actively engage with Aboriginal people across the state, negotiating benefits through Native Title agreements and partnerships, collaborating with Traditional Owners to deliver outcomes aligned with their land aspirations, and implementing initiatives that recognise, manage and protect Aboriginal heritage.

Our unwavering commitment to reconciliation is also reflected in the Department's Strategic Plan 2025-2029, which includes a key pillar centred on improving cultural, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people across Western Australia. Together, through our Stretch RAP and Strategic Plan, we will continue to deliver transformative actions that align with our reconciliation goals. We all have a role to play in advancing reconciliation and together we can successfully deliver our RAP commitments and continue to build diversity within our workforce to drive our reconciliation journey.

The development of our Stretch RAP has been a collaborative effort, shaped by the valuable contributions of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, our RAP Working Group and those in the Department who continue to deliver services to Aboriginal communities.

I recognise that our reconciliation journey is ongoing, and I am proud of the progress we have made and the path we are continuing to forge.

Anthony Kannis PSM
Director General

Our artist and story

Kirsty Burgu is the youngest daughter of Roger Burgu (dec), a well-known Ngarinyin elder and painter. Kirsty was born at Mowanjum near Derby in the West Kimberley of Western Australia, where she has lived most of her life, except for time spent in study. She is a deep-thinking artist who endeavours to pass on a message through her work.

Kirsty remains engaged in the traditional stories told to her by, as a child, by her mother and father, and Uncle Jeffrey Burgu.

Kirsty says: 'I really like painting. Painting is how I share all the stories I've been told with the young ones. I remember when I was small, the electricity would go off early. We would fall asleep around the fire, we didn't have TV for entertainment. My dad would say: 'come I'll tell you story now,' so me and my brother would go and sit in his arms and listen until we fell asleep. The paintings I do now have the stories that Dad told me. There are so many stories and they all have so much to teach us about life.'

Kirsty is one of a new generation of painters at Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre who interpret the old stories in new ways.

Mowanjum Wandjina culture is a living culture and Kirsty uses a wide-range of traditional and contemporary materials including: ochre on bark, ochre and acrylic on canvas, ink on paper, and woodcut, lino and silkscreen printing.

Kirsty has undertaken a number of commissions and her work is held in private collections throughout Australia and internationally. In 2024 she added beach wear design to her portfolio.

Kirsty works at Mowanjum Art and Cultural Centre as a casual arts worker and for Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation as a board member and ranger.

About the Artwork

The artwork from Kirsty tells a story of reconciliation through connection to culture.

Kirsty, as a proud Aboriginal woman, represents her connection to culture through the roots of the Boab tree. The roots are connected to stories, language, law, country and culture. The Boab tree's roots descend deep in the ground to get water, symbolising strength in growing as an individual. The branches of the boab also reach out to connect to other cultures to learn from them. This recognises that we are all similar but come from different backgrounds and environments.

The artwork portrays how Aboriginal people lived in the bush, hunting and gathering, but also went to the town to learn and go to school, as well as for work and health.

Finally, a significant feature of the artwork is of an Aboriginal man and a European man walking and working together. This representation is important as they are portrayed as equals and are helping each other grow by sharing knowledge.

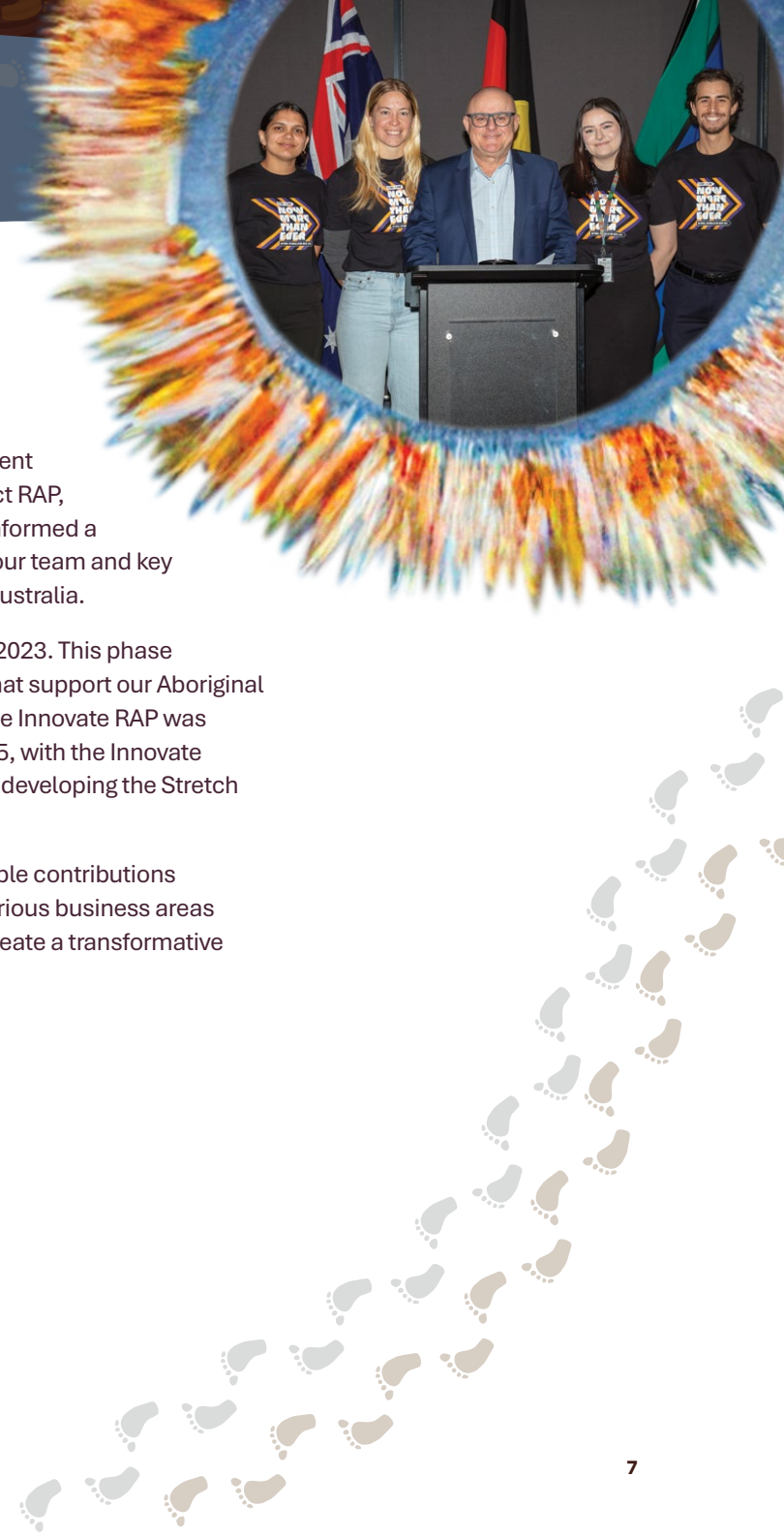


Introduction

In October 2019, the Department embarked on a meaningful journey towards reconciliation by launching its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect RAP). This initiative marked a commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive work environment while enhancing our understanding of the reconciliation process. Through the Reflect RAP, we empowered our staff to deepen their knowledge and share experiences, which informed a culturally responsive service delivery model. This collaborative framework enabled our team and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for advancing reconciliation across Western Australia.

Building on the success of the Reflect RAP, we launched our Innovate RAP in March 2023. This phase demonstrated our dedication to implementing innovative strategies and initiatives that support our Aboriginal staff and enhance our existing efforts to create a culturally inclusive organisation. The Innovate RAP was successfully implemented throughout 2023 and 2024, and completed in March 2025, with the Innovate RAP Working Group deciding to advance the Department's reconciliation journey by developing the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

The development of the Stretch RAP was a collaborative effort. It incorporates valuable contributions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) staff at the Department and various business areas responsible for delivering services to Aboriginal communities. Together, we aim to create a transformative impact that aligns with our commitment to reconciliation.



About the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage plans and manages land and heritage for all Western Australians to conserve our past, protect our unique landscapes, nurture the present and plan for the future. We are responsible for State-level land use planning and management, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage.



We respond to, and balance, demands for land, and proactively plan and advise on key development projects across the state to ensure our communities will continue to prosper for future generations. We plan how to make best use of the state's natural and built assets for the sustainable and responsible development of all Western Australian communities, through evidence-based research, integrated policy development and stakeholder engagement.

The Department supports four State Government Ministers and five statutory boards and committees:

- **Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC)** – a statutory authority established as a body corporate under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* with state-wide responsibility for planning for future community development. The Department provides professional and technical expertise, administrative services and corporate resources to assist in the WAPC's decisions.
- **Heritage Council of Western Australia** – responsible for statutory functions and established as a body corporate under the *Heritage Act 2018*. The Department undertakes most of the Heritage Council's day-to-day operations, projects and service delivery, under an agreed delegation framework.
- **Pastoral Lands Board** – a statutory authority established under section 94 of the *Land Administration Act 1997* with responsibility to the Minister for Lands for administering Western Australia's pastoral leases.
- **Aboriginal Lands Trust** – provides significant economic and investment opportunities for Aboriginal people, under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*.
- **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee** is established under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* to undertake a range of functions, including providing recommendations in relation to approvals sought under the Act. The Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee (ACMC) was abolished on 15 November 2023 and superseded by the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee.



Our vision

*To respect the past
To create opportunities today
To plan for the future*

Our purpose

*We plan and manage land and
heritage for all Western Australians.*

Our values

Our values shape our attitudes and actions, guiding us both personally and professionally.

Respect – We respect that our work is personal to our stakeholders and that every piece of land and site has a story.

Collaboration – We engage and collaborate to build prosperous places and connected communities.

Integrity – Our ethics and integrity guide our actions with every piece of land, site and opportunity to enable us to deliver great outcomes for Western Australia.

Innovation – We enable innovation, implementing innovative approaches to the way we work to create value for our stakeholders.

Professionalism – Our professionalism empowers us to use our specialised knowledge and skills to deliver our work to the highest standards.

Accountability – We work in the interest of the public and take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

Our Goals

The Department's goals clearly align to our reconciliation journey so far in supporting Aboriginal people, facilitating and maintaining relationships, and ensuring a regional presence to deliver good outcomes for regional communities.

Shaping communities – We are the sector leader for planning and managing the use of land and places and we work across Government to create and maintain thriving communities.

Meaningful reconciliation – We use all levers available to the Department to achieve improved outcomes for Aboriginal people which supports meaningful reconciliation.

Sustainable and responsible management of land – We will proactively manage cultural, built and natural assets held by the State to deliver economic, social and environmental benefit to the public.

Economic diversification – We will proactively facilitate economic diversification to provide public value.



Our Enabling Principles

The enabling principles will empower us to achieve our goals.

Thought leadership: We provide expert insight and leadership to deliver solutions for Western Australians.

Empowering: We challenge current thinking to achieve the best outcomes for our stakeholders and the community.

Facilitating: We help establish, build, and maintain relationships with our stakeholders by working across the Public Sector to achieve balanced outcomes.

Regional Presence: We deliver coordinated services for customers and stakeholders, facilitating good outcomes for regional communities.

Workforce Excellence: We are a safe and supportive workplace that attracts, develops and retains a dynamic and motivated workforce, encourages diversity and inclusion and is an environment that inspires and embraces innovation.



Case study

Divestment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Estate

The Department's Native Title Agreements and Partnerships directorate (NTAP) plays a key role in the divestment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) estate and the management of Aboriginal community by-laws under the *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979*. Central to our work are regular and positive interactions with Aboriginal native title holders, claimants, community members, lessees and businesses. These relationships are important to the way we approach the complex process of divestment and community engagement.

The NTAP team recognises that effective engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders requires an understanding of their timeframes, aspirations and lived experiences. We prioritise these factors in every aspect of our work, as we know that building strong, respectful relationships is the key to achieving successful outcomes. This approach ensures that Aboriginal communities are partners in the divestment process, with their voices and needs central to our planning and decision-making.

We acknowledge that past government policies and practices have negatively impacted Aboriginal communities and that these impacts are still felt today. We recognise that because of this, there is often deep-seated distrust and at times hostility towards Government from some Aboriginal stakeholders. As government employees, it is our responsibility to acknowledge these preconceptions and build trust by establishing our own, transparent relationships with stakeholders. We do so by being present, listening and working at the pace, and in the manner, that best respects the aspirations of the communities we serve.

The State Government is committed to divestment of the ALT estate. While this commitment is a positive step, NTAP recognised that the timeframe initially set for divestment that is within two terms of Government did not adequately reflect the time and care required to work with Aboriginal stakeholders on their own terms.

In response to this, NTAP advocated for a more flexible approach, which resulted in a change to the deadline. This decision reflects the importance of honouring the aspirations and needs of Aboriginal stakeholders.

We continue to work collaboratively with Aboriginal communities, including consulting on proposed legislative amendments that will facilitate more appropriate engagement, with a focus on fostering relationships based on mutual respect and understanding and ensuring that divestment occurs in a way that aligns with their goals and timelines.

It is vital that the divestment process not only meets the State Government's objectives, but also upholds the rights, priorities and cultural values of Aboriginal communities. Through this, NTAP is contributing to a more inclusive and respectful process, one that reflects a commitment to reconciliation and long-term partnership.



ALT Team Chris James and Maddy Gibson
at Manning Gorge (Wilinggin Country)

Our reconciliation journey so far

The Department began its reconciliation journey in the RAP program in 2008. With no RAP types at that stage, two plans were completed from 2008 to 2010 and 2013 to 2015 before we began our first Reflect RAP in 2019. The Reflect RAP (October 2019 to April 2021) provided a framework to identify strategies to advance reconciliation in the Department. The RAP Working Group led the implementation of the plan and organised activities to build understanding of the Department's contributions to the broader reconciliation movement. All Reflect RAP actions were successfully achieved. Key highlights in this plan included the RAP Launch and procurement of artwork by Peter Farmer, inaugural membership with Reconciliation WA, development of the Aboriginal Engagement toolkit, joint agency and Department National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events, establishment of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols, delivery of face-to-face cultural awareness training by Danny Ford and development of the Department's cultural calendar, capturing key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander observances and events.

In March 2023, we launched the Innovate RAP (March 2023 to February 2025). This plan outlines actions to achieve our vision for reconciliation, focusing on fostering strong relationships with Aboriginal peoples, engaging staff in reconciliation activities and initiatives and developing innovative strategies to support our Aboriginal community. A lesson learned from the implementation of the Innovate RAP was the need to further embed support for reconciliation initiatives across middle management. A lack of support to fully embrace the RAP deliverables presented a challenge and slowed down the process.

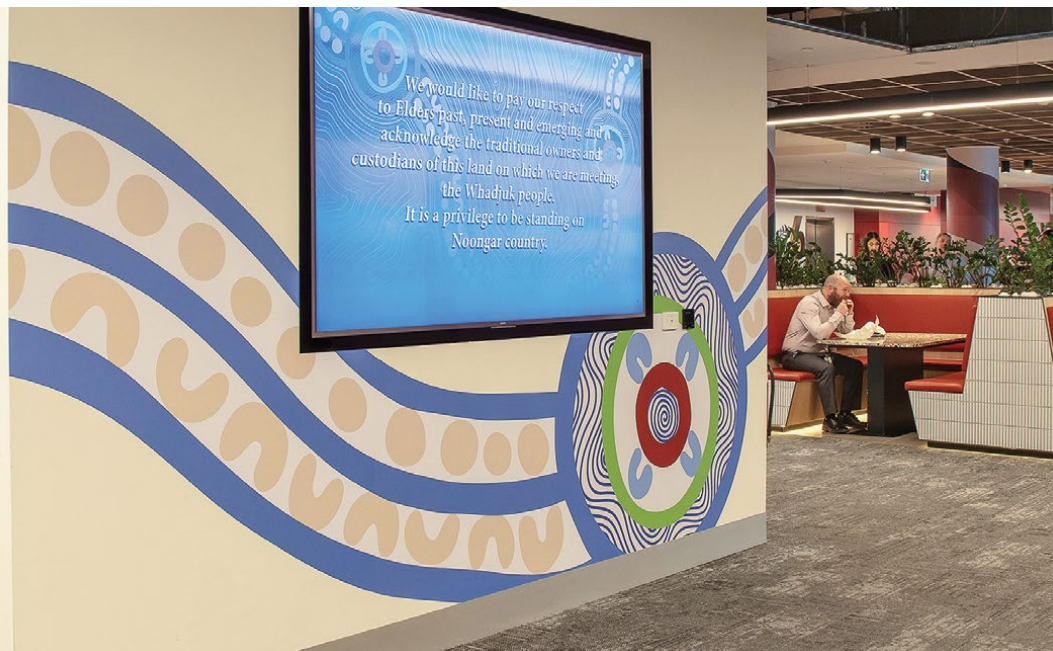


2023 Innovate RAP Launch

Key RAP achievements

Innovate RAP artwork at 140william

As part of the Department's commitment to cultural recognition, we unveiled new RAP wall art at our offices at 140william. The artwork, titled Keip Djooroot, was designed by renowned Aboriginal artist Peter John Farmer II and is featured prominently across the Department's office levels. This initiative was led by the RAP Working Group and supports Innovate RAP deliverable 8.9, ensuring the recognition of Traditional Owners. Produced in collaboration with Aboriginal businesses Nani Creative and Blakline Industries, the artwork is a reminder of our dedication to meaningful reconciliation.



Corporate Executive RAP priorities

The RAP Working Group developed five key priorities for the Corporate Executive during the Innovate RAP period. These include integrating RAP deliverables from the divisional working group members at their monthly Divisional Executive meetings, rotating the responsibility for delivering the Acknowledgement of Country, and ensuring that RAP artwork is displayed across metropolitan offices. In regional areas, alternatives such as the RAP polo shirts were explored. The Department committed to ongoing cultural awareness initiatives and further embedding Aboriginal culture into corporate practices.

Reconciliation Action Plan polo shirts

In September 2023, the Department distributed RAP polos featuring Keip Djooroot artwork by Peter John Farmer II, to selected staff, aligning with one of the Corporate Executive priorities. These polos were shared with Corporate Executive members, RAP Working Group participants, Aboriginal staff, regional employees and those who frequently travel for work, underscoring the Department's commitment to promoting reconciliation through visual representation of Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit Update

Aboriginal stakeholder engagement in the Department is guided by the Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit (toolkit). The toolkit has recently been reviewed and updated to provide a user-friendly resource for staff to embed best practice Aboriginal engagement principles and practices across all divisions of the Department. The toolkit supports the Department's overall stakeholder engagement framework which includes overarching principles to guide activities.

Artwork in Albany

Following recently completed renovations, the Department's Albany office is now the proud host to a selection of works by the late Shane Pickett, one of the most celebrated Noongar artists of his generation.

Ballardong Country (Quairading) born Shane Pickett is known for his powerful depictions of Country and its seasons. His art is featured in major collections across Australia and the world, and now nine of his works are on display throughout the Albany office.

These artworks hold deep cultural significance, enhancing the importance of shared culture in the workplace and celebrating the connection to Noongar Country, which spans the southwest of Western Australia.

The collection was kindly made available by Violet Coyne, Shane Pickett's widow and the manager of his estate. The arrangement was formalised through a Deed of Agreement between Director General Anthony Kannis and Ms Coyne.

Staff engagement and cultural learning

Art workshops and cultural storytelling

A key element of reconciliation is learning from, and engaging with, Aboriginal stories. During National Reconciliation Week 2023, Djugun, Yawuru and Bardi Jawi woman Sammy Wyborn conducted an art workshop for 30 staff at our Perth office. The workshop provided an opportunity for staff to connect with Aboriginal culture through creative expression, led by a skilled artist who learned from her mother and now shares her artistry with her children.

During NAIDOC Week 2023, Self-Made Indigenous Corporation hosted a yarn and painting session, where staff contributed to two pieces of artwork displayed at our offices at 140 William. This helped foster stronger relationship and demonstrated our ongoing commitment to learning from Aboriginal peoples.

In 2024, award-winning Noongar artist Fiona Reidy hosted an immersive Djinda Kaal Dreaming Art Workshop, inviting staff to explore Aboriginal culture through art therapy and creative expression on the theme of 'Meeting Place.'



2024 National Reconciliation Week Djinda Kaal Art Workshop

Expansion of the Aboriginal Employment team

The Aboriginal Employment team was established in 2023 and progressed to become fully resourced with an Aboriginal Employment Manager and Officer. This team established Departmental Aboriginal Employee Meetings, providing a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to discuss issues in the workplace, including recruitment, retention and professional development. The Aboriginal Employment team have made significant changes to the recruitment process and have implemented strategies for retention and professional development contained in the Aboriginal Employment Plan of the Workforce and Diversity Plan. Additionally, professional development, training and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal staff have been identified by the Aboriginal Employment team and highlighted to senior staff.

Aboriginal Employment Plan

The Aboriginal Employment Plan included in the Department's Workforce and Diversity Plan 2024-2027 was developed by the Aboriginal Employment team in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The plan includes targeted initiatives and activities to attract, develop and retain talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including co-designed recruitment, culturally sensitive interviewing and assessment, industry and educational partnerships and regional development.



2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Meeting

Cultural awareness and training

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training

The Department procured a new provider, Aboriginal Productions and Promotions, to deliver a comprehensive Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training program in 2023. The program covers crucial historical events and legislation, including the 1967 Referendum, the *Mabo Decision* and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), along with exploring the impact of legislation specific to Western Australia that directly affected Aboriginal people, offering staff a deeper understanding of Aboriginal heritage, culture and history. Across 2024, the Department delivered four initial sessions with 48 sessions committed to for 2025 and 2026.

Aboriginal Employee Meetings

In 2023, we established the Aboriginal Employee Meetings, providing a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to share knowledge and experiences and discuss career pathways. The group also serves as an internal consultative group for the Department's work on policies and programs and fosters support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The meetings occur in person at least once per year, with Aboriginal staff coming in from across the State to continue building relationships with each other and with other Department members.



Kenneth Kelly and Anthony Kannis at the 2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Meeting

Community engagement and external partnerships

Sponsorship of community events

We continued to support our reconciliation journey through various community initiatives, including sponsoring the Reconciliation WA banners for the National Reconciliation Week Street Banner program and the First Nations Storytelling Prize in the Best Australian Yarn 2024: Short story competition. These efforts reflect our commitment to amplifying the voices of Aboriginal peoples in cultural and artistic spaces.

Sponsorship with MADALAH

In 2023, we partnered with MADALAH, a Perth-based organisation supporting Aboriginal youth education, and sponsored a young woman from the Pilbara region with a two-year scholarship to attend a Perth metropolitan high school.

This sponsorship will continue through to her tertiary studies, and the Department will explore opportunities for supporting other students in line with our goal to create educational pathways for Aboriginal youth.

Cadetship Program

The Department participated in a new program developed by the Public Sector Commission (PSC) and Curtin University, offering paid vacation placements to Aboriginal students in critical specialist roles. The initiative aims to provide employment pathways and hands-on experience for Aboriginal students while they complete their university studies. Some of these vacation students are now part time employees of the Department while completing their studies.

Procurement strategies

Through the Department's updated procurement procedure, staff are encouraged to investigate opportunities to engage Aboriginal businesses as part of their procurement activities, in line with the State Government's Aboriginal Procurement Policy. This procedure includes links to the Aboriginal Business Directory WA and Supply Nation's Indigenous Business Direct to assist staff in identifying Aboriginal businesses that may be able to provide their required goods, services or works. This approach has ensured the Department consistently exceeds the set procurement targets each year since the inception of the Aboriginal Procurement Policy, with 5.11 per cent of contracts for the 2023-24 financial year and currently sitting at 13.8 per cent of contracts for 2024-25 awarded to registered Aboriginal businesses.

Where appropriate, the Department also leverages the provisions in the Western Australian Procurement Rules to encourage and streamline the engagement of Aboriginal businesses via direct or restricted tendering processes where competitive or open market tendering processes would otherwise be required. The Department's procurement team provides advice and guidance to Aboriginal businesses if required in the procurement process Acknowledging Country and celebrating language.

Acknowledging Country and Celebrating Language

Acknowledgement of Country

We updated our Acknowledgement of Country statement in November 2024, ensuring our policy reaffirm our respects to Aboriginal people, culture and protocols. The revised acknowledgement is now used across all Department publications and communications, and staff are encouraged to personalise the delivery of acknowledgements in their cultural context where the opportunity arises.

Words of the Month

To celebrate Indigenous Literacy Day 2023, we launched the Words of the Month initiative to highlight Aboriginal words from different regions of Western Australia. With more than 50 words recognised so far this series fosters greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal languages and cultures among staff.

Significant events and sponsorships

Danjoo Koorliny Bunuru Social Impact Summit 2024

The Department sponsored 10 staff to attend the 2024 Bunuru Social Impact Summit, which brought together change-makers, artists and innovators to discuss how Aboriginal culture has contributed to cultural, social and economic shifts. The theme of the summit, Culture: Survival, Resilience, Strength & Celebration, marked five years of Western Australia's Danjoo Koorliny initiative, reinforcing the importance of Aboriginal culture in shaping the future.



2024 Danjoo Koorliny Summit

WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum 2024

The Department also sponsored the WA Local Government Association's Aboriginal Engagement Forum 2024, which focused on empowering local governments to collaborate with Aboriginal communities. The forum's theme, Looking Back to Move Forward, encouraged reflection on reconciliation and promoted innovation in policy-making.

Policy integration and internal updates

Travel Proposal eForm update

In 2023, we updated our Travel Proposal eForm to include a checkbox acknowledging consultation with Traditional Owners when travelling to regional areas. This update ensures that staff approach regional travel with respect for Aboriginal land and culture.

Incorporation of RAP themes into Corporate Executive papers

To further embed reconciliation in our operations, the template Corporate Executive paper was updated to require staff to identify associated RAP themes, actions and deliverables when raising papers. This ensures that reconciliation is consistently considered in decision-making processes.

Equity, Diversity and Belonging Policy

The Equity, Diversity and Belonging Policy has been developed with extensive consultation with the RAP Working Group. It aligns with the Department's anti-discrimination endorsement.

The policy was endorsed and published in February 2025 with communication provided on the staff Intranet, and the policy team has committed to its regular review.

Challenges and Learnings

A continuous challenge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff face is the experience of working for Government and being an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in Australia. We acknowledge that working for the Department as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member, has many layers of challenges including the cultural load within work as well as competing family and community obligations. Aboriginal people often encounter discrimination and harassment, leading to feelings of exclusion and isolation. The pressure of competing family and community commitments can be overwhelming, impacting their mental health and well-being. It is essential for the Department to recognise these challenges and provide support through cultural awareness training, flexible work arrangements and strong anti-discrimination policies.

Our Innovate RAP was delivered during a period of significant challenge for Aboriginal people, resulting from the repeal of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* and the lead-up to and outcome of 'The Voice' referendum in October 2023. The resilience of our staff, particularly those involved in reconciliation, was tested during these events, which presented significant challenges for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Aboriginal Board, and Committee members in balancing their cultural and professional roles. The events also brought some tension and pressure to collaborative relationships that had long been effective in working with and for Aboriginal communities.

Despite these adverse policy outcomes, the commitment of our RAP Working Group participants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and many teams across the Department ensured that most RAP deliverables were successfully achieved. These

accomplishments serve as a testament to their collective vision for reconciliation and their dedication to embedding Aboriginal culture further into the Department's operations, with a focus on achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The deliverables of the Innovate RAP that faced challenges will not be lost. We remain committed to innovating and delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal communities, with ongoing consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve goals such as dual naming, interpretive signage, and senior representation across the agency.

The Department acknowledges the difficult path many Aboriginal people have encountered through recent events. We share a passion to be better than yesterday, and we will continue to walk together in our reconciliation journey.



2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee

Our Reconciliation Action Plan



Our vision for reconciliation is for our land and places to acknowledge, celebrate and protect the rich histories of local Aboriginal cultures; to see all First Nations people thriving from opportunity and to see all of our employees building strong, collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2028 outlines the concrete actions to achieve our vision for reconciliation.

To achieve meaningful reconciliation, the Department will use all levers available to achieve improved outcomes for Aboriginal people through a Department-wide approach to ownership of reconciliation commitments. The Department is committed to working alongside Aboriginal peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land, by caring for and protecting the Country that sustains us.

We engage with Aboriginal peoples across the State, in the negotiation of benefits associated with native title agreements and partnerships, working collaboratively with Traditional Owners to deliver outcomes that align with the land aspirations of the respective communities. This plan focuses on strengthening and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, engaging staff in meaningful reconciliation, and implementing innovative strategies to support and improve outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Under the leadership of our RAP Champion, Anthony Kannis PSM, the Director General of the Department, our Stretch RAP is built on high impact commitments with measurable targets and goals. A key action of this plan is the systemic inclusion of Aboriginal voices in mainstream planning and development initiatives. This approach ensures that projects are designed with a holistic view and consider the diversity of perspectives in Aboriginal communities and the broader population they serve.

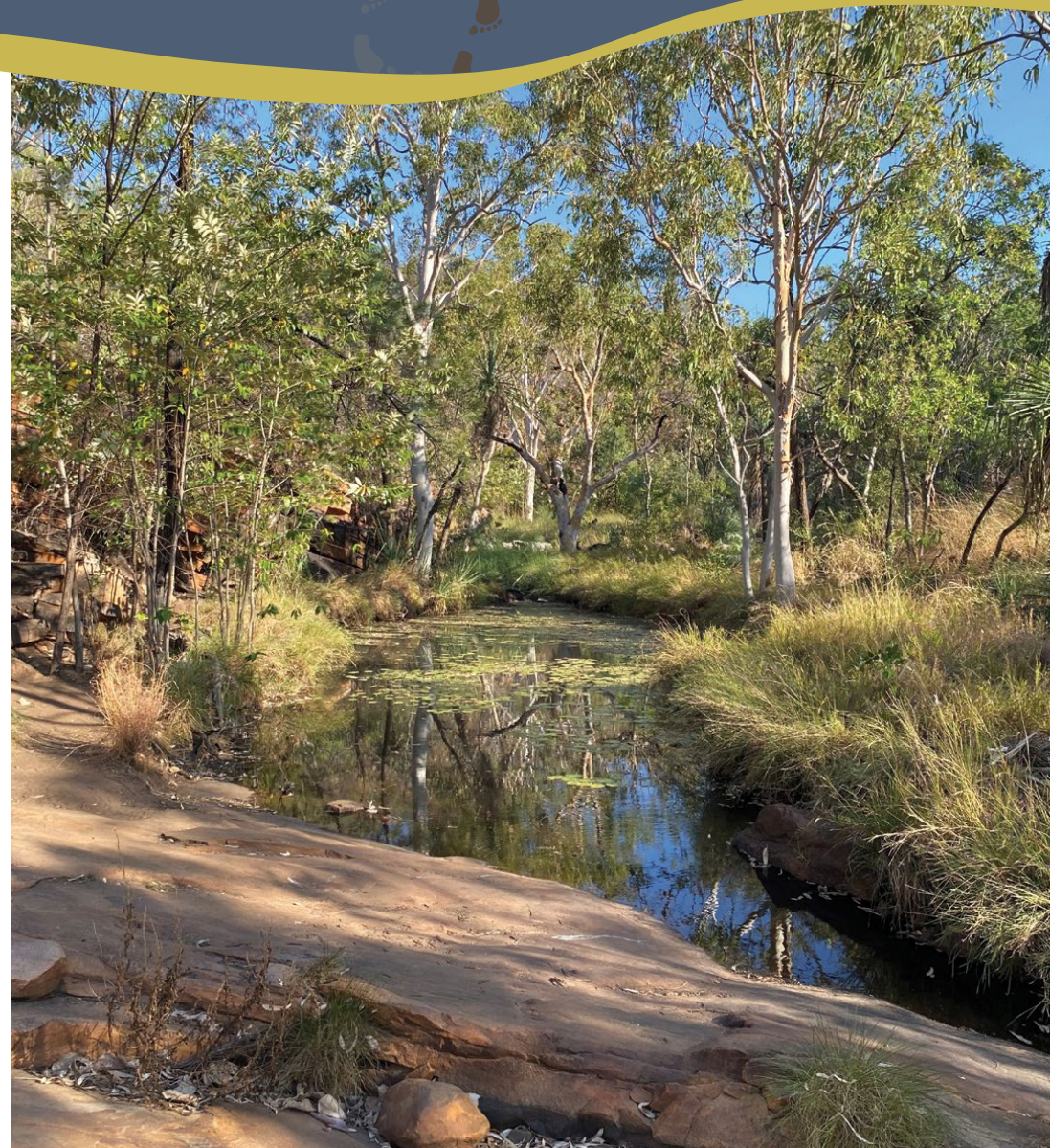
Building on the awareness from our earlier RAPs, the Stretch RAP moves towards aspirational and transformative actions. Through the lens of reconciliation, we aim to better understand our core business and its impact on Aboriginal peoples. This includes innovative strategies for building relationships and engaging with Aboriginal people and educating employees to improve outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

The Stretch RAP also acknowledges the ongoing effects of past policies and practices on contemporary Aboriginal peoples. We are committed to linking our past with the present as we work together to build a brighter and more equitable future.

The RAP Working Group, comprising Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff from all areas of the Department, plays a central role in guiding the Stretch RAP's implementation. The group's diverse leadership and inputs will provide ongoing management, oversight and tracking of RAP progress. A dedicated Project Coordinator will support the RAP Working Group and lead responsible owners to ensure the deliverables and reporting requirements are met.

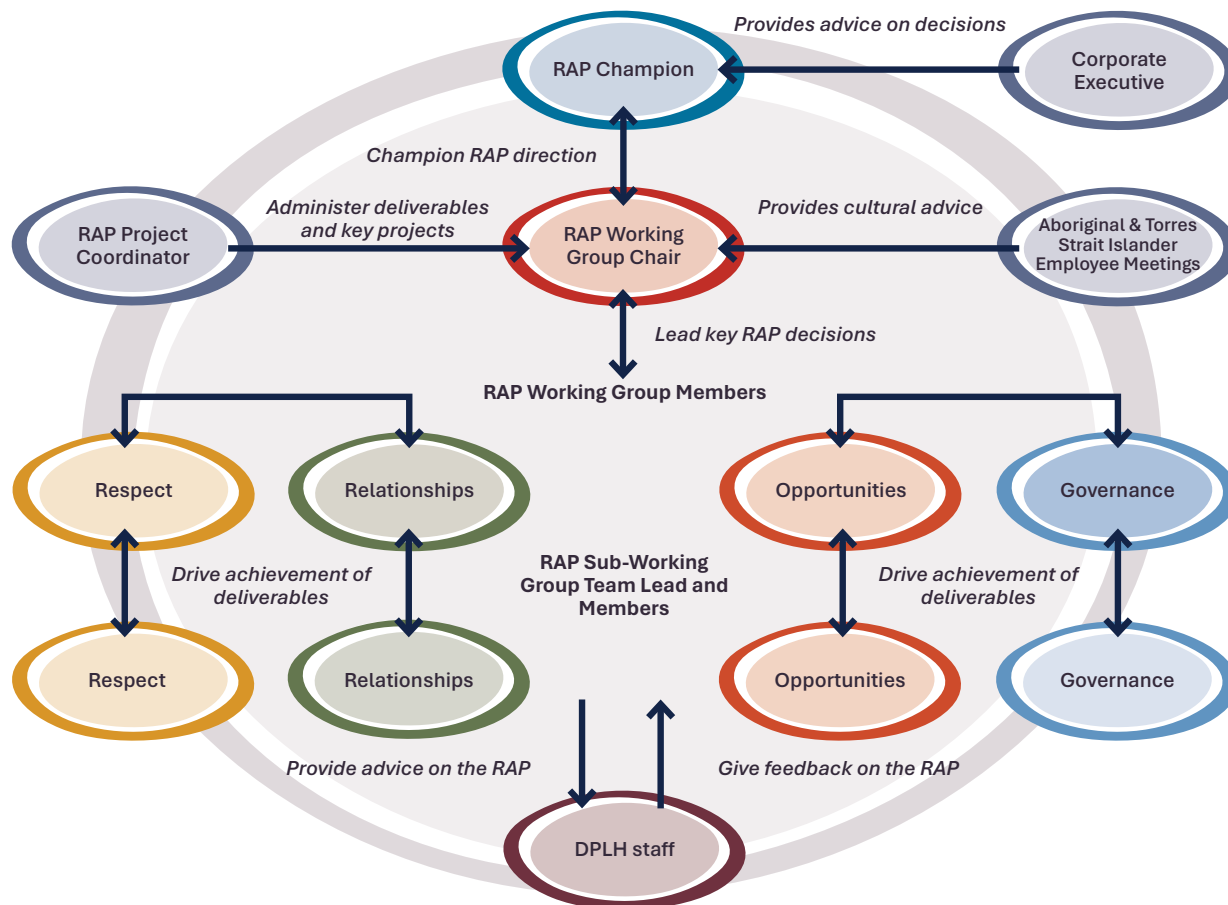
The Stretch RAP features actions and deliverables focused on:

- **Relationships** – Furthering engagement methods and opportunities to enhance authentic relationships and longstanding partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders. This will be supported by a commitment to building understanding and educating staff on the impact of the Australia’s colonial history and implementing strategies to promote positive race relations through our sphere of influence.
- **Respect** – Increasing place-based cultural understanding, acknowledgment and education through a commitment to working across the entire state and workforce with balanced resourcing and promotion.
- **Opportunities** – Being bold in our commitment to increasing Aboriginal employment and supplier diversity by creating impactful and innovative foundations that create these opportunities.
- **Governance** – Clear and effective governance structures that are representative of the organisation and the way in which we work and achieve outcomes.



Supporting our RAP

Governance Structure





Case study

First Nations Australians Planning Program

Relationships

We plan, manage and protect the State's land and heritage assets, striving to enhance connections to people, places and our history. By listening and learning from the stories of our past and aspirations for the future, we plan for growth and development. We respect that our work is personal to our stakeholders, and that every piece of land and site has a story. We engage and collaborate to build prosperous places and connected communities. Through building strong relationships, we can deliver shared opportunities and use our influence to improve social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal peoples, businesses and communities.

The First Nations Australians Planning Program (FNAPP) fosters meaningful engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, particularly in the Kimberley region. Through the program, First Nations Australians are employed to work directly with Aboriginal community corporations, prescribed bodies corporate and local services to help shape community infrastructure, development plans and governance strategies. Through ongoing consultations, FNAPP ensures that development projects align with Aboriginal communities' aspirations, needs, cultural values and priorities.

The First Nations planners have built strong relationships with Aboriginal corporations, such as the Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation, by providing guidance on infrastructure and development initiatives. This includes planning advice, supporting amendments to Layout Plans, and providing expertise on the development of community benefits and local governance strategies. Through the program, Aboriginal planning officers help support community-led projects and offer advice to reflect long-term goals for sustainability and cultural integrity.

The First Nations planners also collaborate with local governments to improve planning processes and policies, ensuring that planning reforms benefit local Aboriginal people and are align with their cultural and social priorities.



Anthony Kannis and First Nations Australians Planning Program Scholarship awardee Arabella Saunders

Building on its success in the Kimberley, in 2025 we are planning to expand the program by recruiting two Aboriginal staff members to be based in Karratha and Geraldton. This expansion aims to strengthen FNAPP's regional presence, promote greater awareness of the program and increase accessibility to Aboriginal communities. The Department is currently liaising with the Yamatji Southern Giants and Karratha stakeholders to explore strategies for raising awareness and creating opportunities for Aboriginal participation in planning initiatives.

As the program expands, we are working to implement stronger internal processes and continuity measures to ensure that the program's objectives are met consistently, and that sensitive information is handled appropriately to ensure quality engagement with Aboriginal communities.

The program helps bridge the gap between Aboriginal communities and the planning processes that impact them. By fostering strong relationships with Aboriginal corporations, local governments and Aboriginal planning staff, FNAPP contributes to effective and culturally appropriate community development. The expansion of the program to new regions, coupled with a focus on improving internal communication and continuity, will ensure continued support for Aboriginal aspirations and lasting community benefits.

Action 1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
1.1. Organise regular meetings with local Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	December 2027	Director – Native Title Agreements and Partnerships, Land Use Management Director – Stakeholder Engagement, Heritage and Property Services
1.2. Relevant divisions to review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal stakeholders.	December 2027	
1.3. Establish and maintain formal two-way partnerships with three new Aboriginal communities/organisations, across three years.	May 2028	
Action 2: Advance internal engagement with Reconciliation.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
2.1. Organise at least two guest speaker sessions per financial year, including one in the regional offices, by partnering with community leaders.	December 2025-2028	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
2.2. Create a pilot education session on the impacts of inter-generational trauma for all staff.	March 2027	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services Manager – Aboriginal Employment and Engagement, Business and Corporate Services

Action 3: Advance external engagement with Reconciliation.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
3.1. Provide opportunities to engage existing Aboriginal stakeholders and partners to provide feedback on the Department's approach to reconciliation.	June 2027	Director – Native Title Agreements and Partnerships, Land Use Management Director – Stakeholder Engagement, Heritage and Property Services
3.2. Attend two or more external events that aim to advance reconciliation in organisations.	May 2028	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group

Action 4: Enhance understanding of best practice Aboriginal engagement across the Department.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
4.1. Undertake research on the Department's current skill gap in Aboriginal engagement.	December 2026	Director – Strategic Stakeholder Engagement, Business and Corporate Services
4.2. Develop an in-person training session based on the Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit.	June 2027	
4.3. Undertake internal reviews of current engagement practices across business areas to ensure better engagement with Aboriginal people for processes and procedures.	June 2026	
4.4. Improve Aboriginal engagement maturity and proficiency across work streams and divisions of the Department.	May 2028	
4.5. Establish internal owners and leaders to provide strategic advice and coordination for Aboriginal engagement, working within the Department's Strategic Engagement Framework.	March 2026	Manager – Government Relations, Office of the Director General

Action 5: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
5.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	June 2025-2028	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
5.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in the Reconciliation WA Walk for Reconciliation Event and external NRW events.		
5.3 Promote a minimum of two external events for participation by staff and senior leaders to recognise and celebrate NRW. These could include regional events and the Reconciliation WA Walk for Reconciliation event.		
5.4 Facilitate a minimum of four internal NRW events. These could include regional offices to host a morning tea, 140william office to host an event, and partnering with other government agencies on a joint agency event.		
5.5 Register Department's NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.		

Action 6: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
6.1. Implement strategies to engage all staff to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2027	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
6.2. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	March 2026	Manager – Digital Marketing, Business and Corporate Services
6.3. Support Reconciliation WA through ongoing Tier 2 membership and promotion of Reconciliation WA events.	June 2025-2028	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
6.4. Implement strategies and promote opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	December 2027	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
6.5. Collaborate with three RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement ways to advance reconciliation through the Department's statutory Boards and Committees.	May 2028	Manager – Commission Services, Western Australian Planning Commission Manager – Board Support, Land Use Management Manager – Policy and Practice, Heritage and Property Services Manager – Development Assessment Panels, Office of the Director General
6.6. Establish a dedicated page on our external website relating to the Department's reconciliation journey. The website page will be reviewed quarterly.	March 2026	Manager – Digital Marketing, Business and Corporate Services RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General

Action 7: Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
7.1 Conduct a review and improve Human Resources policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination.	March 2027	Director Human Resources – People Services, Business and Corporate Services
7.2 Engage with Aboriginal staff and/or Aboriginal advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	December 2026	Director Human Resources – Workforce Capability, Business and People Services
7.3 Educate and communicate the Department's anti-discrimination policy for our staff.	March 2027	Director – Governance and Performance, Business and Corporate Services
7.4 Continue to educate senior leaders on the effects of racism by delivering at least two workshops per year and extend this engagement to wider staff.	December 2026-2027	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services Manager – Aboriginal Employment and Engagement, Business and Corporate Services
7.5 Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	December 2026	RAP Champion and Corporate Executive
7.6 Divisions to organise team leaders (Level 7s or equivalent and above) to attend external anti-discrimination workshops and share learnings.	March 2027	Executive Managers



Respect

Respect for Aboriginal cultures, history and traditions is important for the development of strong relationships. We protect and value the land in Western Australia and strive to enhance connections to people, places and our history. This places an obligation to build understanding of culture and appreciation of traditional knowledge and connection to country. We respect the Traditional Owners, the knowledge of Elders and our Aboriginal history. We carry this respect into our workplace and recognise the value of diversity and individual perspectives. We work with kindness and inclusiveness, ensuring that we treat each other with fairness, dignity and understanding.

Case study

Leaders Listening on Country

In 2024, the Department's Corporate Executive team participated in the first of three half-day Leaders Listening on Country tours, led by Noongar Elder Dr Richard Walley OAM, Heritage and Property Services Assistant Manager John Brinkman, and Business and Corporate Services Aboriginal Employment Manager Harley Coyne. These tours are part of an ongoing initiative to deepen the understanding of Aboriginal culture, history and heritage in the Department, helping to foster stronger relationships between Aboriginal communities and Government leadership.

The Leaders Listening on Country sessions provided Corporate Executive with firsthand experiences of culturally significant sites while promoting reflection on shared history and respectful engagement with Aboriginal communities. The tour took place across three key sites of cultural significance: Yagan Square in the Perth CBD, the artefact scatter at Walyunga National Park and Yagan's Memorial in the Swan Valley.

At Yagan Square, a prominent public space named after Noongar warrior Yagan, Corporate Executive members gained further insight into the transformed public meeting place which features a number of Aboriginal cultural elements and pays tribute to the area's Aboriginal history. This stop emphasised how public spaces can honour Aboriginal culture and promote greater awareness of the history and contributions of Aboriginal people.

Walyunga National Park provided an opportunity for staff to better understand artefact scatters as places of important Aboriginal cultural heritage and offered insights into the sacredness of the site for the Whadjuk Noongar people. It delved into the traditional uses of natural materials for stone tools and weapons, and historical trade networks that existed across regions, with stone sourced from other areas being brought to Walyunga. This stop deepened understanding of the enduring connection between Aboriginal peoples and the land, as well as the rich cultural practices that have existed for thousands of years.



Harley Coyne delivering the 2024 Leaders Listening on Country program'

Yagan's Memorial in the Swan Valley, dedicated to the Noongar warrior who was tragically mistreated by early settlers, highlighted the efforts of Yagan's descendants to secure a dedicated memorial and return his remains to Country. The memorial's rock sculpture symbolises the return and reinterment of Yagan's head to the site, reflecting the journey of healing and recognition for the Noongar community.

The Leaders Listening on Country session provided Corporate Executive members with a deeper understanding of the shared history between Aboriginal peoples and the broader community. By engaging directly with Aboriginal cultural leaders, the group gained valuable insights into cultural heritage, the impact of past injustices, and the need for continued reconciliation efforts.

This tour exemplified the Department's commitment to building stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities and enhancing cultural competency within its leadership.

The Leaders Listening on Country initiative will continue to provide opportunities for government leadership to engage meaningfully with Aboriginal communities. Subsequent sessions have been organised for staff at the Department, supporting broader efforts to promote reconciliation, cultural awareness and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Action 8: Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
8.1 Conduct regular reviews of cultural learning needs and gaps within our organisation.	December 2025-2028	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services
8.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal advisors on the review and implementation of the cultural learning strategy.	June 2026	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services
8.3 Implement and communicate the cultural learning strategy for our staff.	March 2027	Manager – Aboriginal Employment and Engagement, Business and Corporate Services
8.4 Achieve 100 per cent completion of the face-to-face Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training by all staff within their first 12 months of employment.	December 2026-2027	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services
8.5 Facilitate a minimum of two place-based on country cultural awareness experiences per year for staff based in the regions.	December 2025-2027	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services Manager – Aboriginal Employment and Engagement, Business and Corporate Services
8.6 Create an internal webinar series featuring regional officers and their projects that engage Aboriginal people, highlighting best practice in valuing and recognising Aboriginal knowledge and practices.	December 2027	Manager – Digital Marketing, Business and Corporate Services

Action 9: Recognise and educate on Aboriginal language across Western Australia.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
9.1 Prepare a register to highlight key phrases/words relevant to different language groups from our regional offices.	March 2026	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
9.2 Conduct at least one language education session for staff in a different office location each year facilitated by an Aboriginal corporation.	December 2025-2027	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services

Action 10: Build respect and increase understanding of the past through the incorporation of truth telling in our work and engagements.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
10.1 Award grants through the Preserve, Promote and Protect Our Aboriginal Sites grant program to support Aboriginal Heritage in ensuring cultural learning continues.	March 2026-2028	Director - Stakeholder Engagement, Heritage and Property Services
10.2 Seek input from Aboriginal stakeholders on the acknowledgement and recognition of past histories during the repatriation of ancestral remains or cultural objects, site registrations and cultural and historic site management projects.	December 2025-2027	Director - Stakeholder Engagement, Heritage and Property Services Director - Aboriginal Heritage Conservation, Heritage and Property Services Director - Historic Heritage Conservation, Heritage and Property Services

Action 11: Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
11.1 Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2026	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group
11.2 Implement, review and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2027	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group
11.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to at least five significant events per year to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol, including: - National Reconciliation Week - NAIDOC Week - Stretch RAP launch - Joint Agency events - Groundwater Festival	December 2025-2027	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General Director – Whiteman Park, Heritage and Property Services
11.4 Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all formal meetings.	December 2025-2027	RAP Champion and Corporate Executive
11.5 Ensure staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events.	December 2025	RAP Champion and Corporate Executive
11.6 Display Acknowledgment of Country plaques/resource in our office/s, meeting rooms and/or on our buildings.	June 2026	Director – Workplace Projects and Facilities, Business and Corporate Facilities
11.7 Provide staff with Acknowledgement of Country training during onboarding for new staff.	March 2026	Manager – Employee Development, Business and Corporate Services

Action 12: Build respect for Aboriginal cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
12.1 RAP Working Group to participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event each year.	September 2025-2027	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group
12.2 Support all staff to actively participate in NAIDOC Week events in our local and regional areas, including those organised by local governments.	September 2025-2027	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group
12.3 In consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, sponsor one external NAIDOC Week event and create guidelines to support this.	September 2026-2027	Manager – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
12.4 Provide staff with a calendar of NAIDOC Week events to promote and encourage participation.	September 2025-2027	Director – Communications and Engagement, Business and Corporate Services
12.5 Host a bush medicine and tucker workshop as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations.	September 2027	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group



Case study

Talk, Tea and Tim Tams series

The Talk, Tea and Tim Tams series was developed to provide a welcoming space for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff to engage in meaningful conversations about the past, present and future of Aboriginal peoples. The series is based on the idea that a cup of tea and a few Tim Tams can create a relaxed, informal atmosphere, where participants can feel more comfortable discussing difficult and important topics. The workshops help foster open dialogue, and aim to build cultural understanding, promote reconciliation and enhance relationships within the workplace.

The first workshop in the series was facilitated by the Relationships Innovate RAP Sub-Working Group, featuring guest speakers Jacqueline McGowan-Jones and Jim Morrison.

Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia, discussed the future of Aboriginal children and young people. With extensive experience in education, child protection and Indigenous affairs, combined with her cultural connections to Arrente and Warumungu Country, she shared insights on improving opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Jim Morrison, a senior Noongar man and a Traditional Custodian from the southern coast of Western Australia, brought decades of advocacy for Aboriginal rights. As a founding member of Reconciliation WA, he has played a significant part in national efforts related to the Stolen Generations and continues to be a leader in Aboriginal advancement. He also offered valuable context on the meaning of National Apology Day and post 2023 referendum discussions.

Together, Jacqueline and Jim led a candid conversation, encouraging staff to reflect on the past and envision a future of mutual understanding and respect.



2024 Talk, Tea and Tim-Tams Speaker Series with Carol Innes

The second Talk, Tea and Tim Tams session featured Carol Innes, a proud Noongar woman dedicated to the recognition, preservation and advancement of Aboriginal culture and rights. Carol served as the Co-Chair of Reconciliation WA for seven years and is currently the Co-Director of Danjoo Koorliny, an Aboriginal-led project dedicated to fostering collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Carol's presentation focused on the NAIDOC 2024 theme, 'Keep the fire burning! Blak, loud and proud', which celebrated the resilience and strength of Aboriginal peoples. She shared her personal journey, insights into her work at Danjoo Koorliny, and the ongoing importance of reconciliation and cultural recognition. The session offered a chance for staff to engage with Carol's message in a supportive environment.

The final session in the Talk, Tea and Tim Tams series featured Mechelle Turvey, a Noongar Yamatji woman whose life has been marked by courage, resilience, and advocacy. Mechelle's son, Cassius Turvey, tragically passed away in 2022 after a violent assault which sparked a National Day of Action across Australia. Mechelle led the march in Perth and used her voice to call for justice and healing for her son's death.

She shared her powerful personal story and the immense grief she has faced, alongside her dedication to using her lived experiences to create positive change. Mechelle's commitment to supporting her community, volunteering for prison programs, and donating funds for youth organisations is a testament to her strength and compassion.

The Talk, Tea and Tim Tams series has provided staff with an opportunity to engage in deep, reflective conversations about Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary issues. Led by influential Aboriginal leaders, these sessions provided insights into the lived experiences and challenges of Aboriginal people. The workshops enhanced understanding of reconciliation, empowering staff to become more culturally aware and supportive of Aboriginal communities.

By fostering open dialogue, the Talk, Tea and Tim Tams series has strengthened relationships within the Department and reinforced the importance of cultural learning and mutual respect. As it continues, it will further promote a workplace culture that values diversity, inclusivity and reconciliation.





Opportunities

We provide planning, land and heritage services across the State, with officers based in regional areas who provide services directly to Aboriginal people, organisations and communities in those regions. We strive to engage Aboriginal people in the identification and management of Aboriginal land and heritage, and to procure services from Aboriginal businesses where possible. The Department strives to be recognised as an employer of choice by creating employment, career progression and economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and businesses.

Case study

Capacity Building Program

The State Government committed \$8 million per year to the Capacity Building Program from June 2024 to June 2027, offering crucial support to native title parties across Western Australia. This investment aims to support prescribed bodies corporate (PBCs) and native title parties with the resources and training necessary to manage Aboriginal heritage and land rights effectively. To facilitate this, biannual payments of \$90,000 will be available to eligible native title parties. This initiative is part of the Government's broader commitment to enhancing the capacity of Aboriginal communities to manage their cultural and land assets sustainably.

In October 2024, the Department hosted the Native Title Party Capacity Building Pathways Forum to foster ongoing partnerships with groups supporting the development of PBCs in Western Australia. The forum brought together key stakeholders from State government agencies, training providers, supporting organisations and native title parties to discuss challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal communities in managing their land and heritage.

Facilitated by Department staff, the forum aimed to promote collaboration and identify practical solutions for building capacity within PBCs. Discussions focused on available training options, addressing existing bottlenecks and developing strategies for effective PBC governance and cultural heritage management.

Key speakers, including Chelsea Stanway and Stephanie Shorter from Impact Seed, shared their research into the specific needs of PBCs and the importance of targeted training and development. Murray Jones from DK Kaartdijin and Ballardong Aboriginal Corporation emphasised the critical role of PBCs in delivering heritage services to Aboriginal communities and advocated for greater recognition and tailored support to help PBCs achieve their goals.

The Capacity Building Program and Pathways Forum are part of the Department's ongoing efforts to enhance Aboriginal communities' ability to manage their land and heritage. The State Government's funding commitment will help ensure PBCs are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of native title governance and heritage management. By investing in training, capacity building and providing funding, the program is helping to create a sustainable future for Aboriginal communities across Western Australia.

The Pathways Forum will continue to serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration, helping native title parties and supporting organisations work towards common goals. Insights from the forum will help inform future initiatives, ensuring PBCs have the tools and resources they need to thrive.

Action 13: Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal recruitment, retention and professional development.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
13.1 Engage and consult with Aboriginal staff on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2026	Director Human Resources – People Services, Business and Corporate Services Director Human Resources – Workforce Capability, Business and People Services
13.2 Review and update an Aboriginal recruitment, retention and professional development strategy to achieve Aboriginal employment target (5 per cent).	December 2027	
13.3 Advertise job vacancies on three or more mediums and platforms to effectively reach Aboriginal candidates.	March 2026	
13.4 Review Human Resources and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal participation in our workplace.	December 2026	
13.5 Support Aboriginal employees in advancing to management and senior positions, by creating at least two-yearly mentorship and/or acting opportunities to operate at Level 6 and above.	December 2027	
13.6 Present and offer one professional development opportunity per year to staff in the Aboriginal staff meeting.	December 2025-2027	
13.7 Support the Aboriginal Employment team to continue its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development initiatives by providing an increase in access to human and digital resources.	June 2027	

Action 14: Increase Aboriginal supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
14.1 Maintain and regularly review the Aboriginal procurement strategy.	December 2025-2027	Chief Procurement Officer, Business and Corporate Services
14.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2027	
14.3 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal businesses to staff.	June 2026	
14.4 Maintain commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses, exceeding targets set by Ministers and the Public Sector Commission. The targets will be increased targets annually: 5% (2024-25), 5.5% (2025-26), 6% (2026-27) and 6.5% (2027-28).	June 2025-2028	
14.5 Train all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	December 2026	

Action 15: Enhance the capacity of Aboriginal communities to manage their cultural and land assets sustainably.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
15.1 Award at least 10 Aboriginal stakeholders' funds through the Capacity Building Program to manage land and heritage.	December 2025	Director – Programs, Heritage and Property Services
15.2 Resource the Capacity Building Program with at least three full time staff to ensure adequate support provided to Aboriginal communities to engage with the program.	December 2025	

Case study

Whiteman Park

Whiteman Park, a significant cultural and environmental site, offers many opportunities to deepen the understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal heritage. Across various initiatives – from murals and exhibitions to repatriation efforts – there have been efforts to engage Aboriginal artists, communities, and knowledge holders. However, there is also room for further development in acknowledging and interpreting these contributions in ways that truly honour the cultural significance of the place.

Whiteman Park's murals and the design of the Healing Place engaged Aboriginal artists in the creative process, but the lack of accompanying interpretation and signage around these works has left a significant gap in how the stories and cultural contributions are conveyed to visitors. This oversight represents a missed opportunity to provide deeper context and understanding of the artworks and their creators. Effective interpretation could enhance the cultural richness of these installations, offering a more meaningful connection for visitors. The stories told through these artworks could also be shared more broadly, for example through the staff intranet platform, fostering greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture.

The Singing the Train exhibition, hosted at the Revolutions Transport Museum, is a powerful example of collaboration between Aboriginal communities and cultural institutions. The exhibition, which tells the story of the Nyamal Elders' collaboration with AIATSIS, Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, and the Revolutions Transport Museum, was launched in Canberra in November 2016. It highlights the important role of Aboriginal communities in preserving and sharing their cultural stories. The exhibit, displayed in a train carriage at the museum, provides an immersive experience for visitors, but there is potential for deeper engagement and acknowledgment of the Aboriginal Elders' contributions to this work, enhancing both the exhibition's cultural impact and educational value.



The Healing Place, Whiteman Park

For the first time in 2024, Whiteman Park hosted a Welcome to Country ceremony at the Children's Ground Water Festival, delivered by Simon and Ronnie Forrest. This ceremony marked a significant step in engaging Aboriginal leadership in the cultural programming at the park. The Forrests expressed interest in expanding their involvement in future festivals, which presents an exciting opportunity for increased Aboriginal representation in the events at Whiteman Park. This initiative reflects a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating Aboriginal voices and customs into public events, with the hope that this practice will continue to grow in years to come.

There are ongoing discussions around the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural material held at the Revolutions Transport Museum. Among the items is a carved pearl shell Riji, which holds cultural significance to the Bardi people. The team is in discussions with the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) to repatriate the Riji, a process that aligns with broader efforts to return culturally significant items to their rightful communities. This initiative is a positive step toward addressing the historical misplacement of cultural objects, and there is an ongoing effort to identify other uncatalogued Aboriginal items held in the museum, to ensure they are returned to culturally appropriate contexts.

There have been legal constraints around the repatriation process in relation to the Whiteman agreement. The current name of Whiteman Park has been identified as a point of contention for some First Nations peoples, and there is a growing call for a more culturally appropriate dual naming approach. By integrating a dual naming system and installing interpretive signage that acknowledges the significant cultural connections to the site by Noongar people, Whiteman Park could become a more inclusive and respectful space for all visitors.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to better integrate Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge into the management of heritage sites across the region. The initiatives at Whiteman Park and the Revolutions Transport Museum demonstrate the positive steps being taken to engage with Aboriginal communities and share their stories. However, there is still work to be done to ensure these efforts are fully realised through ongoing consultation, collaboration, and the meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal voices in cultural interpretation and heritage management.





Governance

Tracking progress and reporting

Action 16: Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
16.1 Maintain Aboriginal representation on the RAP Working Group.	June 2025	Government Relations – RAP Project Coordinator
16.2 Meet at least six times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	December 2025-2027	Co-chairs, RAP Working Group

Action 17: Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.		
Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
17.1 Implement co-chair roles for one non-Aboriginal and one Aboriginal staff member on the RAP Working Group by including the roles in the Terms of Reference.	June 2025	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
17.2 Ensure the Terms of Reference state that to achieve quorum on a decision, at least one Aboriginal staff member on the RWG must be present, otherwise the decision will be made out of session.	June 2025	

Action 18: Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
18.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2025	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
18.2 Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations/KPI of senior management and all staff.	September 2025	RAP Champion and Corporate Executive
18.3 Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2025	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
18.4 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	June 2025	Director General, Office of the Director General
18.5 Include RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	June 2025	RAP Champion and Corporate Executive
18.6 Ensure business plans incorporate the Department's RAP to allow consideration of its relevance to all staff during MyPlans.	December 2025	Director Human Resources – People Services, Business and Corporate Services Director Human Resources – Workforce Capability, Business and People Services

Action 19: Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
19.1 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2025-2027	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
19.2 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	June 2025-2028	
19.3 Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	September 2025-2028	
19.4 Investigate participation in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2026 and March 2028	

Action 20: Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
20.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2027	RAP Project Coordinator – Government Relations, Office of the Director General
20.2 Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback.	December 2027	
20.3 Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	June 2028	

Key contacts page and information

Current RAP Working Group

Representation across business areas
of the Department include:

Directorate	Number of positions
Office of the Director General	x2
Strategy and Engagement	x2
Business and Corporate Services	x2
Heritage and Property Services	x2
Land Use Management	x2
Land Use Planning	x2
Reform Design and State Assessment	x2

For enquiries about our RAP,
please contact:

RAP Project Coordinator

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Published by the
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

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Published May 2025

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