







JULY 2022 - JULY 2023



West Australian Symphony Orchestra respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Elders of Country throughout Western Australia, and the Whadjuk Noongar people on whose lands we work and share music. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples and recognise their continuing cultures and connections to lands, waters and communities.



CONTENTS

Message from Reconciliation Australia's CEO	4
Message from our CEO	5
Our Business	6
Our Vision, Purpose and Values	8
Our RAP	9
RAP Working Group	13
Relationships	14
Respect	15
Opportunities	16
Governance	17
Contact Us	18

PAGE

MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA'S CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the West Australian Symphony Orchestra to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

West Australian Symphony Orchestra joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-forprofit 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 the West Australian Symphony Orchestra 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 West Australian Symphony Orchestra, 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



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

That our nation is home to the oldest continuous living cultures in the world is something all Australians can take pride in. What a privilege it is for us to bear witness to First Nations art, music, dance and stories; artistries handed down from generation to generation; Songlines passing on intricate knowledge of Country, social law, topography, plants and animals that have enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to flourish for tens of thousands of years.

At the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO), we are proud of the collaborative projects and performances that have allowed us to share our music traditions with those of our First Peoples. These meaningful experiences of connection and the relationships they have fostered have encouraged us to go deeper and engage the whole of our organisation in reconciliation. We are starting from the beginning, with a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Orchestras do not lend themselves naturally to embracing failure. Indeed, it's part of the magic of witnessing a live performance by a symphony orchestra, of up to 100 musicians working as one unit in the pursuit of sheer perfection. Behind the scenes, of course, these heights are achieved through countless hours of rehearsal and preparation, hammering out mistakes and imperfections. This can sometimes make us hesitant to step into uncertainty, to try things in a new way or even to revisit our past mistakes – all of which are crucial to the work of reconciliation.

And so at WASO we are consciously adopting a shift in mindset, one of a willingness to learn, to try, perhaps get a note or two wrong, and try again. It is in this spirit that I am proud to present WASO's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our Reflect RAP acknowledges that we have much to learn, but we won't allow our fear of getting it "wrong" to stop us from asking questions and taking action over the next twelve months. We commit to listening, to collaborating, to making connections and to learning. This will stand WASO in great stead to commit to further reconciliation initiatives as we look to the future and undertake successive RAPs. We understand reconciliation to be a process, not a destination.

On behalf of the RAP Working Group I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this process at WASO so far, including Whadjuk Noongar Elders, First Nations people in our community, our employees, the WASO Board, and staff at Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation WA for their guidance.

Paul Shannon Chief Executive Officer





OUR BUSINESS

From the centre of Boorloo (Perth) to the furthest corners of the state, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) have provided the soundtrack to life in WA since 1928.

As the State Orchestra, Perth's first and finest, WASO is the largest employer of performing artists in Western Australia and reaches two million people with musical experiences each year on stage, in our community, and online. Our season of performances and programs is primarily centred in Perth and the regions of Western Australia. From classrooms to town halls, hospitals to aged care, we bring cheer, inspire learning, and nurture participation in our community, because everybody deserves the opportunity to experience the joy of live music. Every year, through community and leading industry partnerships, we engage a new generation of young and emerging artists to help secure a bright future for music in Australia.

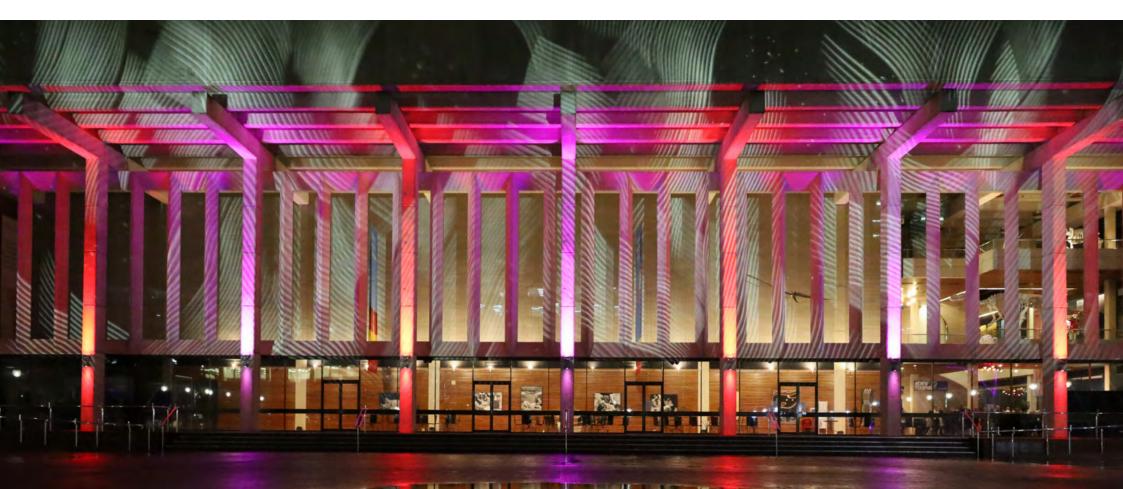
We celebrate our rich classical music heritage with great artists from all over the world and commission new repertoire with contemporary musicians and bands. The Orchestra collaborates widely with major arts companies and independent artists, performing opera to ballet, movies to musicals, jazz to rock. We champion the diversity of music in all its forms, with a team of talented and passionate people who create unforgettable experiences for all West Australians to enjoy.

Asher Fisch is Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of our Orchestra and we are proud to call Perth Concert Hall home. In the heart of the city, Perth Concert Hall is an iconic and vibrant meeting place and the home of music in WA, providing unique and memorable experiences for more than 250,000 people across hundreds of events each year. Perth Concert Hall sits on reclaimed land on the majestic Buneenboro (Perth Water) section of the bilya (river) also known as Gabbee Darbal/ Derbal Yerrigan, and is a site of significance for the Whadjuk Noongar people, the Traditional Custodians of the land.

Serving as a prime example of brutalist midcentury classical architecture, our Hall's exterior is characterised by an innovative use of white offform concrete. Inside, the iconic circular staircase, the striking 3,000 pipe organ, and bold red interior throughout provide the perfect backdrop for an intimate patron-first musical experience.

Designed by architects Jeffery Howlett and Don Bailey with doors opening to the public in 1973, the Perth Concert Hall was the first concert hall to be built in Australia after World War II. Renowned for having one the finest acoustics of any performance venue in Australia, Perth Concert Hall has had many starstudded performers set foot on the main stage, from great classical ensembles The London, Chicago and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras to some of the world's best contemporary artists including Ray Charles, PJ Harvey, Nina Simone, Sting, Tim Minchin, KD Lang and many more. Perth Concert Hall has been privileged to host luminaries of First Nations music and art including Barry McGuire, Yothu Yindi, Dr G Yunupingu, Ngaiire and collaborations with Tura New Music.

Under one banner with our sister organisation WA Venues and Events who manage the Perth Concert Hall, we currently employ 131 staff members and have a casual workforce of 156. An employee survey undertaken in 2021 confirmed that WASO employed 1 staff member who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.



OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND VALUES

VISION

To enrich lives through music.

PURPOSE

Provide the soundtrack to life by creating, curating and presenting high quality musical and entertainment experiences for the enjoyment of all West Australians.

> VALUES Excellence Passion Teamwork

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is the first formal step in WASO's reconciliation journey.

Our RAP process was instigated at the encouragement of the WASO Board that WASO should build on our history of engagement and creative collaboration with First Nations Elders, artists, young people and audience members, to develop a comprehensive framework for our future activities. WASO has recognised that a fragmented approach to cultural awareness and collaborative projects doesn't reflect best practice, and we want to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through a strategic and considered set of actions and a whole-of-organisation mindset. We acknowledge the devastating and continuing impact of Australia's colonial history, and we intend to use the RAP process to formalise our commitments and to embed the principles of reconciliation across our organisation's operations.

In 2019 our RAP journey commenced with preliminary meetings of staff members interested in reconciliation, and attendance by several staff at the 2019 Reconciliation Australia National RAP Conference in Perth. That year some initial steps were taken, demonstrating WASO's commitment to reconciliation. These included from September 2019, adding a verbal Acknowledgement of Country before each public WASO performance and written Acknowledgement of Country in all emails as well as public documents and reports. In October 2019 Mr Andrew Beck travelled with the Orchestra on their regional tour to southern WA. As a proud Ngadju Mirning Noongar man, Mr Beck's presence was pivotal in facilitating WASO's meetings with representatives from the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation, and ensuring our culturally safe performances on that Country. In January 2020 at our Company Communication Day we were privileged to welcome Reconciliation WA co-chair Carol Innes, who presented a reconciliation awareness session to all staff. WASO gratefully acknowledges those employees who instigated our RAP journey and devoted significant time and energy to this work.

2020 brought the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted the organisation's core business, resulted in significant staff turnover and halted the progression of WASO's RAP. 2021 saw WASO return to "COVID-normal" operations, allowing us to re-launch our RAP work and continue our focus on furthering reconciliation.

Our company's RAP Champion, responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the RAP, is Chief Executive Officer Paul Shannon, and the Board of Directors is fully supportive of WASO's RAP efforts. WASO's RAP Working Group has been established and is responsible for monitoring and implementing the actions laid out in this plan. The RAP Working Group that prepared this Reflect RAP comprises 7 staff members from a cross-section of the organisation, including the CEO and an employee who is an Aboriginal man with ties to Bard Country. Working Group members were selected from an open nominations process with a focus on ensuring the diversity of voices at the Group. One of the RAP Working Group's key role is to engage all staff and Board in the implementation and delivery of our Reflect RAP and holding ourselves accountable to our stakeholders through public reporting. We intend for reconciliation to become a value embedded in our operational and artistic decision-making processes. WASO acknowledges that our artform is new when compared to the ancient and continuing artistries of this land's First Peoples. As the Orchestra lives out its vision to "enrich lives through music", music performance, education and collaboration has been at the centre of WASO's engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to date. Providing the platform for First Nations artists to share their stories and songs has resulted in some extremely powerful performances of original compositions, Traditional songs and classical repertoire that live long in the memories of our musicians and audiences alike. The collaborative projects we have undertaken in schools and communities across Western Australia have provided meaningful experiences of connection for both WASO staff, participants and audiences, where learning is truly a multi-dimensional and intergenerational process. We have been proud to showcase these collaborations at significant performances including at Perth Concert Hall and WASO's biggest annual concert spectacular, Christmas Symphony.

Increasing our understanding of cultures and histories, stories and songs is fundamental to building respectful relationships with those in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is through these relationships based on listening, learning and creating that we can offer music that reflects our national identity and promotes healing. Some past and upcoming collaborative projects are detailed below.

In 2004, WASO commissioned composer lain Grandage to create a new work in which two traditions of music met - the Western orchestra and the Traditional Songlines of the Spinifex Peoples from Tjuntuntjura, WA. Though the planned performance in Perth with WASO never eventuated due to the Spinifex Elders being required to remain on Country for sacred business, the poignant process of the work's gestation and the enduring impact the project had on those WASO musicians involved is captured in the 2006 documentary film *Ooldea*.

Since 2014 all students participating in Crescendo, WASO's weekly music education class in Kwinana primary schools, have learnt *Wanjoo*, a song of welcome in Noongar language written by Gina Williams. In 2021 there were 80 First Nations students participating in Crescendo across two schools, and the Acknowledgement of Country at the Crescendo year-end concerts was given by the school's eldest Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

WASO was invited by the Nintirri Centre, a notfor-profit neighbourhood centre in Tom Price, to perform at the Karijini Experience in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021. The Karijini Experience is a celebration of Culture, music, food and art held on the Traditional Lands of the Banjima people in Karijini National Park. At the 2019 Experience a WASO string quartet gave the premiere of Koorlangka, a Noongar-language suite of songs and traditional stories written by award-winning musicians Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse. The string quartet also accompanied renowned soprano and Yorta Yorta woman Dr Deborah Cheetham AO for a performance of Opera in the Gorge in Kalamina Gorge. At the 2021 Experience one of WASO's three performances was accompanying a runway show highlighting First Nations designers and textile artists from across WA, featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models. WASO will return to the Karijini Experience in 2023.

In 2017, 2018 and 2019 WASO musicians partnered with Balladong Wadjuk Noongar Elder Mr Barry McGuire, composer Dr Gerard Brophy and Guildford Grammar School to present *Dookoorniny* ("create, compose" in Noongar), a week-long creative immersion project for students in years 5 and 6. Each project culminated in WASO performing original compositions by the students accompanied by drama and creative art representations of Noongar stories. In 2019 elements of that year's *Dookoorniny* project were featured during the Welcome to Country at WASO's spectacular outdoor concert 'Christmas Symphony' to an audience of 20,000.



In 2018 the 'Christmas Symphony' Welcome to Country featured a Noongar translation of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, a collaborative performance by WASO, Wesley College's Moorditj Mob and school choirs, Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse.

In 2018 Dr Deborah Cheetham AO invited WASO to be one of three Australian ensembles to collaborate with her latest international project with Short Black Opera titled *Woven Song, Embassy Tapestry Project*. A WASO String Quartet travelled to Singapore to perform in the world premiere of *Catching Breath*, a work written in response to a tapestry that resides in the Australian High Commission in Singapore. This tapestry is one of nine created by the Australian Tapestry Workshop, based on works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, for Australian Embassies and High Commissions around the world. During Reconciliation Week in June 2019, a WASO string quartet gave another performance of *Koorlangka* with Gina Williams, Guy Ghouse and pianist Russell Holmes, at the Denmark Festival of Voice. *Koorlangka* ("children/legacy") is the first instalment of a contemporary Noongar song cycle *Kalyakoorl* ("Forever") from Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse. Noongar language is classed as critically endangered with fewer than 400 recognised fluent speakers remaining, and for WASO to play a part in connecting new generations with language was deeply moving.

In 2020 WASO was privileged to collaborate on Bunggul, a multifaceted performance of Dr G Yunupingu's posthumously released album Djarimirri incorporating music, dance, video and visual art, presented by Perth Festival.

In the 2021 Perth Festival, WASO collaborated with Noongar singers Mr Barry McGuire and Della Rae Morrison and the WA Youth Orchestra to present *Dreams of Place*, a concert featuring new orchestral commissions of Noongar songs alongside gems from the classical canon that all celebrate musical connections to Country and homeland.



In 2021 as part of our Hospital Orchestra Project, WASO musicians and composer Kate Page ran two creative music workshops at Perth Children's Hospital. Hospital students worked with the musicians to create and perform a new work using percussion instruments and iPads, inspired by the Noongar season of Kambarang and Vivaldi's "Spring" from the *Four Seasons*.

In 2022 we welcome Dr Deborah Cheetham AO to the Perth Concert Hall to perform *Eumeralla*, *a war requiem for peace*, alongside the full West Australian Symphony Orchestra, joined by mezzo-soprano Linda Barcan and Gungarri baritone Don Bemrose, the Dhungala Children's Choir and WASO Chorus. Combining moving poetry, two choirs, orchestra and the platform of the Requiem mass, a history of heartbreak and horror is revealed in this monumental new work sung entirely in the dialects of the Gunditjmara people. With a fusion of Western classical tradition and First Nations culture, *Eumeralla* soars with resilience and reconciliation. The Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is a practical plan of action based on the reconciliation pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. However, this RAP document is just the beginning of our journey. It commits us to a 12-month plan of education and research, scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in our sphere of influence, and being guided on how our activities and employees can contribute to reconciliation. We believe this initial year will help WASO produce future RAPs that are meaningful, deliverable and sustainable. Now the real work of reconciliation begins for WASO, and we invite our stakeholders to join us on our reconciliation journey.

WASO's current RAP Goals for the duration of our Reflect RAP are based on the four pillars of the RAP framework.



RAP WORKING GROUP

The RAP Working Group was established in October 2021 and comprises the following WASO staff members:

Belinda Gerard, Community Engagement Coordinator Megan Lo Surdo, Project Specialist Tony Pickburn (Chair), Human Resources Manager Paul Shannon, CEO Jenna Smith, Associate Principal Trumpet Shane "Dusty" Thomson, Venue Technician (until April 2022) Alex Timcke, Principal Timpani

WASO is delighted to have established First Nations representation on our Working Group during the development of the Reflect RAP, and we are committed to growing representation as we implement our RAP.



RELATIONSHIPS

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	August 2022	Project Specialist
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	August 2022	Project Specialist
	Invite local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to meet, to engage with WASO on developing guiding principles for future activities.	December 2022	Project Specialist
	Develop a list of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers for performance and collaboration opportunities.	March 2023	Artistic Planning Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Project Specialist
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June, 2023	RWG Chair
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2023	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	July 2022	CEO
through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a strategy to communicate the RAP to internal and external stakeholders, and ensure all staff have the opportunity to become involved in activities and initiatives in support of reconciliation.	July 2022	Project Specialist
	Publish the RAP on our website and place a hard copy in a visible position at Perth Concert Hall.	July 2022	Marketing Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2022	Project Specialist
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2022	Project Specialist
4. Promote positive race relations through anti- discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2022	HR Manager
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2022	HR Manager



RESPECT

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a strategy for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2022	Project Specialist
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2022	HR Manager
	Deliver at least one cultural learning opportunity for employees per year.	December 2022	HR Manager
	Include cultural awareness in employee induction processes.	December 2022	HR Manager
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	October 2022	Project Specialist
	Inform staff about the Traditional Owners and Custodians of all lands on which WASO performs while touring.	December 2022	HR Manager
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, by developing and sharing a cultural protocols document with all staff.	December 2022	Community Engagement Coordinator
	Continue to include Acknowledgements of Country and/or Welcomes to Country in all external communications and publications and at public performances and events, and internally as appropriate.	December 2022	RAP Working Group
	Invite Traditional Custodians to discuss ways WASO can deepen our engagement with cultural protocols (including musical Acknowledgments of Country and ceremonial events).	December 2022	Marketing Manager
	Continue to fly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Perth Concert Hall.	May 2023	Deputy General Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Project Specialist
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022	Project Specialist
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	3-10 July 2022	RWG Chair



OPPORTUNITIES

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment,	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities within our organisation.	September 2022	HR Manager
retention and professional development.	Review our recruitment practices for potential barriers and include specific wording encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply.	September 2022	HR Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2022	HR Manager
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.	December 2022	Project Specialist
	Communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and artists to consider for services and opportunities.	March 2023	Project Specialist
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2022	Project Specialist



GOVERNANCE

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain RWG to oversee development, endorsement and implementation of the RAP.	March 2023	RWG Chair
	Review and update the Terms of Reference for the RWG.	March 2023	Project Specialist
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March 2023	RWG Chair
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2022	RWG Chair
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2022	RWG Chair
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2022	Project Specialist
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022	Project Specialist
	Include RAP achievements and learnings in the organisation's public annual report.	March 2023	Project Specialist
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2023	Project Specialist

CONTACT US

We look forward to sharing more about our Reconciliation Action Plan progress. If you have any questions about WASO's RAP please contact RAP Working Group Chair and Human Resources Manager Tony Pickburn at pickburna@waso.com.au or 08 9326 0018.