

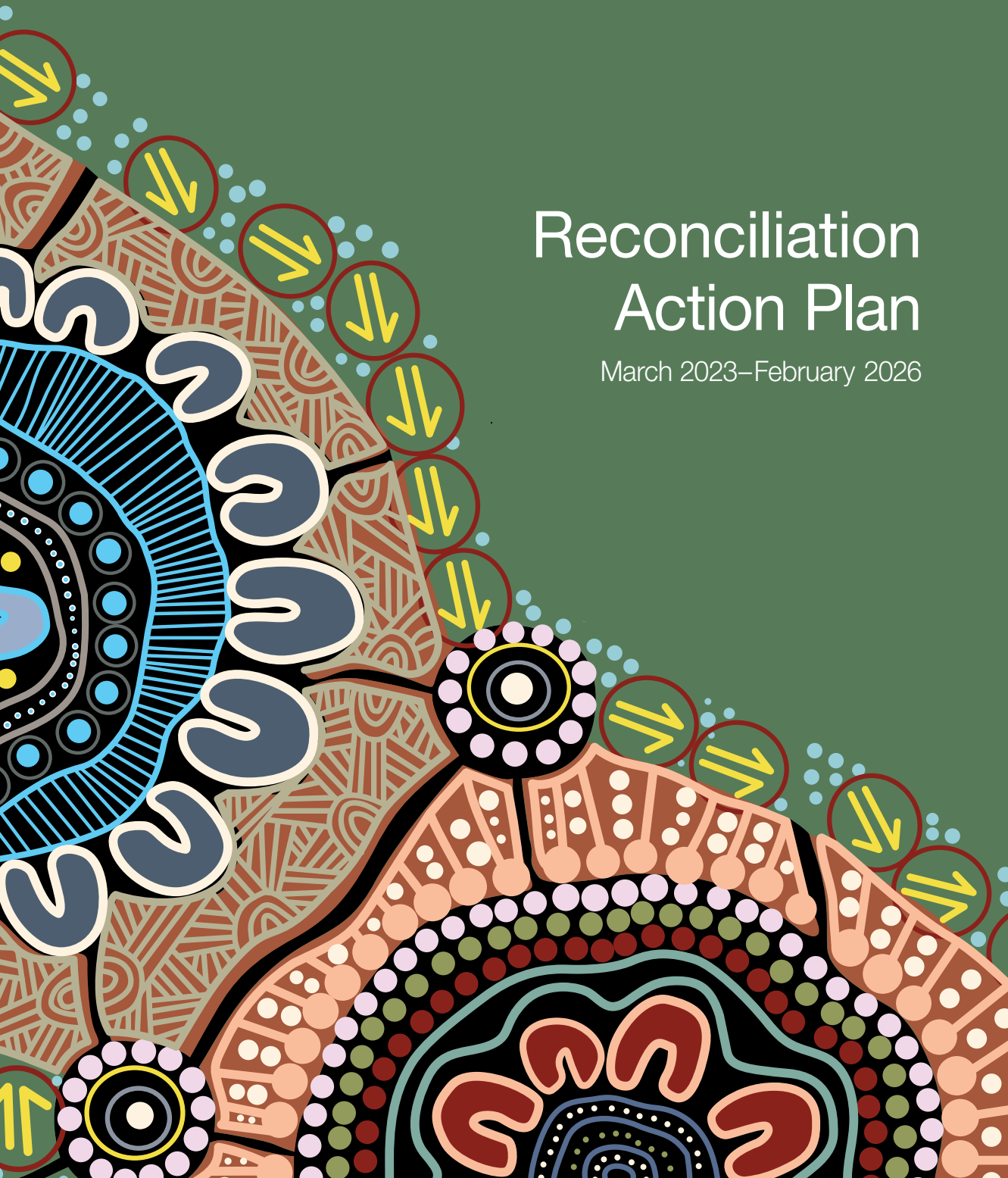


Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs



Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2023–February 2026



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Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned this document may contain images of deceased people.

Wording in this document

Throughout this document, the word 'Indigenous' is used.
This term refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2023–February 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, their ancient living culture, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their Elders past and present.

Our Reconciliation Artwork

The story behind the artwork ties to messages and actions outlined in the RAP. It is a reflection on what reconciliation means for the Department of Home Affairs, our journey towards reconciliation and a sense of belonging for our staff.

The ancestry of the artist, Luke Penrith, is connected through the Wiradjuri, Wotjobaluk, the Yuin and Gumbaynggirr Nation. His passion is supporting and nurturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and jobseekers. Lore, culture and heritage are paramount to Luke.

"For thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been protecting lands, waterways and sacred sites, it was a part of our Lore. First Nations peoples in the present continue to observe these traditional practices.

The work of the Department is vast and varied. This is reflected in the artwork, which depicts our vast, complex and spectacular landscapes; from the islands, mountains, inland rivers, and with our multicultural community thriving.

The U shapes represent the people, past, present and future coming together in true reconciliation and respect - yarning, making important decisions for the betterment of Country.

We all want this nation to be the best version of ourselves, education, walking and sharing our great cultures, we can leave a stronger legacy for our children's children."

Luke Penrith



Table of contents

Secretary and Commissioners' Foreword	4
Message from our First Nations Champions	5
Chief Executive Officer Statement–Reconciliation Australia	6
Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group	8
RAP Working Group Members:	8
What does reconciliation mean for us?	9
Stories from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff	10
Indigenous Apprenticeship Program participant and mentor	10
Our vision for reconciliation	13
Our story	15
Our footprint	16
Our Reconciliation Action Plan	18
Our commitment	18
Our achievements since our last RAP	19
Being Brave: moving forward	20
Relationships	21
Partnerships towards Reconciliation	21
Respect	30
Having a voice and listening	30
Showcasing First Nations artwork	31
Welcoming our newest Australians	34
Opportunities	38
Partnerships	38
Governance	45
Glossary of terms	47

Secretary and Commissioners' Foreword

On behalf of the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) including the Australian Border Force (ABF), we are pleased to present our *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) March 2023–February 2026*, which demonstrates our continuing commitment to tangible action in pursuit of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to fostering relationships, showing respect, and creating opportunities that strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, for the benefit of all Australians.

We are proud to lead an organisation that is committed to building and valuing a workforce that cultivates an inclusive culture and embraces the diversity of its people, and fosters social cohesion in the wider Australian community.

Each person who works in the Department is respected and brings their unique capabilities, experience, values and behaviours to their role to support our shared mission of prosperity, security, and unity for Australia and in Australian society.

Since 2011, our RAP has outlined our contribution to the national effort to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. This, our second Stretch RAP, is an opportunity to continue our focus on embedding reconciliation across our organisation and encouraging other organisations to do the same.

To assist in reaching our target goals, we have active and engaged First Nations Champions, an Indigenous Staff Support Network, a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and a Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Section within the People and Culture Division – all of whom work with our staff to drive initiatives in the RAP.

Staff are encouraged to continue to use the RAP as a tool to progress reconciliation. We can achieve our vision together by increasing the representation of First Nations staff, committing to providing ongoing development opportunities; embracing and appreciating cultural diversity; and continuing to foster relationships that support reconciliation.



Michael Pezzullo AO
Secretary,
Department of
Home Affairs



Michael Outram APM
Commissioner,
Australian
Border Force

Message from our First Nations Champions

We are proud to support the Department's *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan March 2023–February 2026*, which aligns to national Closing the Gap initiatives through a continuing focus on relationships, respect and opportunities.

Through this RAP, we recommit to playing our part in closing the Gap, looking forward to continuing the journey of reconciliation and to continuing truth telling about Australia's history as we journey together into the future.

Fostering social cohesion, supporting opportunities for all, and promoting Australian values, including respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual; parliamentary democracy; equality of opportunity; and a fair go that embraces mutual respect, tolerance and equality are at the heart of Home Affairs' mission to support a prosperous, secure and united Australia.

Our reconciliation journey calls upon us to reflect, respect and celebrate. We look for opportunities to learn about and better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures. We reflect on Australia's modern history since the arrival of the First Fleet including more recent progress towards reconciliation and why that process is necessary. We respect, acknowledge and embrace our differences, and take time to celebrate culture, individual and collective contribution to Australian society, and our achievements together.

To achieve our vision for reconciliation, including implementing Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3 – Transforming Government Organisations, we will continue to increase the attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff; provide ongoing development opportunities; and continue to build cultural appreciation to foster relationships that support reconciliation. The Department also

remains committed to driving and stimulating employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This is demonstrated through the 2,600 contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises in 2021–22 within the Portfolio to the value of \$28.1 million.

The Department will continue targeted recruitment programs such as the Indigenous Graduate Pathway; Indigenous Apprenticeships Program (IAP); Border Force Officer Recruit Training (BFORT) Program (Affirmative Measures); multilevel bulk recruitment (Affirmative Measures) and the newly developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Campaign.

We encourage all of Home Affairs and ABF staff to join in the work of the Indigenous Staff Support Network. Active participation in this network assists in continuing to build on the successes of our previous recruitment and retention strategies, and enhance professional development and cultural appreciation.

We invite you to join us on this reconciliation journey—reconciliation will be achieved together.



Andrew Kefford PSM
Department of
Home Affairs



Malcolm Skene
Australian
Border Force

Chief Executive Officer Statement— Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Department of Home Affairs on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its fourth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and second at the Stretch level.

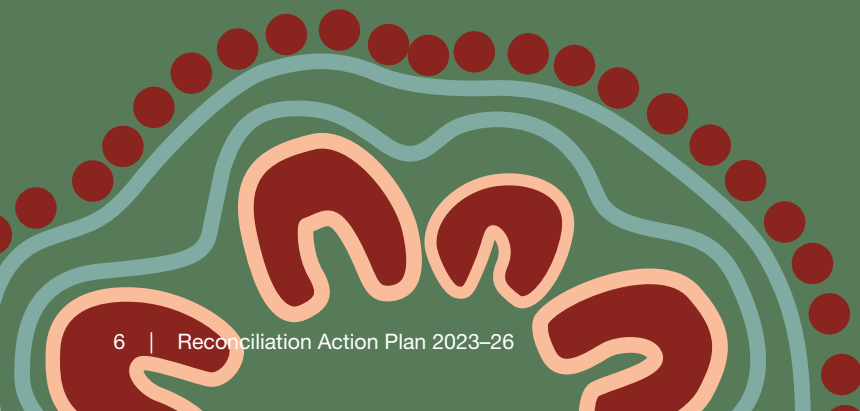
Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, the RAP program offers organisations a proven framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement.

In line with its purpose to contribute to a safe and unified Australia, the Department has immense potential to advance outcomes for reconciliation, particularly in its capacity to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a keystone of our national identity. On its long reconciliation journey so far, it is clear that the Department recognises and understands this potential. Among many achievements, noteworthy is the

Department's careful leveraging of its structures and expertise to assist the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies with their Return of Cultural Heritage Project.

The Department made sure that the Border Force were aware of the cultural objects returning and that frontline officers ensured consignments and objects deemed sacred and secret were only viewed by leaders from respective communities. This thoughtful respect of First Nations cultural protocols is indicative of the wider and concerted effort the Department has made to instill reconciliation values across its operations and workforce.

The Department's new Stretch RAP continues this impressive trajectory, looking for ways it can embed and expand on its commitments to create further impact. It is maintaining its focus on supporting respect for First Nations





RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

cultures by reviewing and updating its Life in Australia resource to promote understanding of reconciliation, as well as to foster relationships between our country's newest Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Department is also continuing work it started with its Indigenous Graduate Pathway, focusing on its capacity for engaging and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent. New projects will include a Mentoring Program, as well as reserving 2% of its managerial and senior opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. It is also implementing a Forward Work Program, to ensure its staff are supported in their cultural awareness capabilities. These new commitments show the Department critically examining both internal and external opportunities for it to increase its contribution to reconciliation.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Department of Home Affairs on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine
CEO
Reconciliation
Australia

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

The Department would like to acknowledge and thank the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) for their commitment and enthusiastic contributions to the development of the RAP 2023–26.

The RAPWG comprises eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and ten non-Indigenous staff located in national and regional offices.

RAP Working Group Members:

- Andrew Kefford PSM, Deputy Secretary, Social Cohesion and Citizenship (Co-Chair)
- Malcolm Skene, First Assistant Secretary, Industry and Border Systems (Co-Chair)
- Inna, Assistant Director, Communications and Engagement, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Michaela, Assistant Director, Employer Sponsored Policy, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Phil, Assistant Director, National Crisis Exercising Capabilities, National Emergency Management Agency
- Carolyn, Assistant Director, People Systems Capability and Governance, Chief Operating Officer Group
- Mal, Assistant Director, Protection Assessment and Learning, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Derek, Assistant Director, WA Status Resolutions, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Kathleen, Border Force Supervisor, Operations North Maritime and Cargo, North West and Detention
- Troy, Leading Border Force Officer, Aviation Operations WA, North West and Detention
- Erin, Manager, SA Student Visa Centre, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Brooke, Operational Manager, Tasmania Global Processing, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Rhonda, People Business Partner VIC/TAS, Chief Operating Officer Group
- Michaela, Policy Officer, Status Resolutions and Removals, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Alaina, Senior Border Officer, North West and Detention, ABF Cairns Aviation Ops
- Jasmin, Senior HR Advisor, Leadership and Management Programs, Immigration and Settlement Services
- Jennifer, Superintendent, North West and Detention
- Carmen, Transport Security Inspector, Compliance Brisbane Team, Cyber and Infrastructure Security

“It has been a privilege to be part of the RAP Working Group. We have come together to share our thoughts, lived experience and knowledge—in a truthful and collaborative way to achieve a shared vision of reconciliation.”



Jasmin

RAPWG member and ISSN Co-Chair

What does reconciliation mean for us?

The picture below is a compilation of the RAP Working Group members' views on what reconciliation means to them. Key points highlighted include respect; working together; sharing knowledge; providing opportunities; having a voice; listening and truth telling. These values are reflected in our Vision and are a part of our reconciliation journey.



“When I think about my involvement in the RAP Working Group, I have a great sense of pride—pride in the work we are doing, pride in my organisation, pride in the fact we are continuing to move forward, telling the truth and seeking to progress the Reconciliation journey. It’s a long journey to strengthen relationships and there is more to do. I encourage everyone to get involved. We are playing just a small part, but a very important one, in building respect and trust, for the benefit of all.”



Rhonda
RAPWG member

Stories from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff

While developing this Stretch RAP we have been sharing stories of success through implementation of past Reconciliation Action Plans.

Indigenous Apprenticeship Program participant and mentor

Kirby-lee is a proud Wiradjuri woman born and raised on Wiradjuri land in Central West NSW.

The Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP), a key initiative to help attract and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent to the Department, was Kirby-lee's pathway into the Department in early 2018.

Since graduating from the IAP, Kirby-lee took on a role in the Entry Programs Team. One of her career highlights was the opportunity to support other new apprentices through their IAP. With her first-hand experience of being a participant in the IAP and her Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, Kirby-lee provided invaluable input into the improvement of the program.

With the support of her leaders, Kirby-lee challenged herself to accept roles outside of her comfort zone to progress her career. Opportunities to develop her skills were provided by the Department, including formal training such as the Indigenous Leadership Course. Reflecting her passion for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Kirby-lee is mentoring two staff members.

“The Indigenous Apprenticeship Program and the mentoring support provided to new Indigenous apprentices really contributes to reconciliation through breaking down barriers, connecting, and creating a real sense of belonging in their new roles as public servants, an important step towards our reconciliation journey.”



Kirby-lee

Procurement Officer, Corporate and External Affairs



Global opportunities

Naurelle was born in Meanjin (Brisbane) on Turrbal country. Her ancestry originates from the Bigambul people, who occupy the Northern Tablelands and Border Rivers region of the South West Queensland and NSW border. Her father (Saunders mob) and grandparents were born in Bigambul country, being born in the Queensland towns of Texas and Goondiwindi, respectively.

Naurelle's journey started in July 2005 where she started as an APS3 at the Brisbane Office with the Department of Immigration. Since then she has been promoted to each APS level, and now is at the Executive Level.

Naurelle says that the best part of her job is the human interaction and making positive differences in people's lives to the betterment of Australia. Having worked in so many areas, each had their own memorable moments, although the pinnacle for Naurelle, has been representing the Department on an international level with postings to Beijing and Jakarta. In particular, a highlight for her was working through a global pandemic in an embassy operating in crisis mode, which was a hectic but very rewarding experience.

Naurelle does not hesitate to encourage others to work for the Department as she sees it as an exciting place full of change, with many different professional and personal opportunities. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Department provides opportunities to contribute to persons coming to live on Country. Naurelle sees that increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will improve cultural understanding, promote diversity and equity, and advance respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

“The implementation of a new RAP displays the commitment to take meaningful action to create an important strategy document with tangible outcomes to advance reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Advancing these measures and focussing on practices that support First Nations people, demonstrates an embedded respect and understanding in all aspects of First Nation identity and culture.”

Naurelle

Principal Migration Officer, First Secretary, Jakarta

Photo: Naurelle with the Jaran Dance Company at the NAIDOC Week celebration in the Brisbane Office.



First Nations Awards

In 2022 during NAIDOC Week, the Department and the ABF announced the inaugural First Nations Awards. The awards acknowledge and celebrate outstanding individuals and teams who strive to improve services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The awards help to raise awareness of the value and importance of acknowledging and recognising Australia's First Peoples and their contributions to our workforce and nation. It is an important step in the Department and ABFs' reconciliation journey and shared vision for the future.

Photo: Inaugural First Nations Awards (left to right) – ABF First Nations Champion Malcolm Skene, Border Monitoring Officers (BMO's) Patricia, Donald, Cornwell, ABF Officer Benjamin, Aunty Violet Sheridan, BMO Peter, Harry, Wolfgang, ABF Deputy Commissioner Cheryl Pearce, BMO Adrian, Clara-maggie, Frank, and Department First Nations Champion Andrew Kefford

Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to contribute to creating an Australia where the same social, health, economic benefits and opportunities available to others are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through this RAP we want to drive increased respect for each other, empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to use their voice, and we want to listen and share knowledge. We celebrate the rich and vast cultures of Australia's First Nations and we will continue to build a cohesive society through understanding Australia's complete history.

Through this RAP we aim to build up a workplace that recognises Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories leading us to more deeply value the inherent talents and strengths of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. We want to create opportunities that inspire and engage our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to successfully move into roles that enable them to reach their full potential. We want to encourage many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join our Department and share in our work.

This RAP gives us direction towards strengthening relationships, showing respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage – and building a future Australia that is truly inclusive. We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through conscious procurement decisions; we will respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through staff education, workplace behaviours standards that do not tolerate racism and discrimination and initiatives that build cultural awareness.

We will strive to achieve this through:

- identifying roles with particular connection to Country and introducing culturally relevant recruitment practices to fill them
- increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through targeted recruitment activities at entry and other levels
- growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent and providing ongoing development opportunities to empower our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to thrive in our organisation
- mandating diversity and inclusion training for all staff with supervisory responsibilities including anti-discrimination and anti-racism components
- clearly setting out the expectations that all staff call out unacceptable workplace behaviours, which include racism and discrimination, including in a formal letter of expectation to all Senior Executive and Executive level staff
- bringing education and understanding about social cohesion to our workforce through our Leadership in Action seminar series
- fostering relationships and building partnerships to support reconciliation through listening, reflecting and collaborating with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders
- embedding cultural knowledge and understanding into our workplace culture
- celebrating and embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and achievements
- driving and stimulating employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our procurement policies and practices.



‘Collaborations’

Artist: Anna

This artwork was created with the concept and feeling of building unity, respect, support, opportunity and strength while moving forward to shared visions.

Our story

The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for central coordination, and strategy and policy leadership in relation to cyber and critical infrastructure resilience and security, immigration, border security and management, counter-terrorism, emergency management, the protection of our sovereignty, citizenship and social cohesion.

The Department enables robust efforts to counter threats of foreign interference and terrorism, promote cyber security and enables responses to and recovery from natural disasters through our Commonwealth Coordinators and the Coordinator-General of National Emergency Management Agency.

The Department continues to contribute to Australia's prosperity and unity through the management and delivery of the migration, humanitarian and refugee programs.

We promote social cohesion through multicultural programs, providing settlement services and through managing and conferring citizenship.

The ABF works domestically and internationally to secure Australia's air, maritime and land domains, and to identify, mitigate and respond to threats before they reach the physical Australian border. The ABF's frontline officers play a crucial role in managing the movement of all goods across our borders, balancing the needs of facilitating legitimate trade while protecting Australia from illicit goods such as drugs, weapons and counterfeit products.

The Department and the ABF work collaboratively to achieve sustainable joint outcomes across the border continuum, from immigration and the facilitation of legitimate trade and travel through to national and border security. The Department and the ABF's operating environment is characterised by increasing complexity and volume and, as a result of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, requires us to continuously adapt our business model. This heightened operating environment requires the Department and the ABF to pivot and respond to multi-faceted threats and risks, which has become the tempo of our normal course of business. We continue to assess and forecast changes to our operating environment to ensure we remain vigilant and responsive to emerging and ongoing threats and position ourselves for future success.

As at 30 June 2022, the Department and the ABF bring together 13,846 staff based in Australia and in 42 cities around the world. We have 272 staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representing 1.96 per cent of our workforce.¹ In conversation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, we have found that the Department's role in protecting Australia is connected to the broader cultural value of protecting Country. This adds a rich and thought provoking dimension to our purpose. It calls us to action.

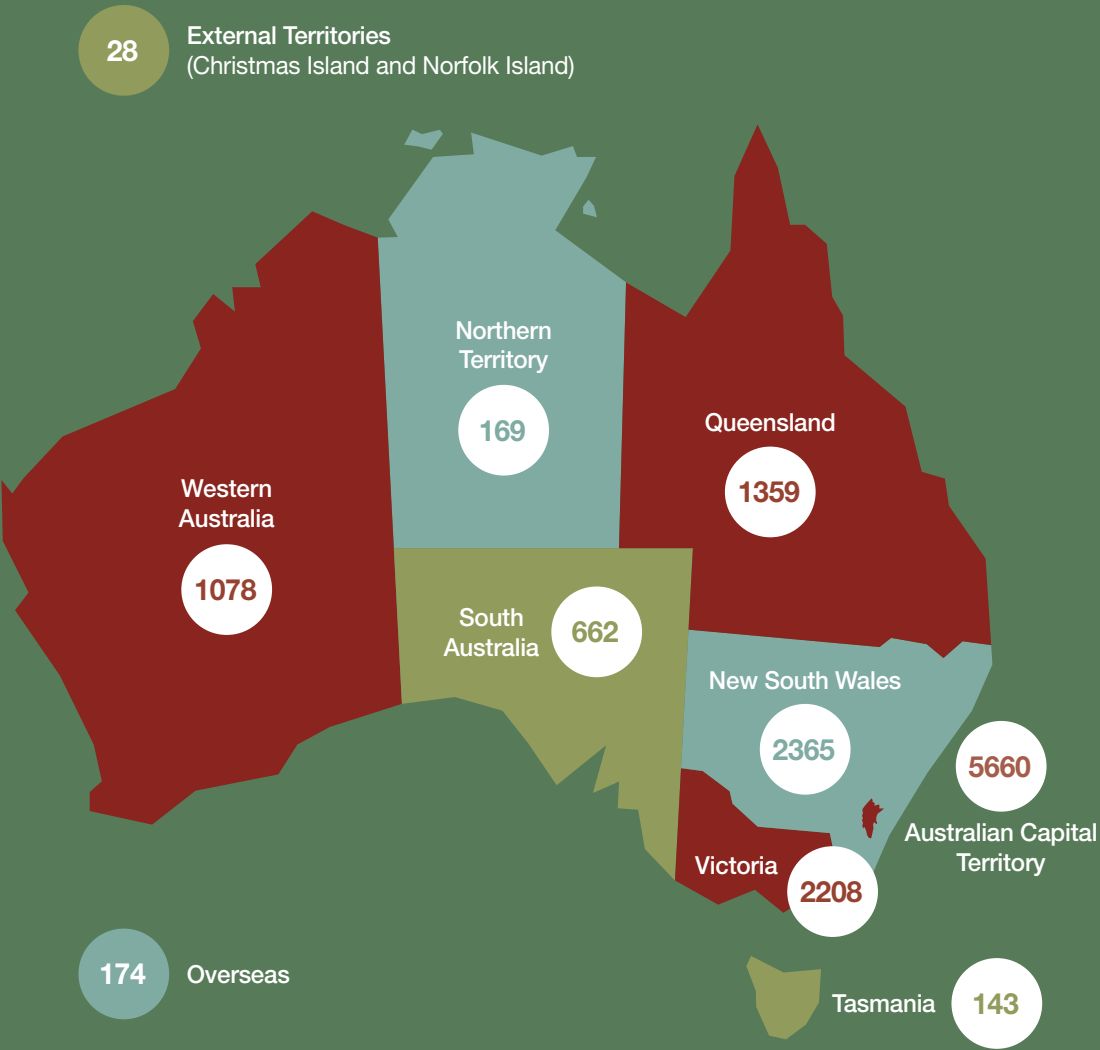
The Department and the ABF will work together, collaborating to progress our commitment to the *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan March 2023–February 2026*. As an organisation, we will continue to collaborate with the National Indigenous Australians Agency on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms design to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensure employment opportunities are increased and available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians at all levels.

¹ Department of Home Affairs Annual Report 2021–2022

Our footprint

As a global organisation at 30 June 2022, the Department brings together 13,846 staff based in Australia and across 42 cities around the world of which 1.96% are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

This map highlights our national footprint.





'BFORT'

Artist: Warren

This painting is an interpretation of the overall scope and function of the ABF, painted by ABF officer Warren, upon his graduation from the BFORT program in Perth. Warren is a Bibbulman man born in Perth and a descendant of the Minang, Goreng, Bindjareb and Wadandi clans in the South West of Western Australia.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Our commitment

“ Brave is when we listen, challenge, and learn about ourselves and others. Brave is saying that you’re ready to delve into the very things that hold you together; your bias, beliefs and values. Brave is when you refuse to accept inertia.”

Shelley Reys²

Our reconciliation journey requires our leaders and staff at all levels to strive to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and non-Indigenous staff.

This Stretch RAP has been created, reviewed and revised in consultation with Reconciliation Australia.

The RAP has been developed in collaboration with our First Nations Champions, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) and the Indigenous Staff Support Network (ISSN) through workshops, surveys, meetings and yarning circles.

National Indigenous Training Employment Services (NITES), a First Nations owned and operated Supply Nation certified business, was also engaged in the co-design of the RAP.

“ Our experiences working with the Department have been extremely positive. We have appreciated the professionalism, transparency, honesty and courage shown by employees within the department who we have engaged with. This has led to a mutually respectful relationship as we collaboratively explore opportunities to build cultural capability across the business.

Reconciliation Action Plans are vital to envisioning reconciliation initiatives and provide a roadmap for success. However they are only the start of the journey. The real work begins through the implementation stages and through buy-in across the Department. Through our interactions we believe that the Department understands this. Not only do they talk the talk but they walk the walk through their commitment to embedding reconciliation as every bodies’ business.

We hope that this is a long lasting relationship and we are excited to see where the Department of Home Affairs cultural capability and reconciliation journey takes them.”

Clinton Scott-Knight

Managing Director, National Indigenous Training Employment Services

² Taken from Shelley Reys’ Foreword to the 2021 State of Reconciliation Report: Moving from Safe to Brave—Summary Report, Reconciliation Australia

Our achievements since our last RAP

This is our second stretch RAP and we continue to align to national efforts to close the gap and embrace reconciliation. We are continually learning about ourselves and each other and acknowledge the significant power of language, story-telling and imagery. We have implemented mechanisms to share our stories and, importantly, listen and take tangible actions that will impact our reconciliation journey.

- Since our last RAP was launched, we have strengthened, introduced and implemented mechanisms to embed reconciliation activities into all aspects of our business. Examples of some achievements under our Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022 include: Assisting the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIASTIS) with their Return of Cultural Heritage Project, by ensuring that ABF were aware of the cultural objects returning, and to facilitate a smooth import process. ABF frontline officers ensured that consignments and objects deemed sacred and secret were not viewed by anyone other than the leaders from the respectable Aboriginal community and ensured the objects were kept safe during import processing.
- Introducing Affirmative Measures recruitment of diversity cohorts at all levels by committing to identifying two per cent of positions within groups/divisions, specifically for staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or people with disability; and advertising positions under Affirmative Measures for all bulk recruitment rounds with 10 or more vacancies.
- Successfully piloting an Affirmative Measures recruitment campaign exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruits. The subsequent deep-dive identified insights into how we refine and improve our processes to allow for more effective future Affirmative Measures campaigns.
- Targeted recruitment programs such as the Indigenous Graduate Pathway; IAP; BFORT (Affirmative Measures); and the newly developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment campaign, which encourages regions to identify positions exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates.
- The launch of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support line, through Benestar, the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider.
- Publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language protocols to assist staff when referring to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander words and cultures in written literature; and tips on 'How to be an Effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ally'.
- Establishment of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country guidelines, as well as language workshops for staff to learn how to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in the local language of that region.
- Inclusion of an Acknowledgement of Country in signature blocks and on all portfolio websites.
- The naming of meeting rooms in local traditional language in consultation with ISSN representatives and local Traditional Owners.
- Cultural Appreciation training delivered on a quarterly basis. Over three hundred staff have completed the non-mandatory training to create awareness of the issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both in the past and the current day.
- Annual Indigenous Leadership training.
- Introduction of the SBS Inclusion Program, which includes a course to foster a fairer, safer and more respectful environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Twenty-two nominations were put forward leading to twelve placements in the Jawun Secondment Program, a professional development opportunity which provides an immersive learning experience focused on developing cultural competence and an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Ongoing participation in the Indigenous Australians Interdepartmental Committee (IA-IDC) quarterly meetings, to progress actions against the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*.

- Commitment, through the Government's Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP), to drive and stimulate employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Since the inception of the previous RAP, the Home Affairs Portfolio has met and exceeded the IPP targets, by both volume and value for financial years 2019–2020, 2020–2021 and 2021–2022.
- Completion of the Workplace Reconciliation Barometer Survey 2020, which provided insights on general workplace level awareness and engagement on reconciliation action. The Barometer revealed the need to continue promoting and seeking engagement with staff on our reconciliation journey.
- Relaunch of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Citizenship Code, a policy framework providing guidance for local government councils and community organisations. The Code reinforces the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements within citizenship ceremonies, and provides ideas on how to incorporate those elements.

The Department completed 71 of the 72 deliverables from the previous Stretch RAP. The above initiatives highlight the focus on creating recruitment opportunities, respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs and peoples, and our actions to build relationships.

These outcomes have informed our new Stretch RAP and we have been guided by and are aligned to the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce strategy 2020–2024. We will continue to deliver initiatives that have been successful and introduce new steps that continue our journey.

Being Brave: moving forward

For this Stretch RAP we recommit to truth telling, listening and taking tangible actions to support our future reconciliation journey. We will continue to listen carefully to the stories received from staff and fully consider the messages and views we receive through the RAPWG, ISSN and other diversity networks, and the 'Five plus Five' Yarning Circles.

This RAP will be used to demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation and is a measuring stick to hold ourselves accountable for the actions we have committed to.

Improved data management is a key focus to ensure we can measure our progress and outcomes. To complement the statistical data, we will draw on anecdotes to look at the bigger picture. While we are striving to retain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, we will develop mechanisms, such as strengthening the exit Interview process, to help measure our achievements.

We will continue to celebrate and promote reconciliation, heeding our staff advice that reconciliation is for all staff and must be inclusive, and should not be a focus for only two weeks of the year during NRW and NAIDOC—rather it is a focus for 365 days of the year. We will demonstrate this through consistent Acknowledgement of Country practices – in the language of the local Custodians where possible.

As an organisation, we will be brave and challenge practices, attitudes and stereotypes which prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from thriving within the organisation by reflecting on our reconciliation vision and our values and incorporating these into our planning, policies, initiatives and actions.

Relationships

Our span of business is large and we are geographically spread throughout Australia, including remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and we have a presence globally. This makes us uniquely positioned to provide opportunities to strengthen relationships and model our commitment to reconciliation through providing diverse, inclusive and culturally-safe workplaces.

Fundamental to our reconciliation journey is a commitment to collaborating and partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, communities and delivery partners on policy, service delivery and communication decisions that have a direct impact on them.

Strengthening our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, including through supporting our leaders' direct engagement will further deliver Priority Reform 3 – Transforming Government Organisations.

Partnerships towards Reconciliation

In line with the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, the Department is keen to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; recognising this is key to helping to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Department is committed to support cultural immersion initiatives such as the Jawun Secondment Program and, where possible, assist other agencies in delivering *Closing the Gap* priorities.

Each year the Department will continue to support participation in the Jawun secondments, an immersive professional development program focused on cultural competence and understanding. Each secondee brings with them their own story, specialist skills, knowledge and experience. By sharing this within the community, they transfer skills and build local capacity, which empowers local leaders in the long term.

Each secondee shares in the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of life, learning their stories, values, unique skills, point of view, hopes and goals. For the secondees, Jawun is a powerful energising experience, which opens them to new ways of thinking of looking at the land and experiencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of life. For the Aboriginal communities that participate in the program, it is about being empowered to be responsible for their own economic and cultural identity, of escaping the welfare cycle and owning their collective and individual futures.

Senior Executives participate in the Jawun Executive Visits program to increase their understanding of the power of the togetherness of the Jawun model – proudly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led, working with communities, corporate and Government partners to deliver community benefits, while also driving a practical form of reconciliation that contributes to a better nation.

The Department was asked to assist the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) in delivering the *Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*, a significant piece of work and a priority for Government. For 12 months, during 2021 and 2022, four secondees were given the opportunity to assist the NIAA with Closing the Gap priorities. This opportunity enabled the Department to share skills and experience in partnership to reconciliation.



“ *I have recently commenced my secondment to the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and am working on the development of an online learning package for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, for all Commonwealth government agencies and organisations. This work requires me to work collaboratively with the Coalition of Peaks, stakeholders across NIAA and the Commonwealth. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our First Nations Champions and other leaders, for their ongoing commitment to making a meaningful contribution to improving life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, thus upholding the good reputation of the Home Affairs portfolio on our shared journey.”*

Inna

Seconded to the NIAA



Working in Partnership: Public Health Response

The Department plays a significant role in emergency situations to protect national security and the health of Australians. During COVID-19, ABF officers were deployed to provide assistance to Queensland Health to provide relief operations within the Aurukun community, located on the western side of Cape York Peninsula.

As part of a multi-agency Outbreak response targeting Acute Post-Streptococcal Glomerulonephritis (APSGN), and providing COVID-19 vaccinations, ABF officers provided a strong platform to build and cultivate positive relationships within the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

For two weeks, ABF Officers supported outbreak teams conducting house-to-house visits, educating and treating the community for the excessively high infection rates and used the opportunity to offer COVID vaccinations. The COVID-19 vaccination rates in Aurukun significantly increased over the 14 day period, bringing the double vaccination rates in line with the rest of the state.

Photo 1: ABF officers with the Queensland Health Response Team

Photo 2: Queensland Health Response Team interacting with community members.

Our focus: Foster strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that are free of racism

Action 1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations		
Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
a To ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are empowered and heard, we will collaborate with 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and partners in relation to recruitment, leadership development and policy proposals (either in development or delivery) most relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: First Nations Champions • First Assistant Secretary (FAS), People and Culture • State and Territory Regional Directors • ABF Regional Commanders 	March (annually)
b Provide opportunities for four non-SES staff members to participate in a Jawun secondment and at least one SES staff to participate in executive immersion annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES • FAS People and Culture 	September (annually)
c Nominate staff in 100 per cent of APSC expression of interest exercises to participate in the Jawun Secondment Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES • FAS People and Culture 	March (annually)
d Enable all staff to access volunteer leave, to share their time and expertise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities through providing each staff member access to at least one day of volunteer leave for an approved organisation and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS Strategic Engagement 	September (annually)

Action 2: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)		
Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
a Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff to communicate and promote reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	May (annually)
b RAP Working Group members will participate in at least two external NRW events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Champions/ Chairperson of RAP Working Group 	May (annually)
c As a part of a communication and promotion campaign, senior staff will acknowledge NRW and its importance and are required to support all departmental staff to participate in internal and external events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: FAS People and Culture • First Nations Champions • ISSN Chairperson 	May (annually)

d	Staff and senior leaders will be encouraged to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW using the Reconciliation Australia website as a guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	May (annually)
e	Continue to organise at least two organisation-wide NRW events each year, which could include sporting events, local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural tours, panel discussions and trivia events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	May (annually)
f	Fund regional offices to host one local NRW event each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	July (annually)
g	Celebrate Mabo Day by promoting external events and hosting three internal events that will include guest speakers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	May (annually)
h	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	May (annually)

Action 3: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence			
Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly, including through our website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: AS People Services AS Media and Communications First Nations Champions 	March (annually)
b	Update and implement an engagement strategy to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. The strategy will consider communication strategies and involvement with interagency forums, IA-IDC meetings and the Commonwealth <i>Closing the Gap Annual Report</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: FAS Strategic Research and Communication First Nations Champions 	July (annually)
c	Attend at least two quarterly RAP Leadership Gatherings presented by Reconciliation Australia per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	March (annually)
d	Collaborate with six other APS agencies and private sector businesses with a RAP to implement ways to advance reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	March (annually)

e	<p>Engage external stakeholders in the reconciliation journey. Actions will include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue our regular engagement with the Australian Public Service Commission on key issues such as developing and improving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Value Proposition (EVP) Tool Project to assist with developing a departmental EVP, and reinvigorating and developing Affirmative Measures processes and guidelines. • Invite external stakeholders to attend six events per year that celebrate or mark days of significance, such as events during NAIDOC Week, Indigenous Literacy Day, National Reconciliation Week. • Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils in remote and regional Australia to promote partnership and collaboration on border protection issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS Immigration Programs • ABF Commander Operations QLD • ABF Commander Operations North • ABF Commander Operations West 	March (annually)
f	Review and update the “MyAus” App and key material produced for new migrants and travellers to Australia to promote reconciliation and to foster relationships between new Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS Refugee Humanitarian and Settlement 	March (annually)
g	Implement strategies to engage all staff to drive reconciliation outcomes using the ISSN and First Nations Champions to advise, support and influence behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: AS People Services 	March (annually)
h	Develop a RAP updates page on the All Staff Culture Hub and share updates quarterly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS Internal Communications • First Nations Champions • ISSN Chairperson 	Quarterly

Action 4: Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies		
Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
a Conduct an annual review of HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination. Use outcomes of the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire, APS Agency Diversity and Inclusion Health Check, Closing the Gap Implementation Plan as guiding tools to understand effectiveness of strategies which are in place to promote positive race relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture AS People Services AS People Strategy AS Workplace Relations and WHS Assurance 	March (annually)
b Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: FAS People and Culture AS People Services State and Territory Regional Directors ABF Regional Commanders 	September (annually)
c Promote Online training such as CORE Cultural Learning and the SBS Inclusion Program, highlighting the modules focused on anti-discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion with Director Learning and Development 	Quarterly
d Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: FAS People and Culture AS People Services First Nations Champions State and Territory Regional Directors ABF Regional Commanders 	September (annually)
e Educate staff in addressing unconscious bias, stigma and discrimination through awareness campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion with Director Learning and Development State and Territory Regional Directors ABF Regional Commanders 	March (annually)
f Clarify behavioural expectations of staff in a letter of expectation from the Secretary and/or ABF Commissioner to all Senior Executive and Executive Level staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture Director Workplace Behaviour 	March (annually)
g Provide ongoing educational opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism through opportunities such as Division Heads meetings, Leadership training, SES / EL Conferences and Keystone events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SES 	September (annually)

h	Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SES 	September (annually)
i	Become a supporter of the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'Racism. It stops with me.' Campaign within the first year of the RAP, led by senior staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: First Nations Champions State and Territory Regional Directors ABF Regional Commanders 	September 2023

Action 5: Host Yarning Circles to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Five SES Officers to meet with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to gain a better understanding of experiences, achievements and challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the Department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SES 	September (annually)
b	SES participants to commit to delivering actions arising from the Yarning Circle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SES Yarning Circle participants 	January (annually)

Action 6: Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	<p>In collaboration with internal and external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organization.</p> <p>This includes the cultural learning strategy and will ensure that we are progressing in line with the cultural capability domains of the Knowing, Doing and Being model - highlighted in the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: AS People Services Director Learning and Development Commander ABF College 	June (annually)
b	All RAP Working Group members, HR managers, senior executive group and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Learning Services 	November (annually)
c	Implement and communicate a Forward Work Program, with the dual aims of raising awareness, understanding and knowledge for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and for non-Indigenous staff and at all levels to ensure everyone feels well supported to build their respective cultural awareness and capability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISSN Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	February (annually)

d	Using all departmental communication channels, on a quarterly basis and coinciding with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebrations, our reconciliation journey, good news stories and guidance for accessing appropriate cultural training will be shared with all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • AS People Services • First Nations Champions/ Chairperson of RAP Working Group 	September (annually)
e	<p>Continue to provide and promote formal and structured cultural learning for staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 per cent of all new starters to be assigned the mandatory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness (ATSICA) training course • A minimum of 200 places available for staff per year to complete the online SBS Inclusion Program, which contains an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander module • A minimum of 200 places will be made available annually for staff to attend the face-to-face Cultural Appreciation training • Places available for at least 10 SES and 60 staff across Australia to undertake language training annually to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS People Services 	September (annually)
f	<p>Deliver opportunities for Truth Telling in our Department through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting two events throughout the year for all staff, highlighting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and stories on past actions • Sharing resources by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on impacts of colonisation and settlement through regional office staff libraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • First Nations Champions 	November (annually)

Respect

We provide a supportive, fair and flexible workplace and have a commitment to strengthen a culture that is inclusive, respectful, embodies a sense of belonging, and is free of racism.

We celebrate and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and days of significance, culture and achievements. Platforms for sharing stories and listening to each other will be provided to build respect and increase understanding.

Ensuring we are culturally capable and continue embedding reconciliation initiatives within our strategy, workforce and operational business practices, will advance our reconciliation journey.

Having a voice and listening

Yarning Circles

Yarning Circle events have been introduced and are held at least every 12 months. These are based on the evidence of experiential learning and storytelling as a mechanism for achieving positive change.

Five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and five Senior Executive Staff (SES), together with the Department and ABF First Nations Champions, participated in the inaugural Yarning Circle in 2021. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff shared their positive and negative personal stories of working in the Department and the ABF. Participants reported the event as being a highly successful way to have a voice, and to be heard.

Key themes raised resonate with the actions and deliverables of this RAP: the importance of mentoring and making personal connections; recruitment and retention obstacles; training opportunities for regional areas; and the need for more support from SES, particularly in regional areas.

Insights gleaned from the Yarning Circle are worked through with the First Nations Champions and Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Section, and are used to shape ongoing programs and services for our staff.

Showcasing First Nations artwork

Displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork in our workplaces celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and provides opportunities for staff to have a voice and share their stories.

Many of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have created and donated their artworks to the Department. Each artist has their own cultural style and shares their own story. The artworks offer another platform to provide awareness of the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The artists' individuality is celebrated and we honour them through showcasing their works and display pieces on the Department's intranet.

Natalie, an ABF Officer in Brisbane, has created several pieces to share her stories. One piece was created to inspire Natalie's team and promotes colour, happiness, calmness and unity in her workplace. Another piece, was a thank you gift to her Commander to thank him for being an inspiring and authentic leader.



'Thank you'

Artist: Natalie

The artwork below was commissioned from Canberra Indigenous artist Kristie Peters and is proudly on display on pull-up banners in our offices around Australia. Kristie's description of Protecting Our Nation is stated below:

The large concentric circle in the middle represents the ABF building respectful and inclusive relationships with everyone from all walks of life, as they continue protecting the borders and keeping this country safe for all Australians.

The U shapes represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people coming together sharing wisdom, knowledge and strength as they support each other on their continued journey of Reconciliation.

The small concentric circles represent all the other organisations falling under the Department of Home Affairs celebrating cultural differences in the workplace. The dots in the background represent all the different Aboriginal nations in the Australian landscape that hold special importance and connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, that keeps them culturally strong.

The white dots represent the importance of acknowledging our ancestors as they continue to guide us to making positive decisions and protecting us through our journey in life.

The ripple effect around the concentric circles, represent the positive energy ABF has in the community. As their voices echo across the borders, sending vibrations, creating greater opportunities and a positive impact for the nation, as they continue to grow together achieving a brighter future for all Australians.



‘Protecting our Nation’

Artist: Kristie Peters



Working with the community: 'Healing Country' on Thursday Island

The Department was invited to participate in NAIDOC celebrations at Tagai Primary School on Thursday Island, Queensland, with the theme of Healing Country. Local ABF officers staged a short interactive dramatic play, explaining to the students how the ABF removes ghost nets from the waters of the Torres Strait to help protect the marine environment. The story was acted out by staff from the Thursday Island District Office and Marine Workforce's Fast Response Boat crew.

The storyline involved Turtle Nancy swimming in the beautiful waters of the Torres Strait and becoming entangled in a big scary ghost net, played by the not-so-scary Adrian. Never fear! Captain Selwyn arrived on the scene and rescued Turtle Nancy from the ghost net. Performances were assessed as amazing with the play being voted the 'best act' by the students.

Captain Selwyn donated the net to the local arts centre for repurposing as sculptures and baskets. Turtle Nancy was able to resume her swimming in the knowledge that she and her fellow wildlife were now protected.

Students from the school were also given an opportunity to look at photos of ghost net retrievals and clean up days undertaken by the ABF. They asked questions of Ghost Net Adrian and Captain Selwyn, who were more than happy to explain how the ABF assists in healing country.

“*The Australian Border Force operates in so many remote areas of Australia, including many with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. It's really important that we truly give back to our local communities, so they understand the critical work that we do in keeping them safe, and so we ourselves can more deeply understand the communities we are working within”.*

Selwyn

Acting Senior Border Force Officer

Photo: Captain Selwyn on the lookout for Ghost Net Adrian, Story Teller Davinna and Turtle Nancy

Welcoming our newest Australians

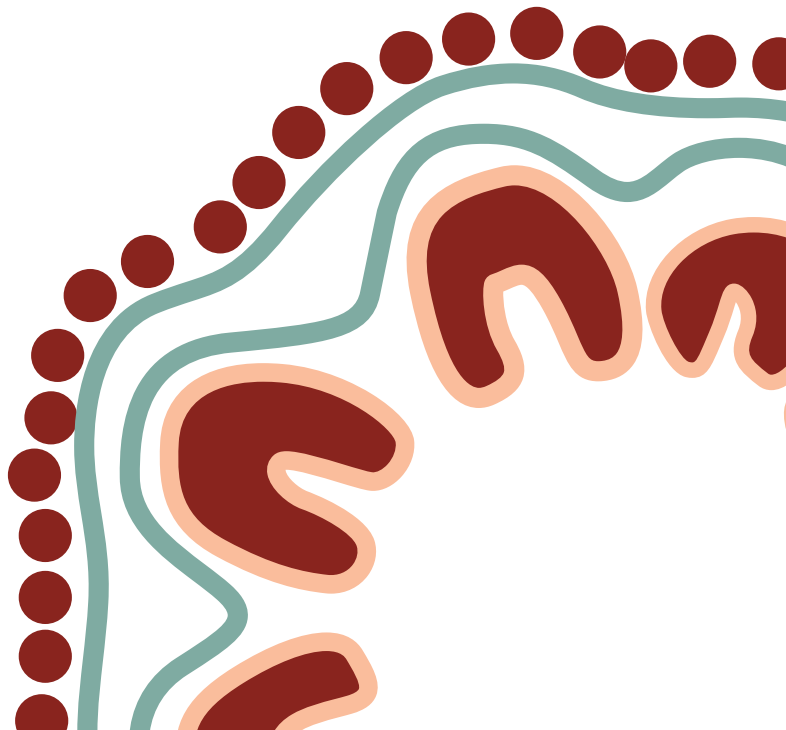
The Department fosters reconciliation through encouraging our oldest Australians to welcome our newest Australians. The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements within Australian citizenship ceremonies is reflected in a key policy document for use by local government councils and community organisations, the *Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code* (the Code).

One practical example of how policy in the Code is implemented is the National Citizenship and Flag Raising Ceremony event held on Australia Day on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. In 2023, immediately prior to the ceremony, Elders representing the Ngunnawal people met with the Prime Minister, the Honourable Anthony Albanese MP and the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) for a personal Welcome to Country at Nerang Pool, near the site of the citizenship ceremony. This is only the second time a personal Welcome to Country of this kind has been held on Australia Day.

At the start of the National Citizenship and Flag Raising Ceremony, Ngunnawal Elder, Aunty Violet Sheridan, performed a Welcome to Country where she spoke of friendship, reconciliation and the need to “come together as one people”. As a new element in the ceremony, each family becoming new citizens were gifted a Message Stick created and presented by Ngunnawal man, Mr Bradley Bell. Message Sticks have been a cultural practice for thousands of years. They represent the spiritual, social and cultural connections Aboriginal people have to Country and each other. Messages, such as an invitation to Country, for business or ceremonial occasions, would be carved or burnt onto the sticks. Traditionally, they were given to a person who would travel to other areas of Country or onto neighbouring nations to relay those messages. The message sticks presented by Mr Bell carry a very special message that welcomes the new citizens to Ngunnawal country.

As in past years an Indigenous apprentice was involved in the ceremony. This year Mitch Radcliffe presented new citizens with the special gift of a native plant as they left the stage. To mark the end of the ceremony, the Muggera dancers performed. The name Muggera means lightning or storm in the Yugembeh language.

Footage of the private smoking ceremony and the National Citizenship and Flag Raising ceremony is available on iView at the following link iview.abc.net.au/show/australia-day-national-citizenship-ceremony-2023



Our focus: We will continue to build our cultural competence, demonstrate mutual respect, celebrate and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and stories

Action 7: Increase visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures throughout our Department		
Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
a <p>We will promote and increase the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by seeking, engaging, promoting and showcasing staff artworks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	<p>July (annually)</p>
b <p>In consultation with the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our offices are located, meeting rooms and large gathering spaces in our primary tenancies will be named in the language of the Traditional Owners of that region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: First Nations Champions Property, supported by ISSN and Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	<p>September (annually)</p>

Action 8: Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by observing cultural protocols		
Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
a <p>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting and sharing cultural protocols via MyHR and communications campaigns on a quarterly basis continuing to facilitate the teaching of 'Acknowledgement of Country' in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language to all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS People Services 	<p>July (annually)</p>
b <p>Review and maintain an Acknowledgement of Country option in our official signature block</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS Media and Communications 	<p>September (annually)</p>

c	<p>Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in Action events • days of significance and key NRW and NAIDOC events • citizenship ceremonies • major national meetings • award ceremonies • other departmental milestones listed in the cultural protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: FAS People and Culture • FAS Citizenship • State and Territory Regional Directors • ABF Regional Commanders 	July (annually)
d	<p>Staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of key meetings and events as per the Department's cultural protocols. Where physical space permits, display Acknowledgement of Country banners at such events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES 	July (annually)
e	<p>Continue to provide Acknowledgement of Country banners to regional offices to display in the foyers of Home Affairs buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture 	July (annually)

Action 9: Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event in at least five capital cities where we operate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Champions/ Chairperson of RAP Working Group • AS People Services 	July (annually)
b	Review HR policies and procedures to remove any potential barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • AS Workplace Relations and WHS Assurance 	March (annually)
c	Promote NAIDOC leave through internal communications to educate staff to attend events during NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	July (annually)
d	All staff and senior leaders will be encouraged to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NAIDOC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • First Nations Champions 	July (annually)
e	People and Culture Division will continue to provide funding for each state and territory office to arrange their own local event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS People Services 	July (annually)

f	Hold a First Nations Awards Ceremony during NAIDOC Week to acknowledge ongoing commitment and contribution of individuals and teams to improving services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to promote their cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • AS People Services • Director Workforce Capability 	July (annually)
g	Sponsor attendance of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members at a regional NAIDOC Ball under the agency's Rewards and Recognition framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS People and Culture • AS People Services 	July (annually)



Opportunities

We continue to close the gap through supporting programs and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities. We are committed to increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working in the Department and the ABF through implementing initiatives, and strengthening policies and procedures, to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

We will remove barriers to successful participation in our recruitment practices and work in partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to ensure they are well supported and have access to professional development opportunities. This will facilitate rewarding career pathways and enable moves into senior level positions. Our commitment to create partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses will continue and we strive to meet or exceed our targets.

Partnerships

The Department has made great steps towards meeting its annual Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) targets for purchasing from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises. In 2020, as a part of the Department's ongoing reconciliation commitment to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the (IPP), the Department formed a supplier partnership with Young Guns Container Crew (Young Guns).

Despite the challenges created by COVID, since the partnership between Young Guns and the ABF was formed, the partnership has continued to strengthen and goes well beyond a transactional business relationship.

Young Guns is committed to creating the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, increasing awareness and uniqueness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business sector, and supporting other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive. They provide new employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers, increasing its Indigenous workforce representation and employing over 900 people in Australia.

“Our partnership with the Australian Government goes deeper than just servicing the contract. Together we have created significant job opportunities, including for Indigenous Australians, driven chain innovation and supported other Indigenous businesses.”

Trent Young
CEO Young Guns



Our National Charity: Indigenous Literacy Foundation

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) was selected through an all-staff vote as the Department and ABFs' national charity.

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation is a national not-for-profit charity working with, and for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote Australia. Their purpose is to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by gifting thousands of new, culturally appropriate books—with a focus on early literacy and first language. They also run programs to inspire communities to share and publish their own stories, in the languages they choose.

Ben Bowen, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ILF was delighted that the Department and ABF chose the ILF as the Department's new national charity. 'The purpose of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, is to raise literacy levels in remote Indigenous communities so all children across Australia have the same choices and opportunities,' said Ben.

Staff participate in *Fundraising Fridays* and other localised fundraising activities to raise money for the charity.

This has been welcomed as another initiative in support of our continued journey to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to reconciliation.



Building First Nations leadership skills

Five ABF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attended the inaugural Pacific Women's Professional Development Program (PWPDP) during February and March 2022. 60 women from 17 countries, serving in Customs administrations, came together to share their experience, build leadership skills and enhance Customs networks.

The virtual course is an initiative of the ABF, in partnership RMIT University and the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO). The PWPDP is developing and empowering women in the Pacific region to become influential future leaders in the customs and border protection domain.

The ABF was represented by five high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who participated in the PWPDP and brought respect, vibrancy and wonderful contributions to the program.

“It was a privilege to represent the ABF alongside our inspirational First Nations and Pacific sisters. It was a unique opportunity in which we learned from one another, shared our experiences together, formed strong connections, and grew as leaders together. We shared a common understanding of the importance of protecting our environment, communities and countries through our Customs roles”.

Photo: ABF Officers (left to right) – Peta, Jasmin, Alaina, Kim and Lauren

Action 10: Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	In line with the Commonwealth aspiration, the Department aspires to achieve a target of three per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee representation for the SES by 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS Strategy, Reporting and Planning 	August 2024
b	We will build our talent pipeline to achieve a target of five per cent representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at APS 4 to APS 6 levels and EL1 and EL2 levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SES AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems Commander ABF Workforce Management 	August 2024
c	Continue to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the ISSN, RAP Working Group and the First Nations Liaison Officer on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategies, ensuring they are connected in with APS strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems Commander ABF Workforce Management 	June (annually)
d	Review targeted recruitment processes to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems AS People Strategy and Engagement Commander ABF Workforce Management 	June (annually)
e	Dedicate two per cent of positions within groups/divisions, specifically for staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems 	June (annually)
f	Hold one multilevel bulk Affirmative Measures round annually in collaboration with an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment agency who will be engaged to lead and coordinate these rounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: AS People Services AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems 	June (annually)
g	Multilevel Affirmative Measures recruitment panels to have at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative on the panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems 	June (annually)
h	Affirmative Measures Selection Committee members to be assigned mandatory AM committee training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: AS Recruitment, Payroll and People Systems 	June (annually)

i	Continue targeted recruitment and development programs, including the Indigenous Graduate Pathway; Indigenous Apprenticeships Program (IAP); and Border Force Officer Recruit Training (BFORT) Program - (Affirmative Measures).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture • Commander ABF Workforce Management • FAS People and Culture • Commander ABF Workforce Management 	June (annually)
j	Advertise job vacancies, create targeted promotional materials and implement practices to more effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture 	July (annually)
k	<p>We will enhance the exit process to capture data for analysis on the reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff choose to leave the Department.</p> <p>This will assist with assessing the effectiveness of our approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture 	July (annually)
l	Review and update HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure identification and removal of barriers to workplace participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABF Workforce Management 	July (annually)
m	Commit to building capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees for management and senior level positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS People Services 	September (annually)
n	Sponsor one award at a school offering mentoring programs targeted to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth, as a pathway to attracting talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Champions 	July (annually)
o	Identify six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend Indigenous Leadership Training on an annual basis, designed to give participants an understanding of self and the tools to become active leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS People Services 	September (annually)
p	Continue to financially support and promote the Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner Scholarship available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS People and Culture 	July (annually)

Our focus: Supply chain, business relationships

Action 11: Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes			
Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Continue to review and implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy in line with the IPP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	December (annually)
b	Maintain and annually review the Department's Supply Nation membership. Requests for membership throughout the year will be arranged as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	December (annually)
c	<p>Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff through promoting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Business Month via common area digital display screens, internal all staff notices and newsletters Supplier Diversity via common area digital display screens, internal all staff notices and newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	October and September (annually)
d	Promote the IPP and promotional pack supplied by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) on the Department's intranet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	June and December (annually)
e	Review procurement templates and guidance material annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	December (annually)
f	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. This will be achieved through raising awareness and educating business areas and procurers, undertaken by Procurement Officers within the Procurement and Contracts Support Branch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	December (annually)
g	Continue to encourage and educate procurers through forums such as the bi-monthly Procurement Community of Practice and the Procurement in Practice Clinic sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	June and December (annually)
h	Maintain commercial relationships with five Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses by encouraging use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	Annually (December)

i	Meet or exceed Mandatory Minimum Indigenous Participation Requirements (MMRs) as determined by the IPP. Use the Supply Nation Spend tracker to monitor progress and report regularly to senior Executives on how the Portfolio is tracking against targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	June and December (annually)
j	<p>Engage with Supply Nation to provide training sessions for relevant staff in searching for and identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Indigenous Business Direct (IBD). Other relevant support to assist staff includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Procurement one-day virtual course which provides an overview of the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) and includes a practical demonstration of searching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers through IBD support and guidance provided to procuring officers by the Procurement Contracts and Support Branch procurement templates, guidance material and intranet content which provide further direction and guidance on the process to purchase from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS Procurement, Property and Contracts 	March (annually)

Our Focus: Charities and not-for-profits

Action 12: Have systems in place to enable support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander charities.			
Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Support at least two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander not-for-profit organisations in the workplace-giving program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	August (annually)
b	Continue to support three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander charities through fundraising events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	August (annually)

Governance

We will continue to maintain good governance and reporting practices, have strong leadership and be accountable to drive the delivery of our RAP commitments.

Action 13: Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP			
Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group with two SES level Champions providing leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	October (annually)
b	The Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group will be reviewed and updated annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions/ Chairperson RAP Working Group AS People Services 	October (annually)
c	The RAP Working Group will meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation and report to senior executives through the Chair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions/ Chairperson RAP Working Group AS People Services 	Quarterly

Action 14: Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments			
Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Ensure the agency has active and engaged SES level First Nations Champions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	June (annually)
b	Embed resource needs for RAP implementation and the tracking of deliverables and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	June (annually)
c	Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	October 2023
d	Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	September 2023
e	Maintain two internal RAP Champions from senior management, representing Home Affairs and ABF that will drive the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	October (annually)
f	Include our RAP as an agenda item at senior management meetings, including the National Staff Consultative Forum (NSCF), Operations Committee, ABF Weekly Muster updates, and SES Keystone Forums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture First Nations Champions 	October (annually)

Action 15: Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	September (annually)
b	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Hub messages to staff from the Indigenous Champions Leadership and Culture Advisory Council Indigenous Staff Support Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	Quarterly
c	Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings, including through the Annual Report, and the APS Agency Survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture Group Manager Executive and International 	October (annually)
d	Continue participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer and accompany this with all staff messaging to reinforce that we are a part of the national reconciliation journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAS People and Culture 	May 2024
e	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	June (annually)
f	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	December 2025

Action 16: Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP

Deliverable		Responsibility	Timeline
a	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS People Services Director Culture, Diversity and Inclusion 	January 2025

Enquiries on this RAP should be made to diversity@homeaffairs.gov.au

Glossary of terms

ABF	Australian Border Force
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
AS	Assistant Secretary
ATSICA	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness
BFORT	Border Force Officer Recruit Training
ESC	Employment Suitability Clearance
EVP	Employee Value Proposition
FAS	First Assistant Secretary
HR	Human Resources
IAP	Indigenous Apprenticeships Program
IAGDP	Indigenous Australian Government Development Program
ISSN	Indigenous Staff Support Network
Jawun	A not-for-profit organisation that places executive level and high performing APS6 staff from Australian companies and government agencies into Indigenous organisations across Australia.
LSCF	Local Staff Consultative Forum
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NRW	National Reconciliation Week
NSCF	National Staff Consultative Forum
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RAPWG	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group





