



WATERNSW RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

February 2022 - February 2023

"Together we will walk as one"



Acknowledgement

WaterNSW would like to acknowledge all First Nations people throughout NSW, their connection and legacy to this country is continually shown through their ongoing spiritual, physical and cultural knowledge and practices of the lands and waters.

We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge their ongoing connection and commitment to the waters and lands on which we operate.

We recognise their vast cultural knowledge and management of country and together we will commit to reconciliation and through these partnerships will care for country and waterways on, and all, of our operations and infrastructure areas.



Reconciliation Action Plan Artist

Name: Dan Clegg (Bundadhaany is the Wiradhuri name given me by Snr Wiradhuri Elders Unc Stan Grant Snr and Unc Cec Grant)

Nation: Wiradhuri

Totem: Goanna (gugaa)

Dan is a contemporary/traditional Wiradhuri artist who spent his early years growing up in western Sydney near the foot of the Blue Mountains and central west NSW before moving to the Riverina.

A proud descendant and active member of the Wiradhuri nation, Dans distinctive and vibrant paintings reflect a deep understanding of Caring for Country and skilfully communicates traditional and contemporary cultural narratives. His paintings are simple yet complex and cleverly capture current land/water management settings within a dynamic framework of traditional cultural values.

- Have an environmental science degree (Ba Applied Science – Parks, Recreation & Heritage: CRM major)
- Qualified and experienced environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage officer with time spent working for DLWC/DIPNR (Wollongong/Sydney), Chipping Norton Lakes Authority, SCA (Warragamba) Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA (Windsor), OEH south west region (etc) for approx. 20yrs
- I have been an Aboriginal or Wiradhuri community rep on various NRM/CRM steering committees and advisory groups in a volunteer and nominated capacity

Previous works: Rio Tinto NP Mine Step Change Program (series collection), Exhibition - Private Gallery, Melbourne, Mural – Banjora Childcare Centre, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service Reconciliation Action Plan painting (office foyer), 'Indigenous' Round Jersey - Albury Steamers (Rugby Union), Multiple Charity Fundraiser Auctions (eg: Cystic Fibrosis, Albury Steamers, Rural Fire Service).





Artwork

“Look after the land and rivers and the land and rivers will look after you”

The visual viewpoint used to tell this story is from an aerial perspective which is a common traditional form of sharing information and familiar to a lot of different first nation groups.

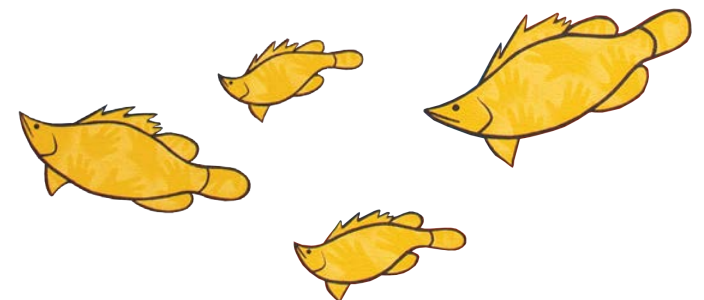
It allows the story to be told through showing what's happening across large areas of Country including boundaries, animal and people movements, recent events (like gatherings and ceremony) and important places.

It also enables different levels of information to be shared simultaneously giving different meanings to people based on their level of knowledge.

I wanted to mostly draw on traditional composition, cultural symbols and colours that are identifiable and have meaning to the diversity of traditional owners Water NSW are working with, without being Nation specific.

I've offset this with modern blue colours which are symbolic of present-day water planning/management and helps the painting achieve balance in bringing together the traditional and non-traditional components of the story.

It was important that elements of the painting had more than one meaning in order to represent and bring together the range of stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities to land and water. From the past, into the present, for the future...only one story is being told...we must walk together.



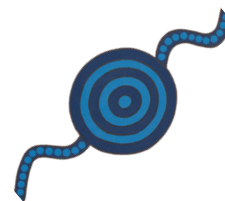
Concentric circles

- Meeting place
- Dam/reservoir/waterhole
- Colour variation for water levels
- Meeting place
- Dam/reservoir/waterhole
- Colour variation for water levels



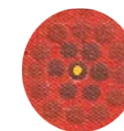
Centreline/River

- Water supply systems/delivery networks/control infrastructure
- Monitoring
- Major river, traditional pathway
- Water supply systems/delivery networks/control infrastructure
- Monitoring



Small circles (spreading brown dots with yellow centre)

- Communities & campsites
- Different groups connecting with each other
- Floodplains
- Rocks (around waterholes)



Feet

- Walking together through land and water
- Shared journey
- Coming together of different groups (meeting)
- Pathway



Turtle and Fish

- Symbolic totem, icon species, resource
- River health
- Traditional practices



Waterbirds

- Special and protected areas
- Connecting water & land/wetlands
- Symbolic totem, icon species, resource



Spirals

- Wetlands, waterholes & lagoons
- Dams, reservoirs & weirs
- Pulse/rhythm of Country



Hands

- Traditional Owner's connection to land and water (and significant places)
- People working and achieving together (creating change)
- Stakeholders representing different values
- Water sharing
- Different Traditional Owner groups and Water NSW working together (creating change)
- Connection to water and land
- Stakeholders and different values





Message from Reconciliation Australia

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

WaterNSW joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types - Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate - allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.



It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables WaterNSW 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 to WaterNSW, 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

A message from the WaterNSW CEO and Managing Director

– Mr Andrew George

As the operators of the States Dams and regulated waterways, WaterNSW has an immense responsibility to operate these assets, which includes more than 40 dams across the state, to meet the needs of our customers and local communities. The water we supply supports more than 8 million people across NSW and we are also required to respond to the challenges of drought, floods and climate change.

Our responsibilities to work with and engage local Aboriginal peoples and communities is one of our top priorities for our business, rightly reflected in our new Corporate Strategic Plan approved by our Board, and which notably includes the development of this, our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our reconciliation journey started some time ago with the development of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for the Warragamba Special areas with Gundungurra. In addition, the approach taken by our project team on the commencement of the Wilcannia Weir project, the latter of which has been widely recognised for its innovative and culturally appropriate engagement and consultation approach. While we have made some positive steps, I know we need to be doing more in some areas of our operations, project delivery and employment pathways.

For many organisations, the fear of inadvertently engaging in culturally inappropriate ways can hinder progress, for fear of not wanting to unintentionally disrespect anyone. At WaterNSW we will build and

inculcate a cultural appropriate framework through our RAP and support its recommendations to move forward, at a whole of organisation level, to embrace reconciliation in all that we do. The RAP will better support meaningful and culturally appropriate partnerships and dialogue with local Aboriginal communities by allowing us to build on our successes to date, learn from how we could do things better, and move forward together as one. This process will be managed and overseen by the RAP Champion Fiona Smith, Executive Manager, Water and Catchment Protection – WaterNSW.

Importantly, the formation of our RAP Working Group was not formed solely from internal staff and those with a personal interest. Rather, we researched and learnt from the lessons of others and called for external nominations from Aboriginal leaders from across the state, to join with us in consultation and collaborate together in the development of our inaugural RAP. Our RAP Working group consist of 10 Aboriginal people – three (3) WaterNSW employees, seven (7) Aboriginal community leaders and one (1) non-Indigenous person who is a WaterNSW employee, the groups diversity also includes 3 females and 8 males. The RAP working group consist of co-chair (who rotate each meeting) David Hogan and Rene Woods and supported by Sharyn Halls, Glenda Chalker, Leeanne Hampton, Duane Byrnes, Derek Hardman, Jason Ford, Fred Hooper, Barry Philp, and Russell Hill. I cannot commend highly enough all those highly respected Aboriginal leaders and community members who have worked together with our own WaterNSW Aboriginal employees to build and develop our first RAP.





A company plan and good intentions are not enough without capability and organisational cultural competency. As part of the preparation towards developing this RAP, WaterNSW rollout a series of immersive 2-day on Country cultural competency training for Board Members, Senior Executive Manager and Managers. This training had a profound effect on all those who participated, and I am confident that WaterNSW has never before been better placed, to undertake this most important journey of walking together with Aboriginal communities.

Our many commitments as part of this RAP will be supported from across multiple teams in the business who will be working closely with our Community Engagement team, Inclusion and Diversity Council and Aboriginal Engagement Manager to see them delivered. Our Board will be kept updated regularly on our progress through my own CEO monthly reports.

I am committing WaterNSW to do our part in supporting better outcomes for Aboriginal communities across NSW and committed to improving mutual understanding and respect towards Aboriginal cultural knowledge and their spiritual connection to the lands and waterways in parallel with the responsibilities we have to manage the states dams and related assets.

This Reflect RAP will strengthen relationships, support our staff to make a difference through all we do, ensure our engagement is culturally appropriate and support strategies to drive better outcomes for the communities across our operations throughout the state, so “together we walk as one”.

Andrew George





About Our Business

WaterNSW operate and maintain more than 40 dams across the state and supply two-thirds of the water used in NSW to regional towns, irrigators, Sydney Water and local water utilities. We manage and protect declared catchment areas to ensure optimal quality water is supplied to customers for treatment into safe drinking water. We also own and operate the largest surface and groundwater monitoring network in the southern hemisphere and build, maintain and operate essential infrastructure.

Our operations and land management, projects and related activities require varying degrees of consultation and engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholder groups. As the state's operators of Dams and water, WaterNSW is fundamentally associated with Aboriginal communities' cultural connection to the lands and waters. In addition, with continued reform across the water sector and in regards to water rights and entitlements the government policy changes around "cultural water" need to be better understood so that WaterNSW is appropriately equipped to respond and support Aboriginal communities through these potential changes into the future. We want to be ready to support communities on this journey.

WaterNSW has a workforce of around 968 employees throughout all of NSW, which includes 40 dam locations including 18 major dam sites and depots located at Warragamba (Western Sydney), Blowering (Tumut), Brogo (Bega), Burrendong (Wellington), Burrinjuck (Yass), Wyangala (Cowra), Hume (Albury) with offices also located in Parramatta, Dubbo, Newcastle, Leeton and Coffs Harbour. At the end of 2021 we currently employ six (6) full time Aboriginal employees within our workforce, whilst the final number for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is not fully known at this stage, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this.

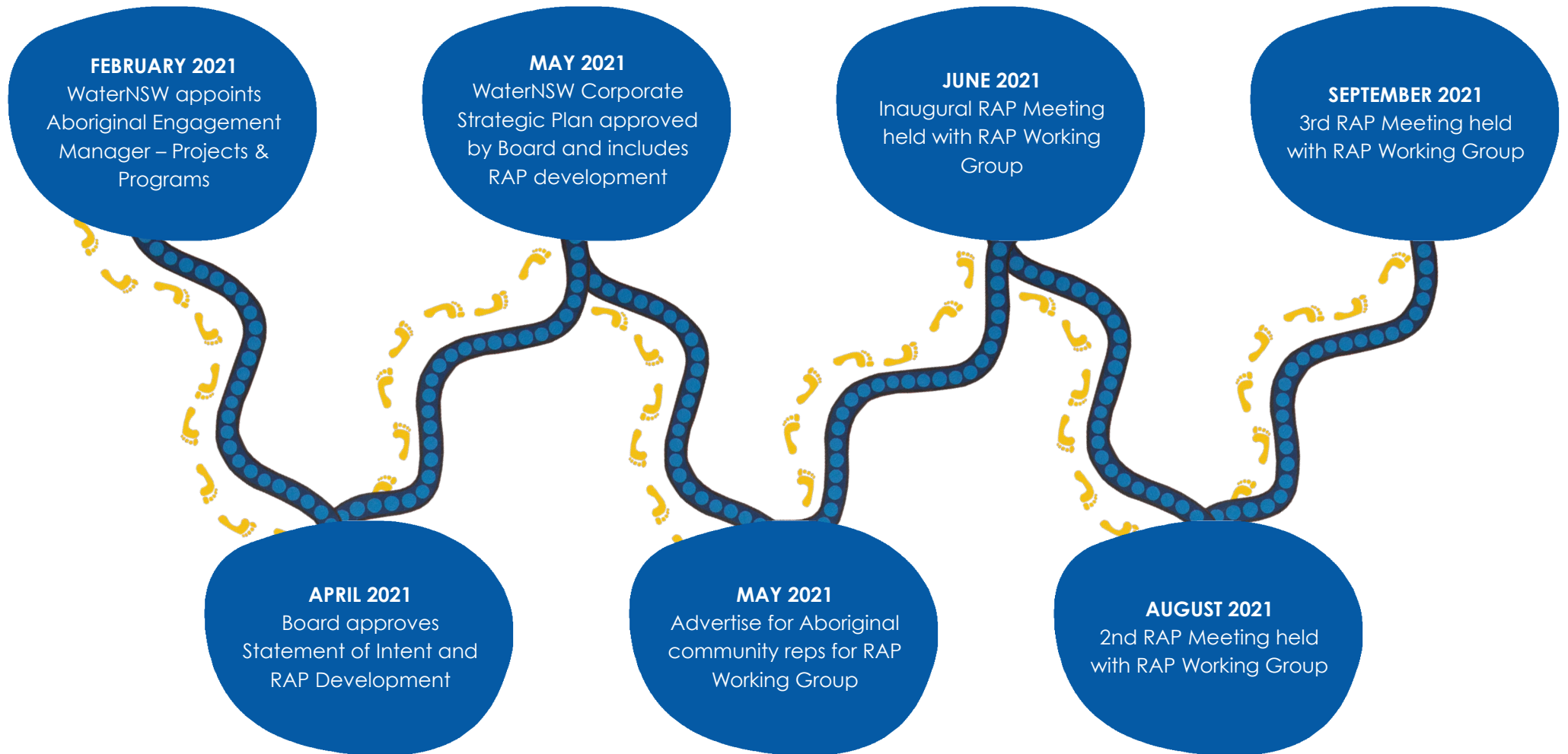
To do so our organisation must be appropriately focussed and committed, and the first step was to develop a Statement of Intent, this was agreed to by the WaterNSW Board with the view that our organisation would commit itself to the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that will support and inform the organisation on this path forward.

Statement of Intent

WaterNSW operates the NSW state's rivers and water supply systems and has significant interface with stakeholders, local communities, our customers and all those who interact with our dams, storages and river operations.

We acknowledge the very strong cultural and spiritual connection of Aboriginal communities to lands, waters and rivers and we are committed to improving how we engage with First Nations peoples across all aspects of our operations and projects.

Our RAP Journey





RAP Working Group

Mr Barry Philp

Maintenance Team Leader - Menindee **WaterNSW**

Born and raised in Menindee, proud Ngijeempaa man, finished schooling at year 11 in Broken Hill (no high school in Menindee) in August 1983 and commenced mechanics indentureship with Water Resources Commission. Completed indentureship in 1987, unfortunately there were no further funding within WRC to keep me employed.

I started back with DLWC in 1995 through an Aboriginal program to complete cert3 in civil construction, during the first few weeks of the training a team member for DLWC had retired and I transitioned into his position as full-time employee (maintenance officer trade) 1998 I had secured temporary storage officer position and in 2002 acting 2IC before securing 2IC position full time in 2004.

Commenced role as team leader in September 2009 which is still current. I am identified in Menindee as an Aboriginal person that no matter what the odds are, you can achieve anything you want if you put your mind to it.

My current role is very interesting to say the least, it involves mentoring/training/guiding/planning and budgets It involves maintaining a team with great harmony to ensure the absolute best outcomes, there has been some struggles along the journey who doesn't have struggles, but we get through them.

I am very passionate about the cultural significance the lake system has as a whole to the aboriginal people and strive to do my best to protect these sites as much as possible (once they are gone, history is gone) and Water NSW are very instrumental in assisting me achieve these outcomes. I have an excellent relationship with local land council and always work together to achieve the best for all with major projects in the area.

- Protecting cultural sites on Lake Cawndilla
- Emergency water supply works to secure water for Broken Hill and Menindee
- Bore drilling on Lake Menindee where monitors were required
- Sourcing and engaging monitors on Lower Darling block bank

Mr Derek Hardman

Chief Executive Officer

Barkandji Native Title Group Aboriginal Corporation Registered Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate

Born in Hillston. Proud descendant of Barkandji, Ngiyampaa (Keewong) & Wiradjuri Ancestors.

Throughout my personal and professional life, I have been humbled and honoured to have been an identified leader by peers my family and cultural belonging through my Aboriginal cultural heritage. I have always had a passion to work with and for the people from an early age to give back and walk a journey as a role model for the generations past present and future.

Throughout my professional and personal life, I have always had a passion to make a lasting difference within the Aboriginal community, I have exceptional conceptual skills that has allowed me to develop many models and worked within many aspects of Aboriginal community cantered approaches.

Working within such commitment and passion to make lasting meaningful and realistic change is central to a legacy I have inherited from a long line of elders and community Leaders respected for their community commitment to make change.

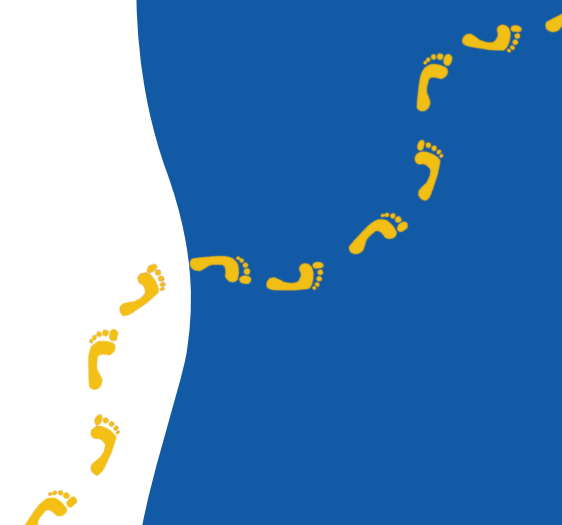
I believe in a society where social and commercial should support each other and to empower the people through self-determination.

This philosophical approach I believe is reflected in my work and the journey of continually building the foundations for empowered communities, families, and individuals.

I am extremely passionate about supporting economic stability, life skill obtainment, cultural connection, respect and believe through conceptual cultural thinking can raise that child again in a community as a supported united community.

My business acumen is extensive and been a driver of business growth and investment at many levels including establishment, implementation and design of various business models and industry portfolios.

That one individual who can take a seat around any campfire with varied audiences and speak at that level best describes a little about me.





Mr Duane Byrnes

Catchment Field Supervisor – Catchment Assets. **WaterNSW**

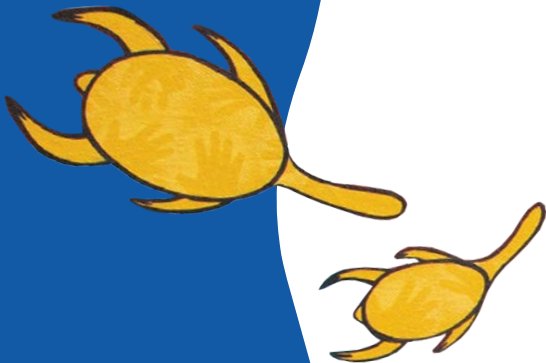
I'm proud to have family heritage from Wonnarua Nation, Murrurundi, NSW. I have grown up and lived in Dharawal country my whole life where I have a strong connection to country, the ocean, rivers and have built relationships with the community.

Having been brought up as a child with family that has been deeply institutionalised and disconnected has had it struggles socially and financially but I strive to be the change for his future generations.

During my 15 years of employment, I started as an Infantry Rifleman for The Australian Army Reserves. I then gained employment as a Trainee Aboriginal Field Officer for Lake Illawarra Authority where I gained qualifications and skills in land conservation, bush regeneration, cultural heritage management and community programs.

He previously held the position of Environmental and Emergency Response Officer for Western Areas Nickel in a FIFO role in Ballardong Country, Western Australia (2011 to 2017) where he gained further qualifications and skills in Environmental monitoring, Compliance and Emergency response.

Duane is enthusiastic about ensuring Aboriginal peoples have a voice in the Land and Water management and looks forward to doing what he can to assist and help drive future opportunities for First Nation peoples through both Public Engagement, Employment / Training and Procurement within WaterNSW and building stronger relationships with our First Nations communities.



Mr Fred Hooper

Chair of the **Murrawarri Peoples Council**

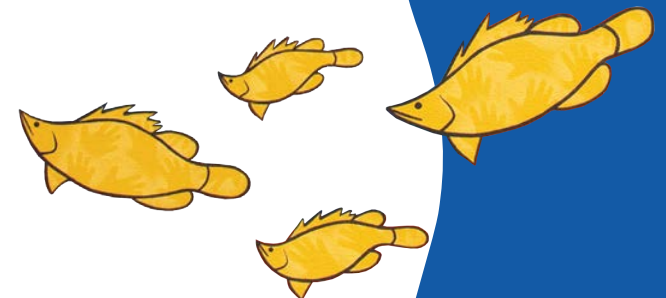
Fred Hooper is a Murrawarri man from the Murrawarri Nation situated between Bokhara and Warrego Rivers which straddles what is now known as the QLD and NSW borders in the Western part of NSW and Southwest of QLD.

He joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1979 at the age of 17 and served six years on both surface ships and submarines. He left the Navy in 1985 and worked in the Commonwealth Public Service.

After leaving the Public Service worked in a number of First Nations organisation. He was responsible for the Murrawarri Nation declaring their continued Independence from the Crown of Great Britain.

He is the Chair of the Murrawarri Peoples Council and former chair of the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations Limited.

He has worked tirelessly over the past 10 years to secure Water Rights for First Nations and their peoples in the Northern Murray Darling Basin.





Ms Glenda Chalker

Chair of ACHAC (**NSW Govt Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee**)

Aboriginal Representative on the **Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee**

Member of the **Camden Heritage Committee**

On the Board for **Ngungulla Art Centre at Bowral**

My name is Glenda Chalker, I am a Dharawal woman of the Cubbitch Barta clan, who were better known as the Cowpastures Tribe, following the invasion of our traditional Country.

I was born in Camden and have lived on traditional Country all of my life, as did countless generations before me. I currently live at Pheasants Nest and have been here for almost 44 years. Pheasants Nest adjoins the western side of the Nepean River catchments, and further to the west is the Burragarang catchments, and to the North East is the Woronora catchments. I have three children, twelve grandchildren and three great granddaughters.

I am currently the Chair of ACHAC, (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee) to the Minister. I am also an Aboriginal representative on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee. I am a member of the Camden Heritage Committee and on the Board of the Ngungulla Art Centre at Bowral. And of course, more recently the Water NSW RAP Group.

In the past I was a member of the NPWS Regional Advisory Committees in my area, but they have changed so many times in the last couple of years, that I know live in the Blue Mountains Branch. I have served two terms with the NPWS Advisory Council. I have been a member of Tharawal LALC since 1992 and have held positions of Chairperson, Treasurer and Deputy Chairperson.

I have been a member of the Pheasants Nest Rural Fire Brigade since 1979, becoming a Life Member in 2004. I am currently the President and served as Secretary for nearly twenty-five years. I am no longer an active firefighter, being a Deputy for nearly thirty years.

I have worked in the Cultural Heritage space for thirty years as an on-ground site officer.

I have traditional and historic links to all three catchments, which surround my traditional Country.

Mr Jason Ford

Operations Manager, **Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations**
Director and Cultural Consultant, **Dhirranggal Solutions**
Cultural Advisor, **Ngemba Community Working Party**
Ngemba Delegate, **Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations**

I have over 15 years' experience in Natural Resource Management, including First Nations water management and policy in the Murray Darling Basin. As a Ngemba traditional owner and delegate on the Northern Basins Aboriginal Nations board, I have advocated for the water rights of my people, including the preservation, cultural management and ownership of water bodies on Ngemba Country and across the Murray Darling Basin.

As both an independent cultural advisor and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the Department of Primary Industries, I have led groups in the use of First Nations science for management of water systems and riparian zones. In the past five years, I have taken a lead role in developing culturally appropriate research and consultation protocols for First Nations engagement with government.

As the director of cultural consultancy company Dhirranggal Solutions, I developed a culturally appropriate consultation methodology for the New South Wales Department of Industry to conduct First

Nations consultation for the development of Water Resource Plans in accordance with the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Also, as part of Dhirranggal, I have contributed to the Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement and the application of its principles at international, national and state levels.

In all of my work, both personally and professionally, I am committed to advancing the cultural, social and economic development of First Nations people, whether it be through influencing the development of policy or building better management practices in collaboration with both government and Non-government organisations.

I have also presented in international and national contexts at conferences on Indigenous Data Sovereignty. I have co-authored several consultation reports for the NSW Department of Industry and honed my written communication skills in roles for both government and non-government organisations.





Ms Leanne Hampton

Councillor Leeanne Hampton, **Councillor for the Wiradjuri Region, NSW Aboriginal Land Council**

Leeanne has been a lifelong resident of West Wyalong and is a descendent of the Ngiyampaa/Wiradjuri peoples of NSW.

Leeanne ran a successful business in West Wyalong for 5 years before moving on to become CEO of West Wyalong Local Aboriginal Land Council (WWLALC) for over 12 years.

During this time, she devoted a great deal of time educating herself in, engaging in and undertaking Cultural Heritage protection, maintenance, and promotion activities within West Wyalong LALCs boundaries and within Wiradjuri Nation.

In 2019 Leeanne went on to win the NSW Aboriginal Land Council elections to become Councillor for Wiradjuri Region.

She now has 21 Local Aboriginal Land Councils within her region that she assists in reaching and maintaining their aspirations within their Community Land and Business Plans while also representing their needs at the State level.

Leeanne has recently completed a 4-year term on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee which involved providing advice to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding the nomination of Aboriginal Places, and other activities aimed at the protection of Aboriginal Cultural values throughout NSW.



Mr Rene Woods (Co-Chair – RAP)

Murray Darling Basin Authority Board Member.

Conservation Officer, **The Nature Conservancy.**

Vice-chairperson of the **Hay Local Aboriginal Land Council.**

Toogimbie **IPA advisory group.**

NSW Aboriginal Fishing Council

Advisor to **Murray Darling Wetlands Watering Group**

Rene Woods is a Nari Nari man from southwest New South Wales. He has had a long involvement Gayini (water) for Aboriginal people across the Basin. He grew up on the Murrumbidgee River where the river was always central to his family, his community, and their way of life.

Rene is a strong advocate for First Nations people in the Basin and has worked in communities in both the public and non-government organisation sectors of the Basin. He is currently employed by the Nature Conservancy Australia as a Conservation Officer and has seen what can happen for communities that have Gayini and land under their ownership and control.

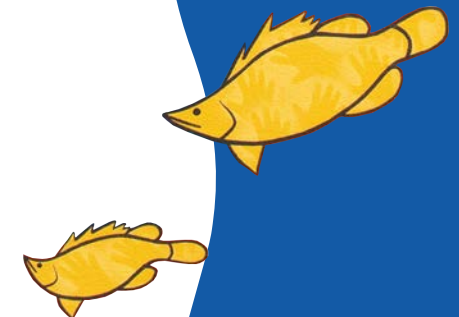
He believes that together we can achieve a strong healthy river system and healthier communities. He works with his Nari Nari Elders to make sure their views are incorporated into Gayini (water) planning within the state and Basin.

He previously held the position of chairperson of the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (2018 to 2020). He has also been vice-chair of the Nari Nari Tribal Council. He has also held several other positions including with New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Aboriginal Water Initiative (2013 to 2016) and Murrumbidgee Valley Water NSW Customer Advisory Group (2018 to 2020).

Rene was also a member of the National Cultural Flows Research Committee (2013 to 2018) and was a panel member of Former Minister Littleproud's Independent Panel for the Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions of Murray–Darling Basin communities.

Rene was the first Aboriginal person appointed to the Murray Darling Basin Authority Board Member in December 2020.

Rene is based on country in Hay South West NSW.





Ms Shayrn Halls

Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement Committee.

Secretary/ Heritage Project Manager **Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc**

Chairperson of the **Gully Traditional Owners Inc. (Katoomba Aboriginal Mission area)**

Member of **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Greater Blue Mountains area**

My name is Sharyn Halls, I am an Elder of the Gundungurra People. My family history traces back to the Burragorang Valley and Katoomba Mission (The Gully). As a founding member of Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc, I was part of the decision making to map our Country and waterways. This is a crucial part of protecting our Cultural sites, Cultural Landscapes, Waterways, all the land and elements (including all the plant and animal species) that fall within Gundungurra Country. We have been doing this for 16 years, to date, and we are still mapping Country (Ngunra).

Nine years ago, through mapping our Country, we took people from all walks of life on a 7-day hike along Ancestral Pathways from Katoomba to the Nepean River. Our aim was to help them appreciate and better understand Aboriginal connection to Country and Water. We have done this every year since (apart for the last two years due to COVID 19 restrictions). We look forward to offering it again as soon as when we can, due to the overwhelming success of the hike and the learnings.

I collaborate with Margot Law at Wingecarribee Shire around Koala Conservation and planting of habitat trees. I also work with SOS programs in the Gundungurra areas. I have been working with Pat Hall (National Parks) putting in Bush Tucker gardens in the Southern Highland schools; something I enjoy doing very much. Ten years ago, I started Garguree Swamp and Bushcare Group in The Gully, Katoomba, with David King a Gundungurra man David is a descendant of the Katoomba Mission families, who lived within the Upper Kedumba Catchment at Katoomba. Garguree Swamp and Bushcare Group plays a significant role in caring for Water and Country.

Each month we encourage families, including children, to help care for Country and learn about Katoomba's Aboriginal history and Culture, as well as how it connects to Sydney's drinking water supply. Other roles also include: Aboriginal Advisory **Council Blue Mountains City Council** and sit on **Local Land Services Committee for Greater Sydney.**

Mr Russell Hill

Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Projects & Programs **WaterNSW**

I'm a proud Wiradjuri man with family connection to Talbragar Mission Dubbo and Nanima Mission Wellington, I grew up on the Kalare "Lachlan" River country in a small regional town known as Forbes.

Growing up in Forbes was difficult at the time due to being only one of around 5 Aboriginal families who resided there during this period.

During my 33 years of employment, I have worked in or with Aboriginal communities and have obtained advanced cultural knowledge, skills, and experience through working in Aboriginal Engagement and Cultural Heritage Management.

I also have a deep passion and high-level experience in Project Management, Natural Resource Management and Community Development.

He previously held the position of Aboriginal Engagement Advisor with the Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (2003 to 2012) and as Aboriginal Engagement and Cultural Heritage Advisor with Santos Ltd (2012 to 2021).

Russell's is passionate about ensuring Aboriginal peoples have a voice in the water management space but is also excited about future opportunities for First Nations people through both Employment / Training and Procurement within WaterNSW.

First Nations people have a long history and a strong cultural, physically, and spiritually connection to the water and our river systems, their cultural knowledge towards the management of our waterways could be invaluable.





Mr David Hogan (Co-Chair – RAP)

Head of Community Engagement and Communications **WaterNSW**

I have had the great privilege of working closely with Aboriginal communities and groups throughout my various roles in my career to date. Early in my career I spent nearly 5 years directly working closely with the communities in northern NSW in regard to Aboriginal tourism and business development.

In my previous role as General Manager, Greater Sydney Local Land Services (LLS) we implemented a wide variety of projects and programs with Aboriginal communities, maintained an Aboriginal Advisory group to our Board and chaired the development of the first Local Land Services Reconciliation Action Plan.

We also developed a program supported by the NPWS, RFS and others to reintroduce Aboriginal Cultural Burning to areas within the Greater Sydney basin, supported by Australian Governments Landcare Program. This program spurred similar programs around the state with LLS. We also introduced immersive cultural awareness and training programs for all staff.

I have spent the majority of my career based in regional NSW and currently based in the Blue Mountains on Gundungurra country.

I have also travelled extensively throughout Australia particularly very remote regions and had very special opportunities to visit various sites of significance and spend time with community.

Supporting the development of this RAP for WaterNSW presents another significant opportunity to work with community to drive meaningful change and improve mutual understanding and respect.

Message from our RAP Co-Chairs

As Co-Chairs of the WaterNSW Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, it's been an incredible privilege of being part of a dedicated and enthusiastic group who have worked hard during 2021 to develop this Plan.

The diversity of experience, cultural knowledge and community linkages has been central to achieving the right plan for WaterNSW that reflects where they are in their reconciliation journey.

In any journey the first steps are often the most challenging and with the guidance from the entire RAP Working Group these steps have been supported and guided by a highly respected group of both external community leaders and internal Water NSW Aboriginal employees.

With the strong support of WaterNSW CEO, management and Board, the RAP Working Group was able to focus on the initiatives that will both benefit First Nations people, the organisation and provide the foundational capability within the organisation to make further steps into the future.

We would both like to acknowledge all the RAP Working Group participants and also acknowledge specifically, the work and support provided by WaterNSW Aboriginal Engagement Manager Russell Hill and RAP Project Support Officer Caroline Haddad for their support to the RAP Working Group over the past 6 months.



Mr David Hogan



Mr Rene Woods





Building Relationships

WaterNSW see the First Nations communities as a valuable knowledge holders within our operations and infrastructure areas. Their continued cultural, physical and spiritual connection to the lands and waters on which we operate is a valuable element within our Land and Water management process. We commit to continue engaging with First Nations peoples to discuss future land and water management through co-design principles and will provide opportunities for knowledge sharing which will deliver best practices in caring for country and on the organisations reconciliation journey.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Develop mutual relationships using culturally appropriate engagement and co-design principles with Aboriginal communities, stakeholders, and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, stakeholders and organisations within our operations and infrastructure areas.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Community Engagement
	Research best practice principles in collaboration with local Aboriginal Communities that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement / Support: Engagement Team
	Develop and promote local Aboriginal engagement strategy throughout regional NSW.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications
	Develop and implement culturally appropriate Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy throughout WaterNSW employees and contractors.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27 May - 3 June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Internal Communications team
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Community Engagement Team

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Community Engagement Team / Inclusion and Diversity Council
	Hold an internal NRW event for WaterNSW employees	27 May - 3 June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / People and Culture Team
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / CEO / Support: RAP Working Group / Internal Communications Team
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Community Engagement Team
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Community Engagement Team
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Inclusion and Diversity Council
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / General Manager– People and Culture / Support: RAP Working Group
5. Build and strengthen mechanisms for collaboration with Traditional Owners on water management.	Co-design a definition with Traditional Owners of what co-design is and how it should be delivered and implemented throughout WaterNSW.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group / Community Engagement Team and specific project teams
	Promote co-design principles throughout WaterNSW staff and workplaces.	August 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group



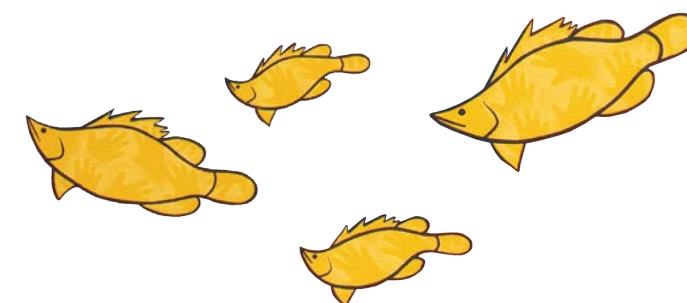


Building Respect

Their traditional practices and cultural knowledge towards land and water is invaluable and opportunity to share this knowledge will be provided to our employees, contractors, stakeholders, and partners.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Respecting diversity for all nations, provide localised On-Country cultural training for all staff.	February 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Development of a new Cultural Competency Program to engage with new starter etc.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: People and Culture Team
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: People and Culture Team
7. WaterNSW to support, sponsor, participate and help celebrate culturally appropriate events that are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Research and develop an annual calendar of First Nations events that WaterNSW may acknowledge within their operations and infrastructure areas.	March 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Increase employee participation and internal visibility at important First Nations events and milestones.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Encourage contractors to support and acknowledge significant First Nations events in matters consistent to WaterNSW RAP within their contracted area of activity.	Ongoing, Review June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: WaterNSW Procurement Team
8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians and Local Aboriginal Land Councils of the lands and waters where WaterNSW has operations and infrastructure areas.	August 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: All WaterNSW Employees
	In consultation with Traditional Owners, develop dual naming protocols for WaterNSW operations and infrastructure areas.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Build understanding, respect, and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories through celebrating NAIDOC week	Promote Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Protocols throughout WaterNSW and our contractors.	Ongoing, Review June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Investigate the installation of Acknowledgement of Country signage in all WaterNSW offices and at the front gates of our operations and infrastructure areas.	October 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Manager Property Fleet & Logistics
	Through engagement with First Nations peoples and Local Aboriginal Land Councils develop a table for WaterNSW assets and confirm their traditional country for future dual naming requirements.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Raise awareness and promote information amongst our staff and contractors about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs Support / Support: RAP Working Group WaterNSW Comms Team
	RAP Working Group Members to participate in an internal and external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group
	Introduce WaterNSW employees to NAIDOC Week by promoting external event in our operations and infrastructure areas.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group
	Promote WaterNSW Aboriginal employees on the WaterNSW intranet, Yammer and Corporate new letter during NAIDOC week promoting their roles and responsibility at WaterNSW and what NAIDOC and Culture mean to them.	July 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: WaterNSW Comms Team
	Develop an annual NAIDOC award for WaterNSW employees who demonstrate commitment of best practices in living our values whilst working in collaboration with an Aboriginal business/community to protect Aboriginal culture on a project.	May 2022	Acting Leadership & Capability Manager, Safety, People & Culture Manager





Building Opportunities

Land and Water has always been intrinsic to First Nation people, community and culture. Through this process we will ensure they continue to have a voice in the management and caring for country whilst economic opportunities are identified through employment, training, procurement, scholarships and engagement. WaterNSW has operations and Infrastructure areas all throughout NSW which ideally allows for First Nation people to remain on country managing land and water whilst gaining employment and improved outcomes for local communities.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within WaterNSW organisation.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: Procurement Team
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: Procurement Team
	Review employment policies to ensure sufficient flexibility to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, like preferencing experience over formal qualifications.	May 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: Procurement Team
	Monitor the application of recruitment processes and encourage the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: People & Culture Team



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement within WaterNSW organisation.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Procurement Team
	Identify procurement opportunities WaterNSW operations and infrastructure areas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, setting an appropriate target and deadline.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Procurement Team
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: Procurement Team
	Investigate and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander internal procurement database for internal and external usage.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: Procurement Team
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	November 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Manager Property Fleet & Logistics



Building Governance

Moving forward WaterNSW will build a governance framework that provides WaterNSW with an accurate tracking tool that records the engagement of First Nation communities/people at meetings, through employment and training, procurement, and any other business opportunities. The objectives of this will also be transferable onto any contractors engaged through WaterNSW. All collating data will then provide advice on areas where engagement is being undertaken, insufficient and maybe require further inclusion to ensure Aboriginal outcomes consistent with the deliverables in the Reflect RAP in our operations and infrastructure areas.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RAP Committee to govern RAP implementation.	August 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications
	Draft Term of reference for the RAP Working Group.	February 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group	February 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications
	RAP Working Group to meet quarterly to drive governance and implementation of the RAP.	April, July, October, and December 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: RAP Working Group
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Report RAP progress to our Board will be kept via CEO monthly reports	Monthly, Review June 2022	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications
	Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Support: ELT



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	April 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs / Head of Engagement and Communications
	Nominate a Board Member to be the RAP sponsor to drive approval and reporting to the board on the RAP implementation progress.	March 2022	Head of Engagement and Communications / Support: WaterNSW Board
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2022	Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Project & Programs

Review

First review date for the Reflect RAP will be undertaken in July 2022

Final review date for the Reflect RAP will be undertaken in December 2022

More information

We welcome your feedback and enquiries about our Reflect RAP.

For further information please contact:

Name: Russell Hill

Position: Aboriginal Engagement Manager – Projects & Programs

Email: russell.hill@waternsw.com.au

Mobile: 0467 818 683

This document has been printed by Spirit Creative Agency, Aboriginal owned business and Supply Nation accredited.

“Together we will walk as one”

