

# POSITION STATEMENT INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) recognises the role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples play as Australia's first traders, with a network of trading paths that have enabled the exchange of goods, knowledge and culture over land and sea for millennia.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land that we live, learn and work on, recognise connections to country, and pay our respects to all Elders past and present.

## CONTEXT

Equality is a fundamental human right for all and the retail sector has an important role to play in addressing inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, given the unique position we enjoy as a buyer, seller and employer in communities across the country.

According to the Australia Bureau of Statistics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 3.2% of Australia's population.

However, the most recent Closing the Gap Report confirms that Indigenous communities continue to be overrepresented in terms of adverse social and economic outcomes across a range of measures, with the most pronounced inequalities including the lack of universal access to healthcare, education and employment.

## POSITION

The ARA is committed to addressing inequality and playing a leading role in promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In line with our commitment to reconciliation, we support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the establishment of a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, which has majority support amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To meet these commitments, we need to recognise:

1. That reconciliation is a shared journey, requiring action by non-Indigenous people and continued generosity of spirit from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
2. That there is not one homogenous First Nations community, with differing views about reconciliation and recognition amongst First Nations people.
3. That there are differing views about reconciliation across the Australian community, including in the retail sector.

## ROLES

The ARA's role is to promote reconciliation within our sphere of influence. The ARA will use its position as Australia's largest peak body for the retail sector to:

- Lead the conversation about the positive role that retailers can play in promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- Contribute a whole-of-sector perspective to the national debate around reconciliation and the establishment of a First Nations Voice to Parliament;
- Provide information and resources to members, that they can share internally, to increase awareness about reconciliation and dispel misconceptions about the Voice;
- Emphasise the importance of creating safe environments and inclusive experiences for Indigenous employees, consumers and suppliers; and
- Facilitate collaboration and information-sharing between members to drive collective impact across the sector.

## ACTIONS

The ARA will also educate and engage members about the importance of the following internal actions.

1. Securing executive sponsorship to embed reconciliation into corporate culture, strategy and structures.
2. Listening to First Nations stakeholders about their perspectives on reconciliation and recognition.
3. Investing in training to build cultural competency.
4. Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to integrate the voice of First Nations people into culture and strategy.
5. Developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan that promotes respectful, mutually-beneficial relationships with First Nations peoples, communities and businesses.
6. Developing and implementing an Indigenous Employment Strategy to create meaningful career pathways.
7. Capturing information about the number of First Nations employees and their unique needs.
8. Establishing pathways for employees to become allies.
9. Creating safe and inclusive experiences for First Nations employees and customers.
10. Improving supplier diversity, encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting the re-emergence of First Nations traders by sourcing from majority-owned Indigenous businesses.
11. Marking First Nations days of significance in a respectful and culturally-sensitive manner.