



# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

AUSTRALIAN RETAILERS ASSOCIATION  
JULY 2022 – DECEMBER 2023



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

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**REFLECT**

# Our acknowledgment

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

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

## Our journey

When publishing a Reconciliation Action Plan it has become customary for organisations to commission a First Nations artist to produce artwork that represents that organisation's reconciliation journey.

The ARA looks forward to working with our First Nations Reference Group to commission a piece of art that reflects our journey.

In the interim, we use the colours, typefaces and graphic devices from the ARA's brand guidelines to demonstrate alignment and integration with our corporate strategy.



## CEO STATEMENT RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

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

The ARA 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 three million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

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

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

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables the ARA 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 the ARA, 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



## CEO STATEMENT AUSTRALIAN RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

One of the few positives to arise from the upheaval of the past few years has been the increased focus and commitment to address inequality across our community.

Even prior to the pandemic, Australia had started to embrace the global push towards gender equality, establish greater protections for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people and prioritise economic inclusion of marginalised members of our community. As these pressures have intensified in recent years, so too have expectations that retailers do more to support (and reflect) the communities they serve.

One uniquely Australian challenge when it comes to our sector's role in helping to build a more inclusive society is an authentic commitment to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The need for reconciliation is bedded in centuries of systematic racism, oppression and disposition of Australia's First Nations peoples, which has resulted in intergenerational inequity and inequality that continues to have profound impacts today.

For me, reconciliation is about acknowledging these injustices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and taking personal responsibility to drive positive change within one's sphere of influence.

For the ARA, our sphere of influence extends beyond our own operations to also include Australia's largest and most diverse group of retailers. As we are just starting on our reconciliation journey, we will initially focus on building our own capability, while also using our communication channels, events and advocacy efforts to build awareness and support for the positive role that retail can play in advancing reconciliation.

The ARA's RAP outlines our vision for reconciliation and the steps we will start to take in building mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders; increasing awareness of First Nations cultures, histories and knowledge; and creating opportunities for First Nations businesses, entrepreneurs, jobseekers and employees.

I commend the ARA's RAP to our members, retail community and stakeholders; and look forward to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians alike, to start bringing our vision for reconciliation to life.

**Paul Zahra**

Chief Executive Officer, Australian Retailers Association

# Our vision for reconciliation

In the retail context, we will have achieved reconciliation when there is equality between First Nations Australians and the broader community.

- First Nations people will have equal access to retail precincts and shops, without fear of racial profiling, harassment or discrimination.
- First Nations people see themselves reflected in the brands and businesses they shop with.
- Retail workers who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people will have equal access to meaningful vocational training and employment pathways, with representation in-line with the broader community.
- Retail businesses owned by First Nations people will have equal opportunity to grow their sales and profits, through all retail settings and channels, to support and empower the re-emergence of First Nations traders.
- First Nations suppliers will have equal access to markets for their products.

As we embark on our reconciliation journey, we will seek to understand how we can best support the **Closing the Gap National Agreement** with a focus on the following targets:

- Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives
- Youth are engaged in employment or education
- Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities
- Families and households are safe
- Cultures are strong, supported and flourishing

Members of ARA's Sustainability Advisory Committee have ranked reconciliation as a high priority for immediate action.

However, fewer than ten members currently have a RAP in place. At this stage, it is unclear how many ARA members are Indigenous-owned businesses.

# Our sector and membership

The ARA is Australia's oldest, largest and most diverse national retail body, representing a \$360 billion sector that employs 1.3 million Australians, as the largest private sector employer in the country.

As Australia's peak retail body, representing more than 100,000 retail shop fronts and online stores, the ARA informs, advocates, educates, protects and unifies our independent, national and international retail community.

Our members sell across all retail categories - from food to fashion, hairdressing to hardware, and cosmetics to computers. The ARA is proud to represent the rich diversity of the retail sector, including our small and medium sized members who make up 95% of our membership.

The ARA operates as a not-for-profit incorporated association and is governed by the Registered Organisations Commission (ROC). Our team of 35 employees works between our Melbourne office on Wurundjeri land, our Sydney office on Gadigal land, and from their homes across the country.

## Contact details

Jason Robertson  
Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact  
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# Our purpose and roles

The purpose of this RAP is to outline the initiatives that the ARA will implement over the 18 months between July 2022 and December 2023, to start building internal capability and start working towards our vision for reconciliation.

Our initial approach will be to focus on those things we can control ourselves to deliver against our own ambitions to: establish mutually-beneficial relationships; ensure respect between the ARA and First Nations stakeholders; create opportunities for First Nations employees and businesses; and ensure good governance.

These efforts will be driven by the ARA's Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact, who will play the role of RAP Champion to drive implementation of the ARA's RAP and increase awareness with employees and members

While the ARA's primary objective is to develop and implement our own RAP, we will also aim to engage with members and the sector where it is practical to do so.

In the short-term, others will be better placed to provide expert advice to members because we have only just embarked on our own reconciliation journey. So, we will initially play the role of an honest broker - connecting our members with information, partners and stakeholders who can help more retailers develop their own RAP.

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan



## Relationships

Establish mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and groups

Build relationships by commemorating National Reconciliation Week

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence

Promote reconciliation and positive race relations



## Respect

Increase understanding and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories and knowledge

Demonstrate respect by observing cultural protocols

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week

Identify and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates, activities or stories of significance



## Opportunities

Create offerings and forums to support First Nations retailers and enable the transfer of skills and knowledge

Improve employment outcomes for First Nations people through recruitment, retention and professional development

Increase supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes



## Governance

Establish an effective RAP Working Group to drive implementation of the RAP

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments

Build accountability and transparency by reporting achievements, challenges and learnings

## Guiding principles

Use our unique position in the sector to increase awareness about reconciliation

Use our influence and reach to unify our sector behind a common vision for change

Help members develop and deploy their own Reconciliation Action Plans

Facilitate collaboration between members

Provide guidance to help our members connect with First Nations communities and stakeholders



# Relationships

Action	Deliverables	Due dates	Accountability
<b>Action 1.1</b> Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	1.11 Establish the ARA's First Nations Reference Group, to provide guidance on issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters.	by July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.12 Conduct research to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and like-minded organisations we could collaborate with on our journey	by November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.13 Conduct research and work with the First Nations Reference Group to co-design best practice principles for stakeholder engagement, to help manage relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	by November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
<b>Action 1.2</b> Build relationships by commemorating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	1.21 Develop and execute campaign for National Reconciliation Week	by May 2023	Director of Marketing
	1.22 Promote NRW events, resources and materials with employees and members, through ARA's internal and external channels	May 2023 to June 2023	Director of Marketing
	1.23 Plan and execute one event during NRW for ARA employees. Invite a First Nations Elder to attend and participate in ARA event	March 2023 to June 2023	Director of Human Resources
	1.24 Ensure the RAP Working Group members attend at least one NRW event	May 2023	Director of Human Resources
	1.25 Encourage ARA council members and ARA employees to attend NRW events	May 2023	Director of Human Resources
<b>Action 1.3</b> Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	1.31 Develop and launch an ARA microsite for reconciliation, providing an online platform for member resources, achievements, news and events	July 2022	Director of Marketing
	1.32 Formalise mutually beneficial relationships between ARA and Reconciliation Australia and Supply Nation	July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.33 Develop and deploy an engagement plan that communicates the ARA's commitment to reconciliation to our employees, members and stakeholders	August 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.34 Start to engage government on reconciliation matters in our sphere of influence	August 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.35 Launch a peer learning network for members developing their own RAPs	May 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
<b>Action 1.4</b> Promote positive race relations	1.41 Conduct research and consultation to define best practice in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. Report to CEO and COO	by November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	1.42 Conduct a review of the ARA's human resources and procurement policies to identify and strengthen anti-discrimination provisions	by November 2022	Director of Human Resources Director of Finance
	1.43 Develop and deliver an awareness campaign that raises the profile of anti-discrimination with members, similar to the ARA's Aggressive Behaviour campaign. Consider Retail Institute opportunities for non-accredited training	May 2023	Director of Marketing Director of Retail Institute



# Respect

Action	Deliverables	Due dates	Accountability
<b>Action 2.1</b> Increase understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights	2.11 Add tiles on the ARA's reconciliation microsite linking to Reconciliation Australia' website and <a href="#">Share Our Pride</a> tool	July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	2.12 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation	August 2022	Director of Human Resources
	2.13 Include annual cultural awareness training as a minimum requirement for all ARA Council members and ARA employees. Provide new modules each year	January 2023	Director of Human Resources
	2.14 Work with the ARA's First Nations Reference Group to develop a style guide that protects against stereotypical representations of First Nations cultures, by focusing on achievements and using strong, positive language	by November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact Director of Marketing
	2.15 Present business case to appoint First Nations Advisor and develop retail-specific cultural awareness training through the Retail Institute	February 2023	Director of Retail Institute
	2.16 Plan for one event each year, showcasing First Nations retailers and suppliers	by July 2023	Director of Marketing
<b>Action 2.2</b> Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	2.21 Add Acknowledgement of Country to ARA email signatures	July 2022	Director of Human Resources
	2.22 Present findings from research conducted to develop an understanding of cultures, histories, knowledge and rights of the local Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, learn and work. Communicate with ARA employees	November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	2.23 Release a cultural protocol document with principles about when, where and how to use Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement to Country	November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	2.24 Socialise a list of First Nations organisations and local Elders to provide a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country at all major events	November 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	2.25 Conclude co-design process and Launch Acknowledgement of Country decal at each ARA location. Make available artwork for members to print and use	November 2022	Director of Marketing
<b>Action 2.3</b> Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	2.31 Raise awareness and share information about the meaning of NAIDOC Week, through the ARA's internal and external channels	July 2022 July 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	2.32 Encourage ARA Council, ARA Executive, ARA employees and RAP Working Group to attend at least one NAIDOC Week event	July 2022 July 2023	Director of Human Resources
	2.33 Plan and execute one event during NAIDOC Week for ARA employees	July 2023	Director of Marketing
<b>Action 2.4</b> Identify and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates, activities or stories of significance	2.41 Create a calendar of First Nations dates of significance. Outline ARA activations	August 2022	Director of Marketing
	2.42 Raise awareness about Close the Gap Day (21 March each year) and National Sorry Day (26 May each year) through ARA's internal and external channels, in a culturally-sensitive manner	March 2023, May 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact



## Opportunities

Action	Deliverables	Due dates	Accountability
<b>Action 3.1</b> Create offerings and forums to support First Nations retailers and enable the transfer of skills and knowledge	3.11 Launch campaign to identify First Nations retailers outside ARA's membership and seek nominations for the ARA Advisory Committee for First Nations retailers	July 2022	Director of Marketing
	3.12 Add field to member on-boarding, to provide members with the opportunity to identify as Indigenous-owned, in-line with Supply Nation's verification criteria	July 2022	Director of Member Services
	3.13 Start to offer free ARA membership to new First Nations retailers for one year, with unrestricted access to the ARA's full suite of offerings and content	July 2022	Director of Member Services
	3.14 Establish ARA Advisory Committee for First Nations Retailers, to identify issues for Indigenous-owned retail businesses and formulate industry responses	July 2022	Director of Member Services
	3.15 Work with Supply Nation, local chambers of commerce, business hubs and business networks to identify ARA members who are First Nations retailers	October 2022	Director of Member Services
	3.16 Present business case for establishing formal mentoring program, connecting members of ARA Advisory Committee for First Nations Retailers with mentors from the ARA membership, and providing support and training for mentors	February 2023	Director of Member Services
	3.17 Nominate one First Nations retailer to serve as an ARA Council Advisor. Support with mentoring from ARA Council members with training for mentors	February 2023	CEO
<b>Action 3.2</b> Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	3.21 Put systems in place to capture information about the number of ARA employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	August 2022	Director of Human Resources
	3.22 Include "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply" in the template for all job advertisements for ARA roles	August 2022	Director of Human Resources
	3.23 Engage Career Trackers and agree to host one intern per year	November 2022	Director of Human Resources
	3.24 Scale-up the ARA's vocational training program tailored for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers, supported by community mentoring.	from January 2023	Director of Retail Institute
	3.25 Add section on reconciliation microsite, showcasing successful vocational training, upskilling and employment outcomes for First Nations people	May 2023	Director of Marketing
	3.26 Conduct research and report on barriers to increasing First Peoples' representation in senior retail roles	July 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
<b>Action 3.3</b> Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	3.31 Become a member of Supply Nation and encourage the procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	3.32 Launch campaign promoting Supply Nation, local place-based chambers of commerce, business hubs and business networks with ARA members	August 2022	Director of Marketing
	3.33 Conduct and report on review of ARA procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to procuring from First Nations businesses	March 2023	Director of Finance



# Governance

Action	Deliverables	Due dates	Accountability
<b>Action 4.1</b> Establish an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive implementation of the RAP	4.11 Agree the purpose, role and scope of the RAP Working Group	July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.12 Schedule the first monthly meeting of the RAP Working Group to prioritise initiatives, confirm status of initiatives, and track issues, risks and opportunities	July 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.13 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and voice on RAP Working Group, through ARA employees or self-nominated ARA members	August 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
<b>Action 4.2</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	4.21 Outline implementation plan to optimise use of existing ARA resources	August 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.22 Establish systems and ways of working to efficiently track implementation	September 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.23 Commence quarterly consultation with stakeholders to assess implementation of RAP activities	September 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
<b>Action 4.3</b> Build accountability and transparency by reporting achievements, challenges and learnings	4.31 Track and measure implementation of RAP activities. Report to Steering Committee four times per annum, including annual updates in September	from September 2022	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.32 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	September 2022 September 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact
	4.33 Include delivery status of RAP in Executive KPIs for Chair of Working Group	July 2023	Director of Finance
	4.34 Register via Reconciliation Australia website to begin developing our next RAP	September 2023	Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact

## RAP Working Group

Meets once per month to drive design and delivery of RAP activities

Chair of RAP Working Group | Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact

First Nations Representatives | ARA employees or self-nominated ARA members

Policy Manager  
Policy Adviser

Director of  
Marketing  
(or delegate)

Director of  
Human Resources  
(or delegate)

Director of  
Member Services  
(or delegate)

Director of  
Retail Institute  
(or delegate)

## RAP Steering Committee

Meets once per quarter to oversee delivery

Chair of RAP Steering Committee | ARA CEO

Members of ARA First Nations Reference Group

ARA Chief Operating  
Officer (or delegate)

ARA Chief Industry Affairs  
Officer (or delegate)

# Our key stakeholders and collaborators

## Our RAP Working Group

Our working group has been drawn from First Nations representatives from our major members and a cross-section of the broader Australian community from our ARA's membership and team with an interest in delivering on our vision for reconciliation.

**Thank you to the working group who supported the development of this RAP.**

**Eloise Bishop**

Head of Sustainability, Country Road Group and David Jones

**Lauren Coyne**

Sourcing Specialist, Super Retail Group

**Tony Dunseath**

VP Marketing Director, TJ Maxx Australia

**Anne Gonzalez**

General Manager Reconciliation, Woolworths Group

**Michelle Matthews**

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs Manager, Bunnings

**Bayley Mifsud**

National Indigenous Engagement Lead, Officeworks

**Kate Thiedeman**

Head of Community, Kmart Group

**Yvonne Chow**

Human Resources Manager, ARA

**Amy Melsom**

Community and Content Specialist, ARA

**Jason Robertson**

Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact, ARA

**Jihad Youssef**

Employment Services Manager, ARA

**Going forward, our RAP Working Group will be drawn from within the ARA, with support from First Nations representatives from our membership.**

**Lisa Brown**

Policy Manager, ARA

**Sam Doyle**

Policy Advisor, ARA

**Amy Melsom**

Community and Content Specialist, ARA

**Caroline Mews**

Regional Manager, ARA Retail Institute

**Joanne Phillips**

Director of Member Services, ARA

**Jason Robertson**

Director of Policy, Sustainability and Impact, ARA

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**First Nations member representatives**

**Gael Duff**

Indigenous Affairs Manager, Kmart Group

**Clint Johnson**

National Indigenous Engagement Manager, Woolworths Group

**Bayley Mifsud**

National Indigenous Engagement Lead, Officeworks

## Our First Nations Reference Group

Drawn from our Advisory Committee for First Nations Retailers and First Nations representatives from our major retailers to ensure First Nations voices and perspectives are heard by the ARA.

### First Nations Reference Group

#### ARA Advisory Committee for First Nations Retailers

new advisory committee open to any ARA member operating an Indigenous-owned retail business

#### First Nations member representatives

insights and expertise from First Nations business owners would be supplemented by First Nations representatives from the ARA's largest members, who have played a critically important role in the development of this RAP

Delivery overseen by Steering Committee