

Reconciliation Action Plan

Nov 2021 - Nov 2022

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The Commission understands that reconciliation is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people moving together on a shared path. One which acknowledges the reasons why there are differences and divisions in the first place and one which helps us move past that and towards building relations that work towards putting an end to racism and discrimination. By building and strengthening these relations, we are working to grow equity, unity, and equality.



From the Artist

Brooke Sutton is a 17-year-old contemporary Indigenous artist from the Kalkadoon people from the Mount Isa area in Queensland.

“This artwork represents ESCOSA, where they work and the services they provide. The leaves, flowers, mountains, and hills represent South Australia in which ESCOSA is located.


The large community symbol in the centre of the painting represents ESCOSA and their main office in South Australia.

The lightning, waterholes, and green dots throughout the centre three rings represents the three main services provided, electricity, water and gas.

The U symbols around the community symbol represents the people who work within these services.

The sun represents the bright future that ESCOSA creates and the handprints in the bottom right corner represents ESCOSA providing advice to the South Australian Government, the Commission acts and exercising powers.”



The background of the entire page is a rich, multi-colored Aboriginal artwork. It features a complex arrangement of symbols and patterns. A prominent feature is a large white triangle on a blue circular background, which is repeated in smaller sizes. Other elements include concentric circles, wavy lines, and various geometric shapes in shades of blue, purple, pink, and green. The artwork is highly detailed, with many small dots and lines creating a textured effect. The overall composition is dense and visually striking.

The Commission acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as the State's First Peoples, nations and Traditional Owners of South Australian land and waters. We recognise their unique cultural heritage, customs, spiritual beliefs, and relationship with the land are of ongoing importance today. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Essential Services Commission of South Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia 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 over 2.3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

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

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

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

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

This Reflect RAP enables the Essential Services Commission of South Australia 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 Essential Services Commission of South Australia, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Message from the CEO

It is always easy to say that we are 'proud', 'pleased' or 'delighted' when announcing a corporate commitment to something as important as a Reconciliation Action Plan. But honesty matters, right? And we need to be honest with ourselves, each other and our community. So, while those things are true, as I think about it all there is a far wider range of feelings at play in my mind, including ignorance, remorse, anger, apprehension and hope.

Ignorance: It is easy to skate across the surface of or give lip-service to the ill and inequitable treatment, broad-ranging abuse, dispossession and denigration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – over time and even, sadly, today. But to truly understand where we need to go, we need to understand where we have been. So as we start this genuine commitment to reconciliation, we all need to listen, learn and understand not merely 'what happened' as a series of events but instead focus on more fundamental issues: 'how did we get here?', 'what does it mean?', 'how has it affected people?' and 'what can we do for a better future?' We have to accept and correct our ignorance – with humility and compassion.

Remorse: As we challenge ourselves to understand more and better, we need to acknowledge that we, today, cannot unmake, undo or expunge the injustices of the past. But we can, and

should, feel and show remorse, sorrow and sadness for the wrongs, the hurt and the physical and emotional pain and suffering inflicted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over many generations.

Anger: At the same time, we may feel a sense of anger at those responsible and at the social, political and moral circumstances which made their actions 'ok', whether through ignorance, indifference or ill-intent. And we may feel anger at the lives lost, torn or wasted as a result of those actions. We have to recognise these feelings – but we cannot let anger govern our future.

Apprehension: We all have a responsibility to move towards a better future through this reconciliation process. In doing so, we may feel apprehensive. What if I am, or am seen to be, merely 'tokenistic'? What if I get this wrong? What if I can't persuade others to come along? These are reasonable concerns – but if we don't take the first step, we can't take the second. The issue we are facing is too important and we can't let fear of failure stop us.

Hope: Having hope matters. Without hope, we just go about our task, indifferent to the outcome. Hope gives us the fire and the determination to see things through, and gets us up and going in the hard times. While having hope doesn't guarantee success, in its absence, success is just that much harder. So we should all

have hope that, through genuine reconciliation, we will make a better future – and that future will not be far-away in time.

So why does our Reconciliation Action Plan matter? First and foremost, reconciliation matters. Reconciliation is a deliberate and layered thing: it is about both being honest about the past and coming together to create a better future for all Australians, which is underpinned by mutual respect, equality and unity. We must understand and own these concepts.

Second, an action plan matters. Too often we see lists of good intentions – those are not plans. A plan is something which we can all buy into, contribute to and work within to deliver a successful outcome. Our plan is clear and is a binding commitment - we must be accountable for it and deliver what we have promised.

If we do all of that, we can make a difference. And while we at the Essential Services Commission might only be a small team, we can make a difference. We can make changes, we can influence others... we can be *leaders*.

Adam Wilson
Chief Executive Officer
The Essential Services Commission of South Australia





Our Business

The Commission was established in 2002 under the *Essential Services Act 2002* to protect the long-term interests of South Australian consumers with respect to price, quality, and reliability of essential services. We add benefit to the South Australian community by ensuring that consumers are adequately protected and that entities are accountable for their services, while not imposing unnecessary regulatory costs and burdens.

Our robust, independent advice to Government informs and provides an evidence base for policy making and public consideration of economic and regulatory issues. We accomplish this with our current 32 staff members, one of whom identifies as a Dunghutti man, from our office in Adelaide, South Australia.

Our RAP

Our RAP journey so far has just begun. The Commission has made a commitment to diversity and inclusion and understands that there are considerations and approaches to ensuring that the different needs and requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged and considered.

We believe that our reconciliation journey must be sincere and meaningful and as such, believe that a tailored and impactful RAP will benefit the organisation and align with our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Our RAP will be championed by our Director, People and Corporate, Rachel Thamm. Rachel will take the lead in driving internal engagement, awareness and delivery of our RAP. We also hope to lead positive change within our sphere of influence and establish beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses.





Our Reconciliation Journey

Our previous partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been limited. After facing the challenges of COVID-19 throughout 2020 and 2021, it is our intention to expand our reach and build meaningful relationships and strengthen our ties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, individuals and organisations.

We have also reflected upon what reconciliation activities and initiatives we have participated in and acknowledge that our involvement has not been enough. We have decided to begin some actions before we implement this RAP such as an Acknowledgement of Country in all staff meetings and commencing the implementation of a three-stage cultural awareness, development and consolidation program.

Relationships



- 1 **Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.**
 - a. Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders within our local area or sphere of influence.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
 - b. Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
- 2 **Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)**
 - a. Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.
Timeline: April 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer
 - b. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NRW event.
Timeline: 2 May - 3 June 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer
 - c. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.
Timeline: 2 May - 3 June 2022
Responsibility: Director, People and Corporate

Relationships



- 3 **Promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence**
 - a. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.
Timeline: Dec 2021
Responsibility: Director, People and Corporate
 - b. Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
 - c. Identify others with RAPs and like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
- 4 **Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies**
 - a. Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.
Timeline: July 2022
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer
 - b. Conduct a review of policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.
Timeline: July 2022
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer

Relationships



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Establish and maintain a relationship with Reconciliation SA

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| a. Purchase Reconciliation SA Gold membership annually.
Timeline: Aug 2022
Responsibility: Licensing Administrator | b. Participate in reconciliation activities and drives throughout the year.
Timeline: Ongoing Review July 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer |
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Respect



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Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

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| a. Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.

Timeline: Dec 2021
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer | b. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.

Timeline: March 2022
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer |
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Respect



7

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

- a. Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our Organisations operational area.
Timeline: Feb 2022
Responsibility: Licensing Administrator
- b. Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgements of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.
Timeline: Jan 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer
- c. Implement an Acknowledgement of Country in all staff meetings and when appropriate.
Timeline: Nov 2021
Responsibility: Director, People and Corporate

Respect



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

- a. Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
- b. Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer
- c. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.
Timeline: First week in July 2022
Responsibility: Senior Project Operations Officer

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Visibly demonstrate respect for local Aboriginal cultures in our workplace.

- a. Consult with Traditional Owners around updating our meeting rooms to respectfully utilise local Aboriginal language.
Timeline: Feb 2022
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer
- b. Change names of meeting rooms to their original Kurna names.
Timeline: Feb 2022
Responsibility: People and Corporate Officer

Opportunities



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Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.

- a. Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.
Timeline: July 2022
Responsibility: Manager, People and Corporate
- b. Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.
Timeline: July 2022
Responsibility: Manager, People and Corporate
- c. Explore the use of the State Government Indigenous Employment Register for future recruitment activities.
Timeline: Nov 2022
Responsibility: Manager, People and Corporate

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Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

- a. Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business.
Timeline: June 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer
- b. Investigate Supply Nation membership.
Timeline: Feb 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer

Governance



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Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

- a. Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.
Timeline: Nov 2021
Responsibility: Operations Officer
- b. Draft a terms of Reference for the RWG
Timeline: Nov 2021
Responsibility: Operations Officer, Manager, People and Corporate
- c. Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG
Timeline: Nov 2021
Responsibility: Operations Officer

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Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP Commitments.

- a. Define resource needs for RAP implementation.
Timeline: Nov 2021
Responsibility: Operations Officer
- b. Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.
Timeline: Dec 2021
Responsibility: Director, People and Corporate
- c. Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.
Timeline: Feb 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer

Governance



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Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.

- a. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia
Timeline: 30 Sept 2022
Responsibility: Manager, People and Corporate

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Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

- a. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.
Timeline: Aug 2022
Responsibility: Operations Officer

Contact Officer Reconciliation Officer

Contact Email reconciliation@escosa.sa.gov.au

Contact Number 08 8463 4444







RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



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