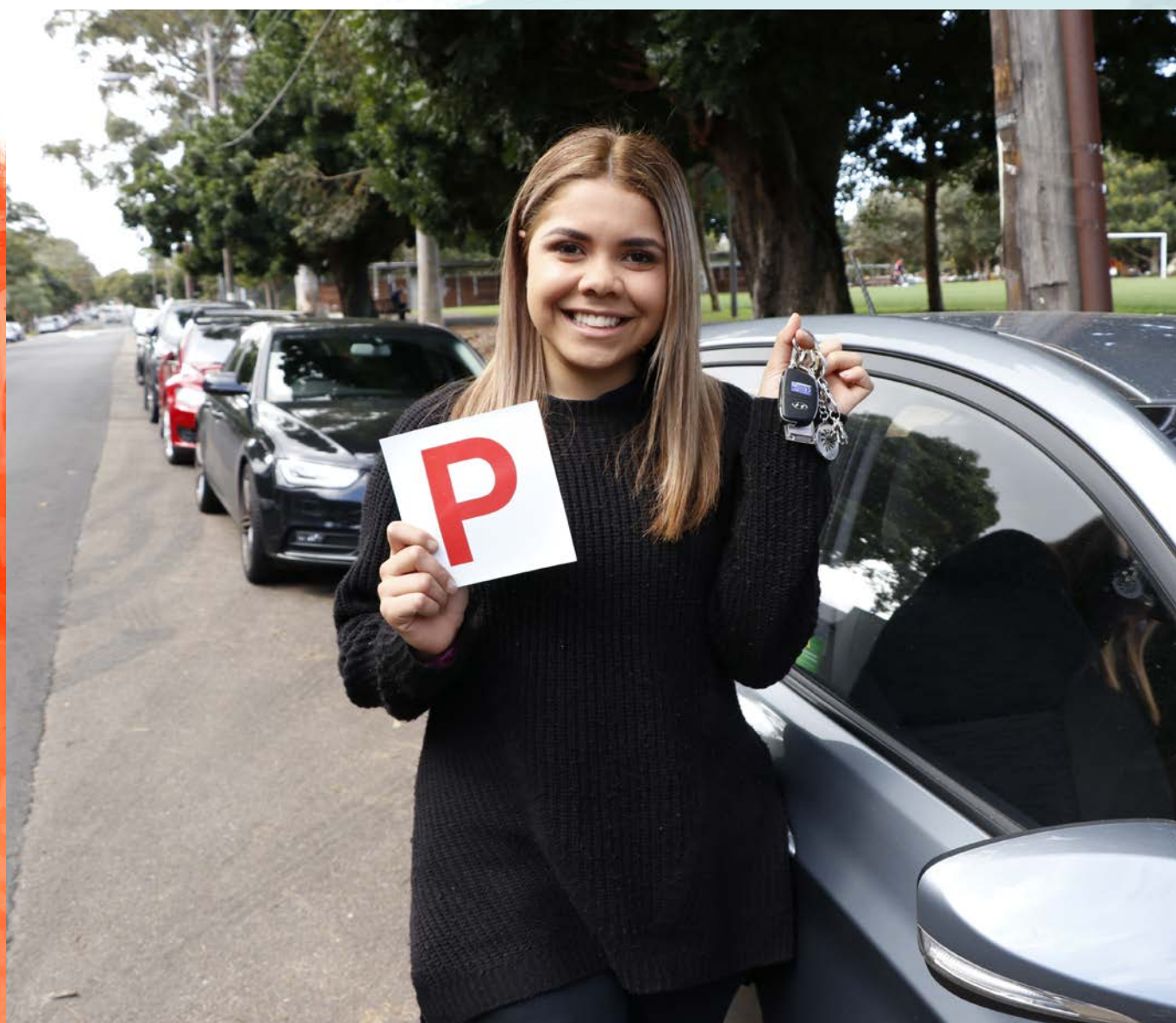


# 2020 RAP IMPACT REPORT

**Capturing the data, stories and progress of the  
Reconciliation Action Plan program**



**RECONCILIATION**  
AUSTRALIA





**RECONCILIATION**  
AUSTRALIA

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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of Country and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

**Cover image:** WestConnex Indigenous Driver participant. Photo: Transurban

# 2019-2020—A BIG YEAR FOR RECONCILIATION

**Reconciliation Australia exists to foster genuine, lasting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of Australia. This year—despite the impacts of pandemic and economic recession—that work continued to succeed and grow.**

Key to this is the **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)** program. We work with organisations of every kind to embed the principles and purpose of reconciliation in the way they function, engage their staff and interact with the community and other organisations.

More than 1,100 organisations—large, small, private sector, public and NGOs—have joined us to develop a RAP tailored to their own work, people and needs.

The RAP program unites them all and gives them a set of shared values and goals. Our RAP partners comprise a vast community and collaborative effort to take Australia forward into a just, equitable and reconciled future.

Close to 3 million Australians now work or study within an organisation that has an active RAP. Almost 3 million more are members of organisations which have RAPs, such as sporting clubs.

This huge, influential reach grows year on year. It advances the great national aspiration of a multicultural Australia that is reconciled with its true history and the fact that we all live and work on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.

RAP partners are changing Australia from the ground up. They are changing attitudes, building long-term connections and ‘moving from safe to brave’ on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This report describes the substantial impact of all that activity across all those Australian walks of life in the year to June 2020.

## **Karen Mundine**

Chief Executive Officer





# RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia promotes and facilitates respect, trust and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

**Our vision** is for a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

**Our purpose** is to inspire and enable all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation.

# WHAT IS RECONCILIATION BUILT ON?

Reconciliation Australia understands and measures progress towards reconciliation through five interrelated dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance.

## Race Relations

All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships that are based on trust and respect and free of racism.

## Equality and Equity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.

## Unity

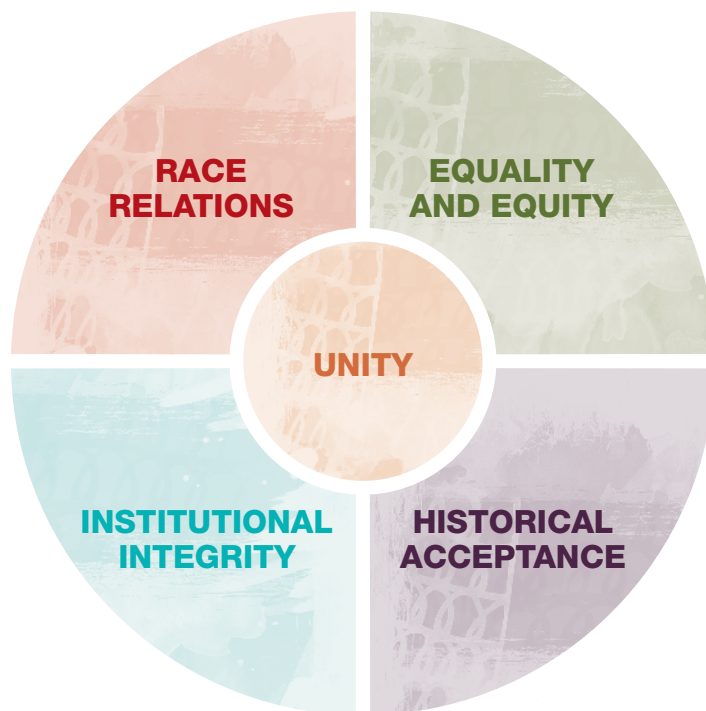
An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.

## Institutional Integrity

The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.

## Historical Acceptance

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past that occurred, and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices and ensures these wrongs are never repeated.



These five dimensions do not exist in isolation; they are interrelated and Australia can only achieve full reconciliation if we progress in all five.

With a growing network of RAP partners, real strides are being made towards an Australia in which the goals of the five dimensions are realised and embedded in the fabric of our nation.

# RAPS IN ACTION

**RAP organisations commit to an ongoing journey that begins with a Reflect or Innovate RAP and progresses as the organisation learns and grows.**

This journey develops from first creating a 'safe space' for reconciliation to flourish then entering the 'brave space' of difficult conversations and tricky real-world organisational challenges.

While there are short-term wins on every RAP journey, we are in it for the long haul and ask our RAP partners to join us on the road to a better future for all Australians.

All RAP types are equally valuable and together they provide a structure through which organisations can evolve, develop and grow their part in the reconciliation movement.

Underpinning all RAPs are the core pillars of:

- **Relationships**
- **Respect**
- **Opportunities**
- **Governance**

## RAPs come in four types:

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### **Reflect RAP – scoping**

The first step to prepare for reconciliation initiatives. Allows time to scope and nurture relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, determine your individual vision for reconciliation and understand your sphere of influence.

### **Stretch RAP – embedding**

With strategies well-developed and an active approach to promoting reconciliation among staff and within your sphere of influence, you're ready to stretch out to longer term strategies and clear, measurable goals. Stretch RAPs embed reconciliation initiatives throughout the organisation, with many becoming business as usual.

### **Innovate RAP – implementing**

Articulates practical actions to achieve your organisation's particular vision for reconciliation and focusses on strengthening relationships, engaging staff in the process and trying innovative approaches to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Elevate RAP – leadership**

A leading cohort of influential organisations seeking to fill a gap in the reconciliation movement, Elevate RAP partners are active champions of the program and set standards for ongoing excellence. They also open themselves to greater accountability via independent audits of their RAP activities.

# RAPS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE —HERE’S HOW WE KNOW

**Reconciliation Australia monitors attitudes to reconciliation in Australia with two major national surveys conducted every two years.**

- **Workplace RAP Barometer (WRB)** – measures perceptions and attitudes in participating RAP organisations
- **Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB)** – tracks those same perceptions and attitudes across the whole Australian community.

These studies have been done since 2012 and 2008 respectively, providing a valuable means to track progress over time. By comparing results for the most recent studies (conducted in 2020) the value and impact of the RAP program is revealed.

The 2020 WRB features responses from 28,043 people across 92 organisations, up 40 per cent from the previous report in 2018. The survey was conducted as the COVID-19 health

crisis was unfolding across Australia, with its huge impact on workplaces everywhere.

Additionally, the surveys were run during and after the resounding impacts of global and Australian Black Lives Matter movements and large demonstrations across the country.

Augmenting these studies was the:

- **RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire** – which collected data from 756 RAP organisations in the July 2019 to June 2020 reporting period.

Together, the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and Workplace RAP Barometer—with comparative data from the Australian Reconciliation Barometer—provide the evidence base supporting the RAP program and its increasingly strong results.

## RAPs in the world:

### TRANSURBAN INNOVATE RAP

One of Transurban’s RAP commitments is to proactively address transport-related social issues.

Through its role delivering WestConnex, Australia’s largest road infrastructure project, a partnership was formed with the KARI Foundation, which led to the establishment of the WestConnex Indigenous Driver Program.

The program supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to get their driver’s licence through mentoring, educational support and other practical assistance. It is free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth from disadvantaged backgrounds living in South Western Sydney.

Since the program began, 107 young people have gained provisional licences. Of these, 56 have subsequently got jobs.

More than 141 young people have gained their learner licence.

The KARI Foundation also provided support to Transurban during the opening of their two major infrastructure projects in 2020, the WestConnex M8 and NorthConnex, with the KARI Signers and KARI Dancers performing an Acknowledgement of Country for both of the virtual opening events.



WestConnex Indigenous Driver participant.  
Photo: Transurban



# RAPS IN STATS —THE PHENOMENAL BENEFITS DRIVEN BY RAPS

Many of the outcomes gleaned from the 2020 **RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire** are remarkable and might surprise even some of our stakeholders and RAP partner organisations.

Our core pillars—relationships, respect, opportunities, and governance—supported the following results last year. These are the fantastic combined efforts of all 756 RAP organisations which responded to the questionnaire.



## Relationships



**6,483** Formal partnerships

**7,422** Informal partnerships

existed between RAP organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations



**2,915**

**National Reconciliation Week events** hosted



**\$49,155,196**

**Donated** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations



## Respect



**7,425**

employees participated in **cultural immersion**



**48,067**

employees took part in **face-to-face cultural learning**



**250,683**

employees took part in **cultural e-learning**



**67%**

**of organisations changed services and/or practices** because of having a RAP



## RAPs in the world:

### ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INNOVATE RAP

Each year the Art Gallery of South Australia stages the Tarnanthi festival of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. For artists, Tarnanthi builds relationships and ensures respect, recognition and empowerment by listening to what artists want to achieve and guaranteeing them control of their projects at all stages.

*Blood Money Currency Exchange Terminal*, by Marri Ngarr artist Ryan Presley, was a participatory installation that recreated a currency exchange booth during Tarnanthi 2019. Visitors could exchange Australian dollars for various denominations of 'Blood Money Dollars'. These were limited-edition banknote-size prints of works from Presley's series of watercolour paintings that present Aboriginal leaders, warriors, advocates and writers as figures worthy of national commemoration.

*Blood Money Currency Exchange Terminal* raised more than \$32,000, which was donated towards Aboriginal-led non-profit organisations Ceduna Youth Hub and Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi.

*Tarnanthi* is presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia with Principal Partner BHP and support from the Government of South Australia.



Ryan Presley with his work *Blood Money Currency Exchange Terminal*, Tarnanthi 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia. Photo: Saul Steed



## Opportunities



**63,973**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff **employed in RAP organisations**



**\$2,086,255,726**

**procured** from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses



**\$24,517,123**

was invested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through **educational scholarships**



**\$50,241,753**

**of pro bono services** provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, organisations or communities



**\$27,606,796**

contributed to organisations which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

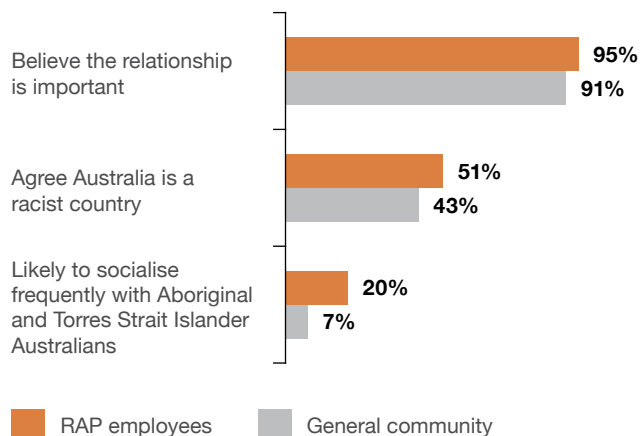
# 2020 BAROMETERS SHOW SUPPORT FOR PROGRESS IS RISING

Key findings of the 2020 Workplace RAP Barometer and Australian Reconciliation Barometer surveys, within Reconciliation Australia's five dimensions of reconciliation, are summarised below.

## Race Relations

**All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships that are based on trust and respect and free of racism.**

Almost all employees of RAP partner organisations believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important. They are also more aware of the real-world impact of racism on people's lives.



## Equality and Equity

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.**

RAP employees enthusiastically support opportunities that promote equity, such as in employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and procuring from First Nations businesses.



## RAPs in the world:

### DELOITTE STRETCH RAP

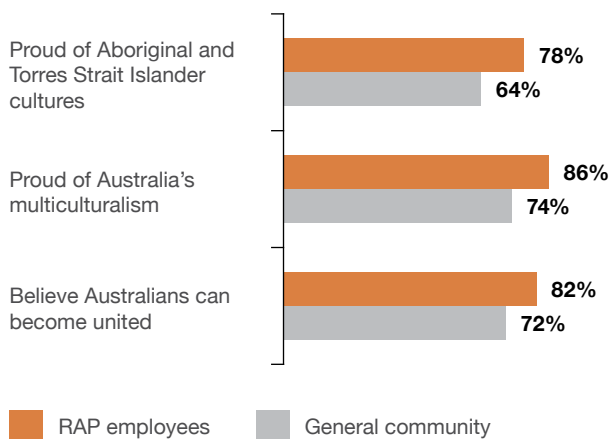
'As an original member of Deloitte's RAP Working Group, I have been inspired to see the increased awareness of and sensitivity to the need for reconciliation with First Nations communities. When I joined Deloitte ten years ago, overall knowledge of Indigenous history and culture was at a low level. As we move through our third 'Stretch' RAP, guided by our Indigenous Leadership Group, I believe there is now a discernible enthusiasm for learning, and commitment to authentic engagement from the most senior levels of the firm to the most junior.'

— Shehara Wijayapala, Senior Manager, Responsible Business, Deloitte.

## Unity

**An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.**

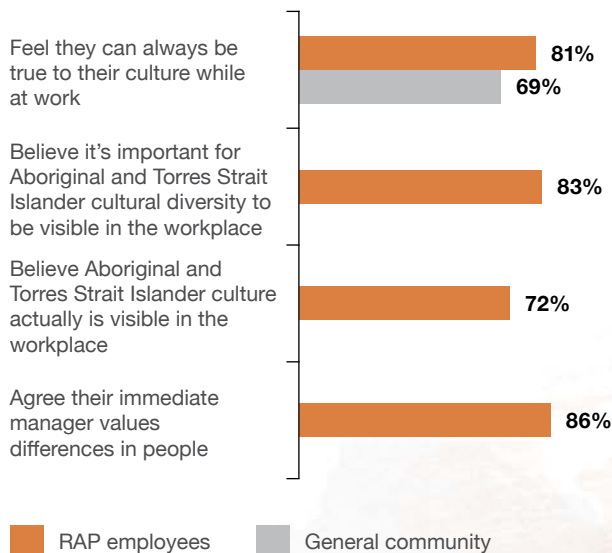
RAP employees have high levels of pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and in Australia's multiculturalism. More of them than ever believe Australians can unite.



## Institutional Integrity

**The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.**

Most RAP employees believe that by having a RAP their organisation shows effective leadership and allows them to be true to their cultures while at work.

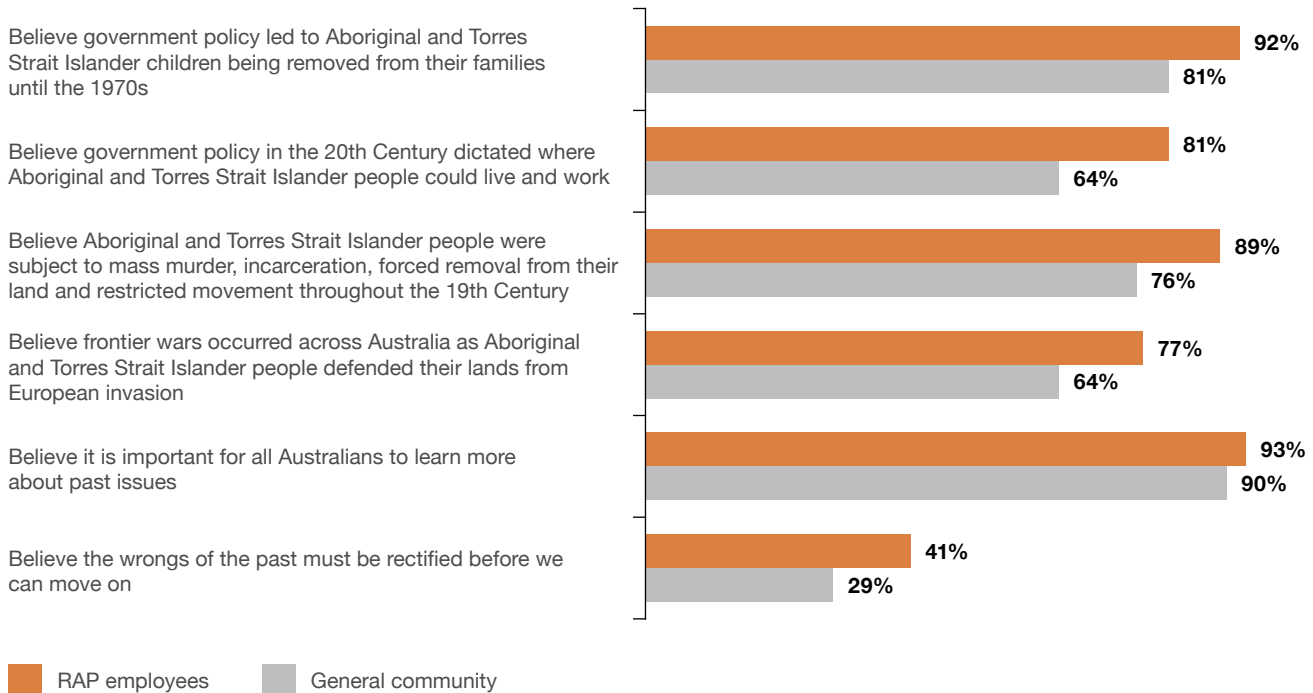




## Historical Acceptance

**All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past that occurred, and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices and ensures these wrongs are never repeated.**

Most RAP employees believe formal truth-telling processes are important and a growing number believe past wrongs must be rectified. More RAP employees readily accept a range of historical facts than other Australians do.



### RAPs in the world:

## ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA STRETCH RAP

St Vincent's Health Australia is changing the way it works to show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In Melbourne, St Vincent's Aboriginal Health Unit Manager and Art Curator worked with local Aboriginal artists Peter Waples-Crowe, Ngarigo Elder and Aunty Bronwyn Razem, Gunditjmara master weaver, to commission the Djarmbi art installation.

The installation has improved cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and promotes Aboriginal culture to all patients and visitors to the St Vincent's Cancer Centre.



Djarmbi art installation in the SVHM Cancer Centre is a collaboration of Aboriginal artists, Peter Waples-Crowe, Ngarigo Elder and Aunty Bronwyn Razem, Gunditjmara master weaver.  
Photo: St Vincent's Hospital





## RAPs in the world:

### CITY OF HOBART REFLECT RAP

The continued presence of a statue of William Crowther and a lack of acknowledgement of William Crowther's actions towards Aboriginal people elicited feedback from Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples.

The City of Hobart committed to undertaking an interpretation project in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples to tell the layered story of Crowther.

The City's **Public Art and Aboriginal Programs** teams are working with Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples on a series of temporary public art commissions that invite conversation and inquiry into the stories of both Crowther and William Lanne.

These smaller projects will precede a permanent art and/or interpretation installation on or near the existing statue.

Community members celebrating with City of Hobart staff and elected members at the launch of the Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan. Photo: Jillian Mundy

# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

**Drilling into the data from our 2020 Workplace RAP Barometer shows us where we have achieved real gains but also where there is more work to do. Learning the lessons from this ongoing feedback has enabled us to make significant progress on the project of national reconciliation.**

This year's data confirms some of what we have learnt over 14 years of developing RAPs with organisations of every size and type and then researching their impact.

When it comes to maximising the impact of a RAP within an organisation and making that organisation a more valuable contributor to the national reconciliation movement, certain attributes stand out.

## Leadership matters

The data shows that middle managers are critical supports to RAP activities. It is striking that, for example on the measure of believing the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians to be very important, senior executives are in enthusiastic agreement with new recruits. But somewhere in the middle of that career path there seems to be a problem.

### Agree the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians is very important



And a worrying number of senior executives seem to find their enthusiasm tested when the rubber meets the road of actual recruitment and procurement. That is when things require hard choices and real reconciliation with jobs, money and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses.

### Support their organisation recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff



### Support their organisation contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses



This points to a proportion of senior managers who say they support the aims of reconciliation but don't follow through when the required action seems difficult, challenging or unfamiliar.

This is where genuine leadership, from the very top of an organisation, comes into play. Only the boss can impart these values and imperatives to senior executives—that the organisation is serious about these goals, not merely 'box ticking'.

As was noted in the 2019 RAP Program Evaluation, "RAP success is synonymous with leadership commitment".

Some may need further work in their appreciation of history and how it can weigh us down as a nation until we acknowledge it truthfully and deal with it.

### Believe the wrongs of the past must be rectified before we can move on







Barunga Laundry staff.  
Photo: Northern Territory Primary  
Health Network

## RAPs in the world:

### NORTHERN TERRITORY PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK STRETCH RAP

NT Primary Health Network sponsored a Remote Laundries project delivered by an Aboriginal organisation in the Katherine region in recognition of the importance of social determinants that influence health outcomes.

NT PHN's involvement in the project includes providing COVID-19 and other health messaging for display at the Barunga laundry. This includes messaging in the local Kriole language.

The laundry is fully staffed by Aboriginal employees and injects \$1,000 per week into the local economy. To date, in Barunga, the project has resulted in a recorded 24% monthly reduction in skin complaints.

## Awareness matters

While RAP success is not dependent on all employees knowing about the RAP, it is clear that gaps in awareness mean organisations are not fully able to benefit from or realise the impact of their RAP.

Among RAP employees, RAP awareness has grown since 2018, yet still only 63 per cent know their organisation has a RAP. That's almost four in ten staff who don't even know it exists. This indicates there is some serious work to do.

Of those who are aware, most believe the RAP has a positive effect in advancing the objectives of reconciliation, especially around celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events. Awareness of RAPs also boosts job satisfaction, an important benefit to employees and the organisation. This indicates that the more organisations do to lift that 63 per cent awareness rate, the more they and their people will benefit.

At a senior executive level awareness is higher—80 per cent are aware of their RAP. Out of those however, only 56 per cent believe it has made a very positive impact on the senior leadership group. And if more than four in ten don't think it has, it may be fair to ask what they intend to do about it.

## Participation matters

RAPs make for satisfied staff. Employees who have taken part in at least one RAP activity are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, compared to those who have not. Those who have engaged multiple times exhibit cumulative gains in satisfaction.

The more they take part, the better their relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workmates and the stronger their personal support for workplace cultural safety and reconciliation goals.

The evidence shows that direct engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is the key to the biggest impact on RAP employees. Among those employees there has been a dramatic jump in the number who want more opportunities to engage with First Nations peoples and cultures—from 33 per cent in 2018 to 43 per cent, a 30 per cent increase in two years.

This points strongly to one area where organisations can make rapid gains in furthering reconciliation while also increasing general staff satisfaction.

## Visibility matters

Comparing employees who have participated in RAP activities with those who haven't yields some stark results on employees having positive views about RAP outcomes.

Employees who said their RAP had a very positive impact on their view of:

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities



### Clear leadership from senior managers on reconciliation



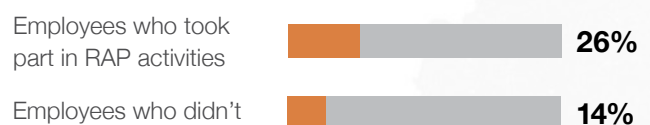
### Shared celebration of NRW and/or NAIDOC Week



### Knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures



### Better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' customs

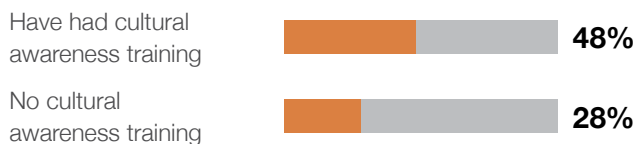


## Cultural learning matters

The data shows RAPs have unarguably raised levels of cultural understanding among employees of organisations which have them. Where they have taken part in cultural awareness training, their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures shows it.

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### High knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories



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### High knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures



These results show the impact of RAPs close to doubling the desired outcomes among those employees.

One of the most important findings in this research concerns not just who has experienced cultural learning but what kind of learning it was.

For example, when researchers interrogated what proportion of people within RAP organisations have frequent social contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, the results were telling (see page 16, 'Relationships matter').

## RAPs in the world:

### NBN INNOVATE RAP

Between June and November 2020, nbn deployed 36 emergency community Wi-fi solutions to support remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to respond to COVID-19.

Working with Queensland Police, nbn also deployed emergency communication services at seven vehicle checkpoints, supporting the safety of First Nations communities in lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

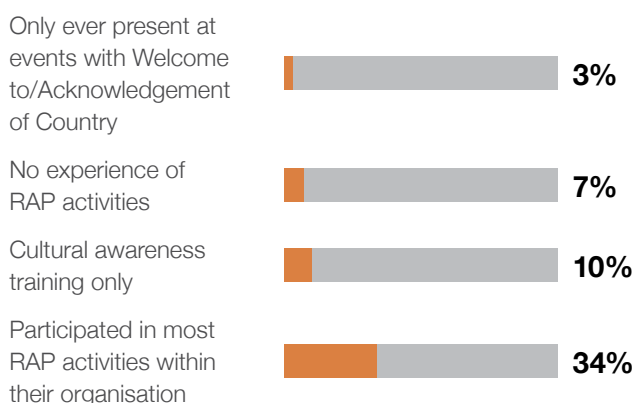
Laura, Far North Queensland was one of the first communities to benefit from nbn's hybrid Wi-Fi satellite solution. Photo: nbn





## Relationships matter

### Frequently socialise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians



The researchers' analysis showed that while taking part in multiple RAP activities has an accumulating beneficial effect on people's disposition to key reconciliation objectives, the most marked effect was on their relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and their support for workplace cultural safety.

Moreover, the researchers concluded: "... when it comes to improving attitudes and views of reconciliation objectives around historical acceptance and unity, actually meeting and engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of those activities is MORE effective than simply learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples/cultures alone."

While nearly two thirds of RAP partner employees have received cultural competency training (with their current employer) the number has not improved since the 2018 survey. Conversely, more than one third have still received no cultural awareness training.

While the benefits are clear, significant work remains to be done.

### RAPs in the world:

#### FAMILY PLANNING NSW INNOVATE RAP

Family Planning NSW developed, *Yarning about Girls' Business*, a culturally appropriate, youth-friendly resource on menstruation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young women and girls.

The educational resource was co-designed after thorough community consultation with a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including **Dubbo Girls Academy** and the **AFL Indigenous Academy** in Campbelltown NSW.

Queensland-based Aboriginal graphic design agency **Leon Designs** were contracted to develop the illustrations and design the resource.

Printed copies have been provided to the participating organisations. Participants involved in the focus groups report enjoying seeing their thoughts listened to and converted into a highly useful physical resource.



Yarning About Girls Business resource cover art.  
Photo: Family Planning NSW

# THE ROAD AHEAD

**Reconciliation Australia has combined the results of our Workplace RAP Barometer, Australian Reconciliation Barometer and RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire into this report.**

Together they tell a powerful story. It's a story of continuing success in expanding and improving the RAP program and the extraordinary impact created by our diverse network of hundreds of partner organisations.

It is the story of a year in which RAP partners engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to the value of not thousands or millions of dollars, but billions.

It is also the story, emerging from our statistics, of more people within RAP organisations consistently showing higher levels of respect and support for the objectives of national reconciliation, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians themselves, than the rest of the population.

The report shows how far we have come and where we've done well. It also shows where we need to go next and some of the pressing work we still need to do.

It highlights that even among senior managers of some of our partner organisations there can be a disconnect between good intentions and the willingness to challenge themselves and their established ways of operating to genuinely pursue real-world RAP goals.

There is a heartening story also in the figures cited above where RAP employees who enthusiastically and repeatedly engage with RAP activities are 10 times more likely to know and socialise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians than those whose sole engagement has been attending a Welcome to Country.

This result is both dramatic and, on reflection, unsurprising. While individual RAP actions may seem small, the cumulative effect of those actions can be transformative. Sustained, genuine, and heartfelt engagement is the key to national reconciliation.

Out of these statistics we see what 14 years of work has achieved for Australia so far. And we see the work still to be done.

This report illuminates the road ahead to a truly reconciled nation.



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