

Reconciliation after the Referendum

Based on a survey of leading RAP partners, Reconciliation Australia has compiled the following actions that organisations can take in response to the referendum. The actions are grouped in two themes: (1) supporting First Nations staff and stakeholders and (2) sustaining your commitment to reconciliation.

We encourage each organisation to reflect on how these themes can be expressed in their unique context. Each RAP organisation must listen to the voices of First Nations stakeholders and adapt actions to authentically meet the needs of their people.

Support First Nations staff and stakeholders

1. Invest in and communicate well-being resources.

- **Ensure there are visible and easy to access resources** staff can refer to: EAP providers, helplines and guidance from First Nations health organisations. Notably, 13YARN, Healing Works Australia, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) and Gayaa Dhuwi.
- **Communicate about existing and additional leave.** Ensure all staff, including people managers understand the various leave available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Encourage discussions with First Nations staff around what additional leave they may need and ensure that flexibility is granted, as required. Provide a clear, confidential method to discuss additional leave requirements in the event staff are not comfortable discussing with their direct managers.

2. Host dedicated in-person gatherings.

- **Consider specific day or days to gather.** Consider planning a specific day/s, schedule a retreat or conference to provide a safe space for First Nations team members to meet.
- **Consider how you can safely and appropriately host dedicated spaces for First Nations people** in your organisation to connect. If you'd like to learn more, here are two useful guides from [The Yarning Circle](#) and [R U OK?](#)

3. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

- **Openly communicate your support** (through websites and media platforms) and invite First Nations organisations and communities to reach out for support.
- **Creatively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.** These organisations are leading the way in addressing First Nations rights and justice. Donate, publicise and attend community events, [expand your knowledge](#) of First Nations peak bodies.

4. Promote respect and call-out racism.

- **Share a letter or statement from your organisation's leadership** addressing the result of the referendum and encouraging respect in the workplace. Champion respect in your organisation and call out racism faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Review your organisation's approach to racism.** Consider policies in addition to education to create a culturally safe workplace and actively promote anti-racism.
- **Communicate existing approaches to staff** and ensure there are a range of clear and simple ways for staff to reach out with concerns.

5. Equip non-Indigenous allies to step up.

- **Educate and equip managers to understand cultural load** and support First Nations staff and stakeholders to navigate it. Specific efforts include targeted training, communications and toolkits for people managers.
- **Enhance your commitment to cultural learning.** Concerns about the tone of the referendum debate and its impact on First Nations staff and stakeholders has led many RAP partners to prepare to roll out additional and targeted cultural learning tools.
- **Host ally gatherings for non-Indigenous staff.** Doing so can provide a space for non-Indigenous allies impacted by the referendum result to debrief and draw strength from each other without burdening First Nations staff.

Sustain your organisation's commitment to reconciliation

Leading RAP partners have emphasised the **importance of balance** with respect to communicating your organisation's ongoing commitment to reconciliation. It is important to recognise that this is a time for healing and reflection, while sustaining the good work your organisation has already committed to.

1. Listening to First Nations voices.

- **Leadership engagement.** Facilitate direct engagement with your organisation's CEO and/or senior leaders to meet with First Nations employees in the weeks after the referendum to reflect on the outcome and propose a way forward, while also allowing for feedback and adjustments based on staff needs.
- **Reflect on your own governance.** The referendum provided an important moment for RAP organisations to reflect on their own governance and evaluate the extent to which they are hearing from and responding to the voices of First Nations staff and stakeholders. RAP partners plan to engage internal and external advisors to guide this process.

2. Communicate and pledge your organisation's support towards reconciliation.

- **Reaffirm your organisation's RAP with all employees.** Emphasise what motivated your organisations to launch a RAP, how it has driven and will continue to drive substantive change.
- **Creatively engage your sphere of influence.** This moment requires more Australians and Australian institutions to step forward. Reflect on and review your organisation's engagement with your internal and external stakeholders to promote engagement with reconciliation and identify ways to do this differently or better.
- **Maintain commitment to the RAP Network.** This includes sustaining existing RAP commitments and, for those drafting a new RAP, adapting your next RAP to the post-referendum environment.

3. Sustain support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

- **Reiterate public support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.** The referendum results in First Nations communities underscore the ongoing relevance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- **Review your agreement making practices.** Identify ethical agreement making practices that may need to be implemented in your partnerships with First Nations organisations.
- **Explore ways in which your organisation can contribute to truth telling.** For more resources, [read this unique collaborative study](#) between Reconciliation Australia and Deakin University's Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation.