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# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

**Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria**  
February 2024 – February 2026



Royal  
Botanic  
Gardens  
Victoria





## Acknowledgement of Country

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our two Gardens are situated: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge their continued custodianship and deep spiritual connection to these lands and waters. We honour the strength and richness of over 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal culture and recognise the vital role of future generations as stewards of culture and Country.

The work of RBGV extends beyond our Melbourne and Cranbourne sites, and we acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of all Country on which we work and learn. We honour their custodianship, knowledge of, and connection with plants, land, water and sky.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledge that we are the beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 230 years ago and continues today.





### About the artist and artwork

Samantha Richards is a proud descendant of the Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung Tribes of the Melbourne and Bendigo regions of Victoria. Samantha has a passion for teaching through both her art and early youth education programs. This is reflected in the organisation that she began in 2019, 'Connecting Two Worlds', which aims to share the knowledge of her peoples with everyone and bridge the gap of understanding between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Australian communities.

### Artist's statement

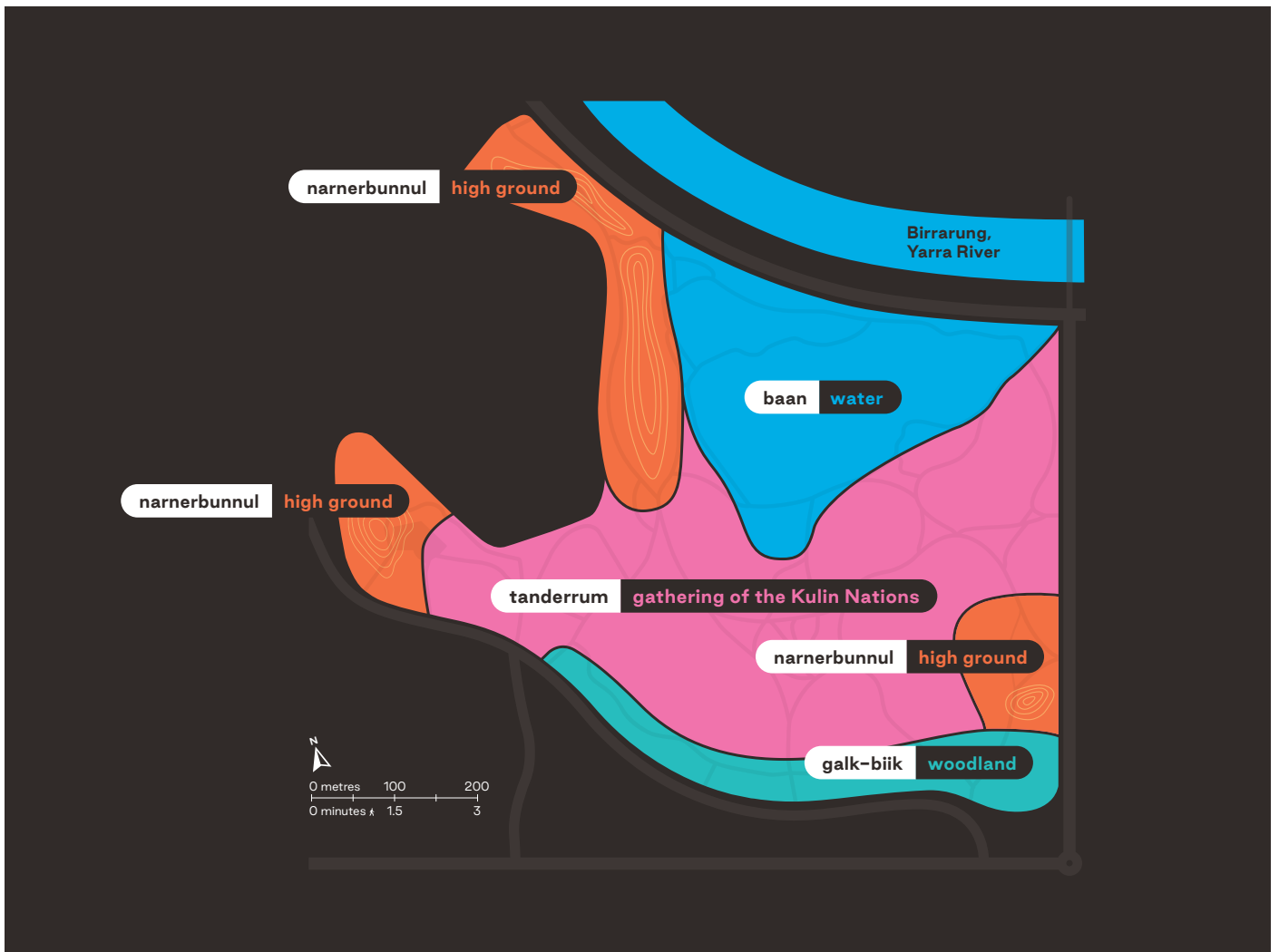
This artwork is about paying homage to the land: the plants, the waterways and the landscape itself – the hills and the flats. It is about acknowledging the uses of different plant life, from welcoming people onto Country with the gum leaves and cherry ballart in smoking ceremonies, and acknowledging our Ancestors through the wattle, whose flowers create a bridge between here and the Dreamtime so that we may share and learn knowledge from our Ancestors. The background is made of diamond shapes, which represent protection of the people, the waterways, and the land and plants. The white borders represent the journey of many people: staff and visitors, and Traditional Owners past, present, and those who will walk this land in the future.



Jakobi (Djap Wurrung/Gunditjmara),  
Aboriginal Learning Officer, Melbourne Gardens.

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The Melbourne Gardens landscape was mapped through a First Peoples lens as part of RBGV's Wayfinding, Signage and Interpretation project. Developed using the International Indigenous Design Charter in collaboration with Greenaway Architects, Studio Binocular, Aspect Studios and Traditional Owners.

New wayfinding at Melbourne Gardens represents the primacy of Country and weaves First Peoples' culture, language and plant knowledge through the landscape.



galk-biik



## Message from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer



Reconciliation Australia commends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for RBGV to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, RBGV will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. RBGV is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals RBGV's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations RBGV on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
Reconciliation Australia





## A message from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Chair and the Director and Chief Executive



We are honoured to present Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's first *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–2026)*. The *Innovate RAP* builds on RBGV's *Reflect RAP (2021–2022)* and deepens our commitment to taking meaningful action towards reconciliation.

Our *Innovate RAP* is, by its nature, a more ambitious plan. It encourages us to look outward and promote reconciliation in all the work we do, from our engagement and education activities, to our landscaping and planting schemes, and the interpretation of our scientific collections and research. It pledges to strengthen our cultural learning and develop stronger relationships with the Traditional Owners of our two gardens and the wider First Peoples community. And it reinforces our responsibility to engage in truth-telling as a fundamental step in healing the past to create a truly inclusive future.



RBGV's work is motivated by the unifying truth that *life is sustained and enriched by plants*. Though much of our science and many of our landscapes are steeped in a colonial history, the plant-based and place-based nature of our work presents a valuable opportunity to support Traditional Owners' aspirations for Healing Country. This is an emerging theme in our *Innovate RAP*, and we are genuinely looking forward to working ever more closely with First Peoples communities to care for plants and place.

Developed by the *RAP Working Group* in partnership with Traditional Owners, the *Innovate RAP* captures the vision and ideas of staff from across the organisation, who have shown an energising commitment to RBGV's reconciliation journey. The *RAP* has the full support of the RBGV Board and leadership team, and we are confident that it will deliver real action towards improving cultural safety and opportunities for First Peoples.

As we write this message together — David as a relative newcomer to both Australia and RBGV, and Penny as an Australian who has been with the RBGV Board for nearly a decade — we reflect upon our individual reconciliation journeys, which join paths with the launch of this *RAP*. Recognising that we have much to learn, we together remain committed to listening to and learning from the Traditional Owners of our two sites and RBGV's First Peoples staff. The excitement of this moment, though, is to move into the innovation phase, and all that this could and should liberate.

We urge all RBGV staff, volunteers and partners to actively and warmly engage with RBGV's *Innovate RAP* and commit to taking further steps in their own reconciliation journeys. In doing so, we can all contribute to a more just and equitable future that truly celebrates, respects and integrates First Peoples' knowledge, cultures and histories.

**Penny Fowler**  
Chair  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

**David Harland**  
Director and Chief Executive  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's vision for reconciliation is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to live self-determined lives with strong connections to culture and Country. We want a just and equitable Australia that is built on truth, fairness and respect, and that celebrates and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their unique connection to, and stewardship of, plants and Country.

Reconciliation can only begin when the history of invasion and colonisation are openly understood and acknowledged, and we commit to listening to and learning from First Peoples' experiences and engaging in truth-telling about the history of our sites.

A long legacy of racism, dispossession and intergenerational trauma has disrupted First Peoples' access to, and ability to continually care for, their Country. We endeavour to support Traditional Owners' aspirations around Healing Country and to help build a greater understanding and respect for First Peoples' rich plant knowledge. By understanding, protecting, restoring and cultivating Australian native plants used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we actively promote and act on reconciliation and connection to Country.

As a scientific institution, we strive towards recognising diverse ways of knowing alongside botanical science; being inclusive in our historical and contemporary storytelling; being appropriately consultative in all the work that we do, and carefully managing our biocultural collections while respecting Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

We are committed to promoting cultural safety in our workplace, addressing systemic racism, and working towards a society that understands and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, knowledge and cultures.

We embark on our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to formalise and strengthen this commitment. As an agency of the Victorian Government's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), we are also committed to contributing to and aligning with whole-of-government commitments set out in the Victorian Government Self-Determination Reform Framework, *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025, Yoorrook Justice Commission and subsequent truth, treaty and reform processes.



RBGV staff joined Koorie Heritage Trust's Birrarung Wilam (River Camp) Walk during NAIDOC Week 2023 to learn about the Aboriginal history of the Birrarung Marr.

## Our Organisation

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is one of the world's leading botanic gardens and a centre of excellence for horticulture, science, learning and engagement. Our vision is that 'life is sustained and enriched by plants'. Our mission is to 'safeguard plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet' through engaged communities, vibrant places, shared plant knowledge, and discovery and conservation action.

Our organisation is dedicated to the conservation, display and enjoyment of plants. It extends over two locations: Melbourne Gardens, which is situated on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people, and Cranbourne Gardens, which is situated on the land of the Bunurong people. The Melbourne site also incorporates the National Herbarium of Victoria, which houses a collection of preserved plants, algae and fungi from across Australia and throughout the world.

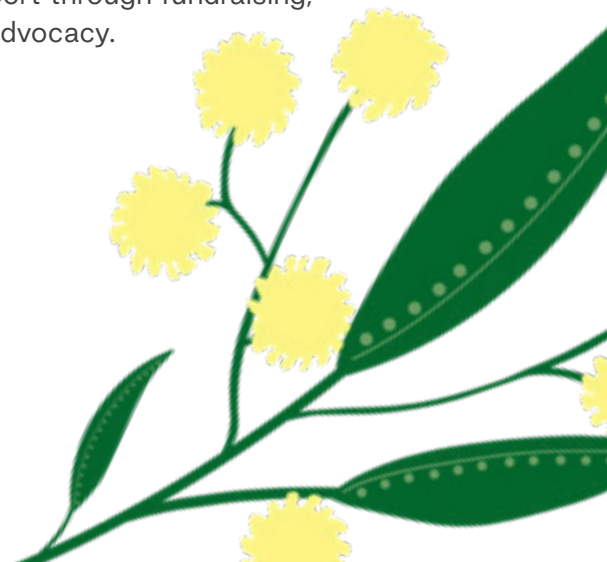
### Reconciliation looks and feels like ...

*An inclusive, positive, strong and proud society.*

Our Melbourne site is a 38-hectare heritage-listed landscape in the heart of Melbourne that houses over 8,000 plant species from around the world. Our Cranbourne site is a contemporary native garden set within a 363-hectare natural bushland reserve. Both our sites are home to rich displays of plants that enable people to connect with nature through our landscapes, innovative public programming, world-leading plant science and conservation horticulture.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria also contributes to local and global biodiversity knowledge through research, discovery, protection and cultivation of rare and threatened plant species, and via the development of conservation seed and spore banks as insurance against extinction. Our work contributes to plant knowledge and conservation at local, state, national and international levels via scientific and horticultural research, knowledge-sharing and policy influence.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria employs approximately 250 staff who work across our two sites, with one full-time, three part-time and two casual staff identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Over 100 volunteers across both sites play a vital role in the Gardens' operations and each site has their own dedicated Friends group who provide support through fundraising, grants and advocacy.





Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) representatives with RAP Working Group (RWG) members at Melbourne Gardens, August 2023. L-R: Kasia Gabrys (RWG), Jayden Garvey (WWCHAC), Emma Mildenhall (WWCHAC), Aunty Georgina Nicholson (Elder, WWCHAC), Alison Vaughan (RWG), Andrew Laidlaw (RWG), Uncle Tony Garvey (Elder, WWCHAC), Émer Harrington (RWG).

## Our Reconciliation Journey

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is a leading public plant science, horticulture and learning institution, and recognises that this knowledge has been built on a confronting and exploitative colonial history. The native plants of Australia, along with the plants from other colonised nations that were and continue to be ‘discovered’ by Western science were already intricately known by First Peoples globally for thousands of generations. Australia’s many diverse First Peoples’ cultures – each with their own unique languages, customs and knowledge systems – held and continue to hold a deep understanding of and connection to their rich and unique ecosystems, plants and Country.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has a deeply embedded colonial history: the National Herbarium of Victoria holds one of the largest collections of colonial plant specimens in the southern hemisphere; Melbourne Gardens was established on First Peoples’ lands early in the colony; and we have contributed to the modification of Australia’s native plant landscapes through the planting of non-native species. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria seeks to better acknowledge, understand and reconcile the past and present. We embarked on our RAP journey in 2021 to help achieve these aims and are pleased to be taking the next step towards a more just, equitable and reconciled future with the launch of our Innovate RAP.

Since the implementation of our Reflect RAP (November 2021 – November 2022), there have been some noticeable organisational shifts, including the strengthening of our relationships with the Traditional Owners of our two sites. A key driver for this was the development and implementation of a new Wayfinding, Signage and Interpretation (WSI) Project. Guided by the International Indigenous Design Charter, this project engaged Jefa Greenaway (Wailwan/Kamilaroi), Head of Indigenous Architects Victoria and Supply Nation-registered and Kinaway-certified First Peoples firm Greenaway Architects Pty Ltd, in partnership with Greenshoot Consulting Pty Ltd. Together with these specialists, we worked



closely with Traditional Owners in the co-development of a new Interpretation and Storytelling Framework and the design of a new wayfinding strategy and system for both sites. This staged project has seen the installation of key wayfinding, signage and interpretation elements across Melbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens, which weave Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong cultural landscape layers, language, imagery and perspectives of Country, plants and heritage into the site. It was a 2023 Victorian Premier's Design Awards finalist in the Communication Design category and received merit awards in the Design for Good (Community), and Spatial (Wayfinding) categories of the 2023 Australian Graphic Design Awards. Cranbourne Gardens staff have worked closely with Bunurong Traditional Owners in the preparation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans for two projects in the garden's bushland areas — the development a new children's nature playground and the realignment of the western entrance road. Cranbourne staff have also continued to work with both Bunurong and Boon Wurrung Elders and advisors in our Learning programs, as well as our annual NAIDOC celebrations, which are developed and led by First Peoples, primarily for First Peoples.

The Melbourne Gardens and Science divisions have forged new relationships with Gunditjimara, Taungurung and Wadawarrung Traditional Owners, hosting their natural resource management groups for onsite tours of our plant conservation projects, horticultural and botanical collections, as well as collaborating in on-Country botanical collecting trips. We look forward to building relationships with other Victorian Traditional Owner groups in the coming months and years.

**We are committed to engaging with ...**



**Young First Peoples to create pathways, share knowledge and support leaders.**

Internally, Acknowledgement of Country protocols and guidelines for appropriate terminology have been embedded across our organisation. Staff awareness and understanding of First Peoples' cultures, histories and past and present socio-economic issues has increased through both face-to-face cultural training and eLearning, as well as staff-focussed National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities.



Though the Reflect RAP produced many positive outcomes, it also highlighted some key challenges for the Gardens. The lack of First Peoples representation at the senior level, combined with resourcing constraints post-COVID that have resulted in staff and Traditional Owners being overstretched, has limited our capacity to attend to all Reflect RAP actions. We acknowledge that we have much work yet to do, particularly in strengthening RBGV's First Peoples governance, staffing and training opportunities, and in providing adequate time and flexibility to effectively implement RAP actions. We understand that the organisational shift needed to support and enable self-determination and truth-telling requires us to have greater alignment with Traditional Owners' priorities; formalised co-designed partnerships with First Peoples; improved senior level engagement; and appropriate resourcing, skills, time and flexibility throughout the RAP process. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria sees the RAP process as one that belongs to everyone within the organisation, and that is everyone's responsibility.

To ensure RAP actions are implemented, the organisation has:

- secured the enthusiastic support of our Director and Chief Executive, David Harland, as RAP Champion to ensure that all parts of our organisation commit to the development and understanding of the RAP
- formed a new Innovate RAP Working Group that includes two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and eight non-Indigenous staff from across various work areas and employment levels
- worked with the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners of our two sites to review this RAP and to identify and work towards priority actions for Traditional Owners
- established regular reporting updates on RAP progress to the RBGV Executive and Board, and via all-staff communications
- budgeted appropriately for time and resources to ensure actions within the RAP are prioritised and implemented on time
- committed to reporting RAP progress in the Gardens' Annual Report, on our website, to donors and to the public.

*By the Birrarung* by Wurundjeri-willam artist Mandy Nicholson features detailed illustrations of luk (eel – pronounced ee-ook), which migrate down the Birrarung each Spring. Lightscape 2023, Melbourne Gardens. Photo: Ben King











Wayapa practitioner Karan Kent (Bidjara) shows burning on a kangaroo skin that tells the story of family gathering at a meeting place. NAIDOC Week, Cranbourne Gardens, July 2023.



Aboriginal Learning Officer Janine "Jaffa" Richardson (Dja Dja Wurrung) shares her weaving with Sebastian Beck, Senior Learning Facilitator, at a NAIDOC Week staff event at Cranbourne Gardens, July 2023.

# Innovate RAP Working Group

## Members:

### Janine 'Jaffa' Richardson

Aboriginal Learning Officer  
Engagement and Impact

### Émer Harrington

Head, Program and  
Audience Development  
Engagement and Impact

### Andrew Laidlaw

Landscape Architect  
Melbourne Gardens

### Sally McPhee

Creative Producer  
Placemaking and Interpretation  
Engagement and Impact

### Rebecca Miller

Research Scientist (Seed Science)  
Science

### Jackie Ollis

People and Culture Business Partner  
Corporate Services

### James Robbins

Digital Content Coordinator Engagement  
and Impact

### Ricardo Simao

Manager Environmental Systems  
Cranbourne Gardens

## Chairperson:

### Alison Vaughan

Manager Collections  
Science

## Deputy Chairperson:

### Christopher Jakobi

Aboriginal Learning Officer  
Engagement and Impact

## Secretary:

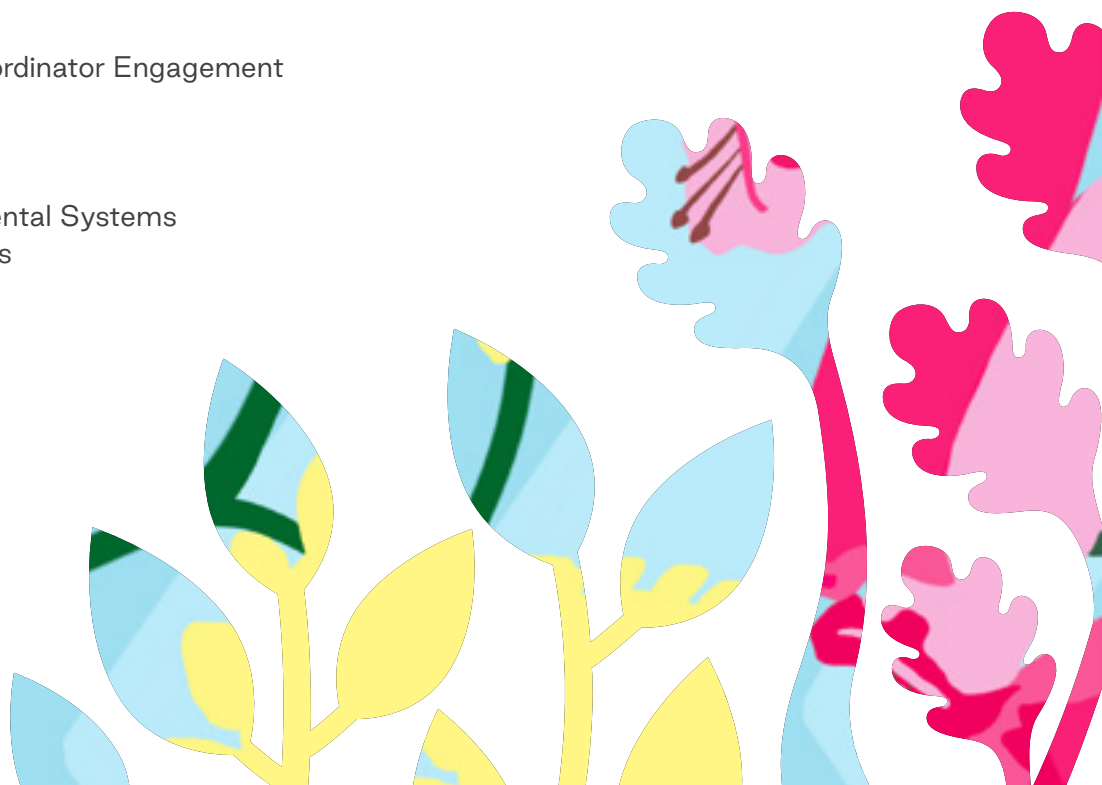
### Kasia Gabrys

Advisor – Governance and Projects  
Corporate Services

## Reconciliation means ...



Fully acknowledging  
the truth of colonisation.



## Relationships

RBGV's vision is a flourishing community and healthy planet, sustained and enriched by plants. As an organisation that strives to safeguard plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet, we are uniquely placed to support the aspirations of Traditional Owners to care for plants and Heal Country. By developing strong partnerships with Traditional Owners – based on mutual trust, respect, reciprocity and shared experiences – we can better realise our shared goals.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	<b>1.1</b> Meet with the Traditional Owners of our two sites to develop guiding principles and agreements for future engagement.	October 2024	Lead: RAP Champion  Support: Secretary RWG
	<b>1.2</b> Identify and prioritise opportunities to develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities whose land our work extends to, and develop guiding principles and an engagement plan to assist in the development of those relationships.	February 2025	Lead: RAP Champion  Support: Secretary RWG
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	<b>2.1</b> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024 & 2025	Lead: RAP Champion  Support: Head of Development, Marketing and Communication
	<b>2.2</b> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2024 & 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>2.3</b> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2024 & 2025	RAP Champion
	<b>2.4</b> Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May – 3 June 2024 & 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>2.5</b> Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024 & 2025	Secretary RWG
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	<b>3.1</b> Implement staff engagement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	February 2025	Lead: Chair RWG Support: Head of People and Culture
	<b>3.2</b> Develop and implement annual RAP Communication Plans to communicate our commitment to reconciliation to staff, stakeholders and the public.	March 2024 & 2025	Lead: Head of Development, Marketing and Communication  Support: Chair RWG

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>3.3</b> Develop a stakeholder analysis and action plan to explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	August 2024	Head of Development, Marketing and Communication
	<b>3.4</b> Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	February 2026	Lead: Chair RWG Support: Secretary RWG
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	<b>4.1</b> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>4.2</b> Continue to review our Workplace Behaviours Policy to ensure it contains adequate anti-discrimination provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>4.3</b> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our Workplace Behaviours Policy.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>4.4</b> Educate senior leaders, managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and People and Culture on the effects of racism, and best-practice prevention and response, to ensure a culturally safe workplace.	September 2025	Head of People and Culture
	<b>4.5</b> Include a RAP briefing as part of the orientation program for new staff.	March 2024	Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Chair RWG
<b>5. Support initiatives towards Healing Country where our horticulture, science and education work intersect with the aspirations of Traditional Owners.</b>	<b>5.1</b> Improve our understanding of Traditional Owners' priorities and aspirations around Healing Country.	February 2025	Secretary RWG
	<b>5.2</b> Explore opportunities to support Traditional Owners' aspirations for Healing Country by sharing plant information, and our knowledge of horticulture, conservation and ecosystem management.	September 2025	Secretary RWG

## Respect

As an organisation that conducts its core business on land that has been, and continues to be, under the cultural custodianship of Aboriginal Peoples, it is vital that we acknowledge, respect, learn from and celebrate First Peoples’ enduring connection to Country through our day-to-day work. Recognising that we engage with and can influence the public and other stakeholders, we aspire to model respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, histories, rights and traditional knowledge systems through our scientific research activities, our learning and outreach programs, and events celebrating First Peoples’ culture and achievements.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	<b>6.1</b> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	August 2025	Head of People and Culture
	<b>6.2</b> Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	September 2025	Secretary RWG
	<b>6.3</b> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	February 2026	Head of People and Culture
	<b>6.4</b> Provide opportunities and budget resourcing for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff, including line managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June 2024 & 2025	Executive Director Corporate
	<b>6.5</b> Continue to implement RBGV’s First Peoples-led Interpretation and Storytelling Framework and wayfinding initiatives.	February 2026	Lead: Head of Programming and Audience Development  Support: Creative Producer, Placemaking and Interpretation



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	<b>7.1</b> Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>7.2</b> Review and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, and provide training for staff and volunteers in preparing a meaningful Acknowledgement of Country.	September 2024	Lead: Secretary RWG Support: Chair RWG
	<b>7.3</b> Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	February 2025 & 2026	Secretary RWG
	<b>7.4</b> Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important internal and external meetings, events and public programs.	February 2025 & 2026	RAP Champion
<b>8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	<b>8.1</b> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024 & 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>8.2</b> Seek feedback from staff and review HR policies and procedures to identify and remove barriers to all staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>8.3</b> Raise awareness and share information with our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week and promote and encourage staff participation in external NAIDOC events.	First week in July 2024 & 2025	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Chair RWG

## Opportunities

We aspire to be an organisation that confidently supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation as staff, collaborators, contractors and suppliers. To do this, we need to prioritise, invest in and adequately resource the creation of a culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and businesses by building and embedding a culture of knowledge, understanding, respect and cultural intelligence across all areas of our organisation. We commit to actively seeking opportunities to support and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, organisations and individuals throughout our operations.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	<b>9.1</b> Build understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing needs and challenges to inform future employment and professional development opportunities and RBGV's workforce planning needs.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.2</b> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy and to identify career pathways.	December 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.3</b> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy to improve employment and retention across all of RBGV's divisions.	June 2025	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.4</b> Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	June 2024	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.5</b> Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2025	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.6</b> Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce to 3%.	February 2026	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.7</b> Initiate the development of mentoring, internship and/or training programs across both of our sites to assist in the recruitment and retention of First Peoples.	February 2026	Head of People and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>9.8</b> Create and recruit a senior Aboriginal-identified role or external advisor to support the cultural safety of all Aboriginal staff members and provide guidance on projects that require consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	June 2025	Head of People and Culture
	<b>9.9</b> Review current First Peoples-identified positions to assess their cultural loadings.	June 2024	Head of People and Culture
<b>10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity and support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	<b>10.1</b> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	June 2025	Manager, Governance and Projects
	<b>10.2</b> Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2025	Secretary RWG
	<b>10.3</b> Develop opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and provide annual training and communication to all staff involved in purchasing.	March 2024 & 2025	Lead: Manager, Governance and Projects Support: Secretary RWG
	<b>10.4</b> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	October 2025	Manager, Governance and Projects
	<b>10.5</b> Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses that align with RBGV business requirements.	September 2025	Lead: Chief Financial Officer Support: Head of Development, Marketing and Communication
	<b>10.6</b> All First Peoples' creative, artistic and knowledge-based content to be designed and co-delivered by First Peoples in alignment with Victorian Government guidelines on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights.	February 2026	Head of Programming and Audience Development
	<b>10.7</b> Formalise organisation-wide processes for providing services and facilities free-of-charge or at discounted rates to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	June 2024	Secretary RWG

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	<b>11.1</b> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG and look at opportunities to engage external First Peoples advisors when appropriate.	February 2026	Chair RWG
	<b>11.2</b> Establish and apply Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2024	Chair RWG
	<b>11.3</b> Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February 2024, 2025, 2026; May 2024, 2025; August 2024, 2025; November 2024, 2025	Chair RWG
<b>12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	<b>12.1</b> Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2024 & 2025	Manager Governance and Projects
	<b>12.2</b> Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2024, 2025; June 2024, 2025; September 2024, 2025; December 2024, 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>12.3</b> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2024	Secretary RWG
	<b>12.4</b> Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	February 2024	Director and Chief Executive

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	<b>13.1</b> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2024 & 2025	Secretary RWG
	<b>13.2</b> Report RAP progress to all staff, senior leaders and volunteers quarterly.	March 2024, 2025; June 2024, 2025; September 2024, 2025; December 2024, 2025	Chair RWG
	<b>13.3</b> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings.	October 2024 & 2025	Head of Development, Marketing and Communication
	<b>13.4</b> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	Secretary RWG
<b>14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	<b>14.1</b> Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2025	Secretary RWG

#### Contact details

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# I Am Sorry

A Poem by **Dennis Fisher**  
Aboriginal Heritage Guide  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

I'm sorry for losing my culture  
I'm sorry for losing my language  
I'm sorry for losing my identity  
I'm sorry I had to learn English  
I'm sorry I grew up on a mission  
I'm sorry I'm not served in shops  
I'm sorry for being called names  
I'm sorry for being blamed  
I'm sorry for people not believing in me  
I'm sorry for being born an Aborigine  
I'm so, so sorry for telling the truth.

'Uncle Den' is Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's longest serving Aboriginal Heritage Guide. Since 2010, Den has educated and touched the hearts of an estimated 35,000+ visitors and hundreds of staff, as he shares his personal stories and knowledge about First Peoples' heritage, culture and plant wisdom. We thank Den and all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, past and present, for their ongoing contribution and long-standing commitment to reconciliation.



Heritage Walk  
Section - Land

Bisley

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