



Innovate

Reconciliation Action Plan

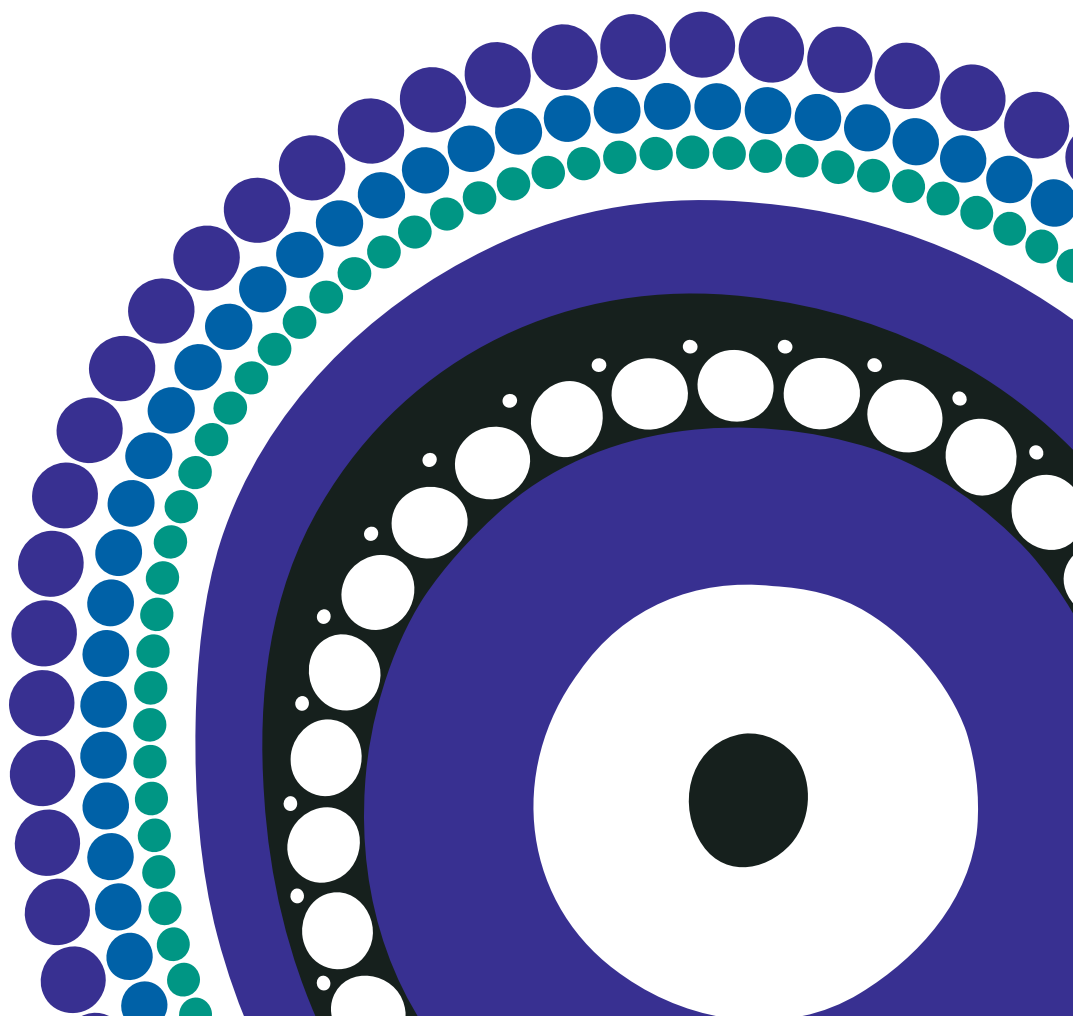
January 2026 – 2028





Contents

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia	4
A message from our CEO and Chair	5
Our vision for reconciliation	6
Our business	7
Our RAP	8
Our RAP artwork	10
Relationships	12
Respect	14
Opportunities	16
Governance	18



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd 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 NAATI 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, NAATI 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 over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. NAATI is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals NAATI'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 NAATI on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



A message from our CEO and Chair

At NAATI, we pride ourselves on being a workplace that embraces cultural differences and that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

Our values of respect, integrity and professionalism shape how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and how we contribute to reconciliation through our national role in certification.

This Innovate RAP sets out practical actions that will guide NAATI to strengthen trust, deepen engagement, and work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. It also challenges us to grow cultural capability across our organisation and ensure our work is informed by genuine partnerships.

NAATI has worked with the Australian Government to increase the number of certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters in Indigenous languages. As at 30 June 2025, there were 98 credentials in Indigenous languages held by 84 practitioners across 22 Indigenous languages. Through this Innovate RAP, we will continue to build on this progress and expand opportunities in partnership with Indigenous language communities.

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility. Delivering this plan will require commitment from all of us and I am confident NAATI's people will bring this work to life with care and purpose.

I look forward to working with the Board, our staff, and our partners as we implement this Innovate RAP, and I remain deeply committed to engaging with key stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on our reconciliation journey.



Mark Painting
CEO



Magdalena Rowan
Chair

I am pleased to present NAATI's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which marks a second important step in our ongoing reconciliation journey.

NAATI's vision is for a connected community without language barriers. By certifying translators and interpreters across Australia, we help ensure that people can access services, participate fully in society, and have their voices heard.

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are deeply connected to culture, identity and Country. NAATI is committed to supporting the strength and continuity of these languages, and to working respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase the number of certified interpreters and translators in Indigenous languages.

This Innovate RAP builds on the foundations established through our Reflect RAP. It reflects our commitment to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and language groups, and to pursuing new and meaningful ways to contribute to reconciliation within our sphere of influence. This plan provides a clear framework to guide NAATI's work over the coming years and to support stronger partnerships across our sector.

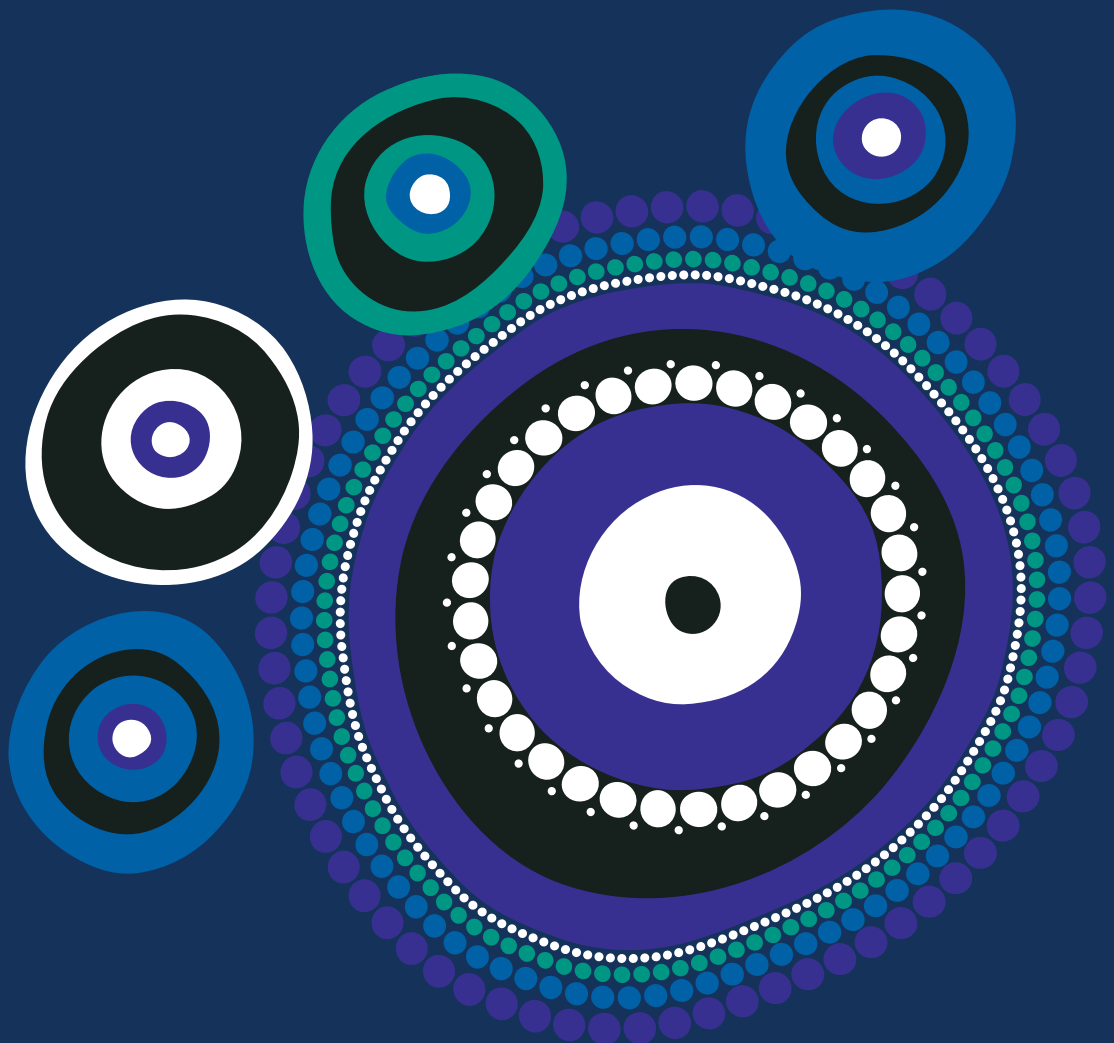
On behalf of the Board, I thank the Innovate RAP Working Group Chair, Mr Michael Nemarich, and all members of the Working Group for their leadership and commitment in developing this plan.

I encourage everyone across NAATI to embrace this RAP and to play an active role in its implementation as we continue to learn, listen and move forward together.

Our vision for reconciliation

In striving for our vision for a connected community without language barriers, we acknowledge that reconciliation must be a core part of our business. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first peoples and custodians of the country that Australians now call home. We cannot be truly connected as a community without reconciling the past and creating a future that is inclusive.

NAATI occupies an important part in Australia's multicultural society, and through our interactions with interpreters and translators of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, migrant, and signed languages, will use our influence and presence to increase understanding and connections between groups and promote our rich and diverse First Nations' histories to new Australians, in addition to increasing the number of First Nations interpreters.



Our business

NAATI's mission is to set and maintain high national standards for the translating and interpreting sector and enable a supply of skilled translating and interpreting professionals, responsive to the changing needs and demography of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse society. We are recognised globally as an international leader in the certification of interpreters and translators.

Our role as the standards and certification body for interpreting and translating connects us with individual interpreters and translators and by extension the communities they interact with, in addition to the state, territory and federal governments of Australia as the largest procurers of translating and interpreting services (and the owners of NAATI) which facilitate access to services, universities and registered training organisations who deliver training for aspiring practitioners, and language service providers who employ translators and interpreters.

We currently employ 78 people on a permanent full-time and part-time basis across Australia. A further 1500 staff and examiners from multicultural backgrounds work with us in casual or contract roles. NAATI has offices in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, and we have staff working remotely in Adelaide, Alice Springs and Hobart. NAATI currently has one Aboriginal staff member on extended leave.

The availability of interpreters is critical to ensuring First Nations people who do not speak English as their first language or do not speak English well can access essential government services. Allowing opportunities for Indigenous people to speak and be heard in their own language is important in ensuring languages remain strong and are passed down to the next generation.

The Australian Government's Closing the Gap initiative includes a target that aims to ensure that Indigenous languages are strong, supported and flourishing. NAATI believes that ensuring a sustainable and high-quality interpreting workforce supports this initiative. Importantly, NAATI delivers the Indigenous Interpreting Project, which aims to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters who hold NAATI certification. The availability of interpreters is critical to ensuring that First Nations peoples can continue to use their primary languages rather than English and still access government services. We engage the expertise of an Indigenous Languages Reference Group to appropriately guide our work.

Our RAP

This is NAATI's second RAP, the development and implementation of which marks the continuation of NAATI's reconciliation journey from the Reflect RAP.

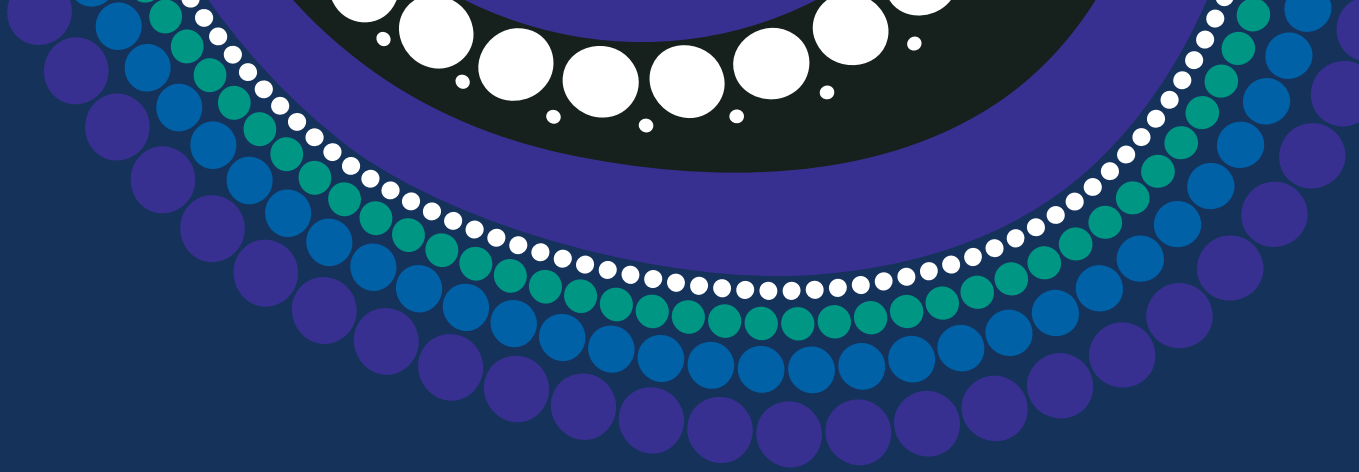
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages have been included since 1981 in NAATI's accreditation (now certification) system, just four years after NAATI's commencement in 1977. Through our certification and credentialing system we have continued to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase the number of qualified interpreters and translators in the languages they speak, allowing them to maintain and protect their language and support their communities.

NAATI's identity as a diverse and inclusive organisation is reflected in our staffing profile and our external stakeholder communities. This RAP provides an opportunity for NAATI to leverage its national reach to engage partners around reconciliation. This will create a foundation for future work that mobilises our stakeholders to take substantive action toward reconciliation, in allyship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We will continue to engage deeply with our vision for reconciliation, developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, and exploring our potential to create meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Interpreters, mentors, trainers and support crew come together for a NAATI testing workshop in Alice Springs.



Our RAP is championed by Michael Nemarich, NAATI Chief Operating Officer. The following NAATI staff are members of the Innovate RAP Working Group:

Michael Nemarich	Chief Operating Officer (Chair)
Donna Brown	Human Resources Manager
Georgina Fargher	Manager, Corporate Governance and Company Secretary
Kym McDowell	Regional Operations Manager (WA)
Helen O'Malley	Senior Certification Development Manager
Brenna Rebeiro	Certification Testing Officer

The RAP Working Group has two external members: Edward Sailor and Lavinia Heffernan.

Edward is both an Aboriginal (Waanyi/ Indjalandji) and Torres Strait Islander (Erub Island/ Mer Islands) man, former NAATI staff member, and an Indigenous advancement consultant based in Cairns, Far North Queensland. Lavinia is a Pintupi-Luritja woman from Papunya, a small community located three hours northwest of Alice Springs.

Although in our Reflect RAP we had First Nations representation, a key learning was to ensure that this was made permanent and ongoing representation to influence and co-design future RAPs, and their inclusion reflects our efforts to address this.

NAATI has an Indigenous Languages Reference Group. This is an advisory group that provides guidance to NAATI on culturally appropriate and effective ways to support interpreters and translators to move through the NAATI certification pathway.

NAATI's previous Reflect RAP was successful in increasing knowledge and awareness of the histories and ongoing challenges faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. With a workforce that is comprised of a majority of employees who were not born in Australia, the increased knowledge and awareness enabled staff to gain a greater understanding of First Nations' cultures and histories.

Some of the key learnings from our Reflect RAP included the realisation that many migrants to Australia have limited knowledge of First Nations' histories and experiences. The lack of knowledge creates misunderstandings and stereotypes to be accepted or adopted by new arrivals. We see our role in multicultural Australia and this RAP to improve knowledge and understanding through education and continual learning.

Our Reflect RAP journey included workshops, cultural tours, establishments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander story libraries in all offices, support of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week events, procurement targets, updates to improve HR and recruitment policies, considerations of cultural events in our Enterprise Agreement, and the adoption of cultural protocols (Acknowledgements of Country).

Organisational support was confirmed and highlighted in our annual reports with statements from our Chair and CEO, and support as a company for the Voice referendum.



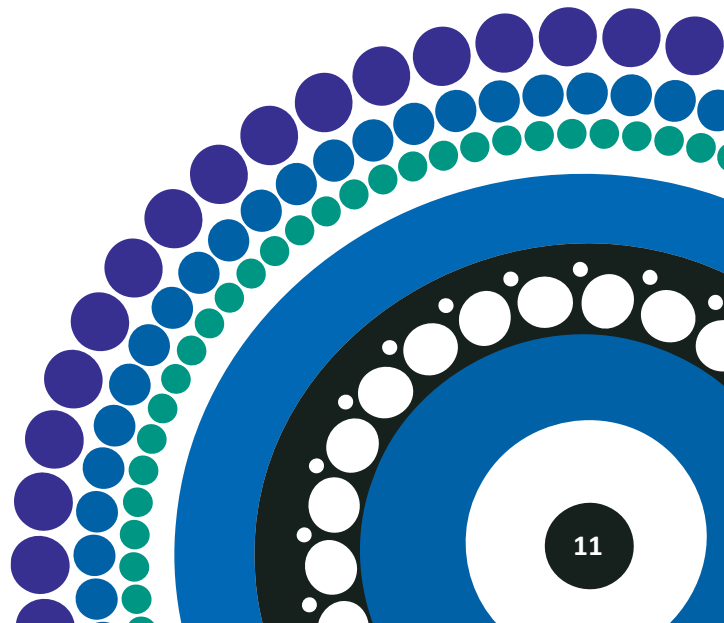
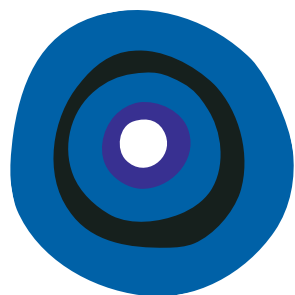
Our RAP artwork

'Message Carriers' by Curtis Haines

This artwork shows interpreters and translators from all walks of life united by their shared role as message carriers and keepers of language Elders and those with many languages walk beside emerging voices, symbolising the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and the unfolding journey of each language worker.

Lines surrounding them suggest the continuous, ongoing flow of professional learning and NAATI certification. The background hints at the deep pride felt by those who inhabit this space—a reverence for the role they play as bridges between worlds.

This painting is about the profound responsibility and quiet honour of carrying messages and holding language with care.



Relationships

NAATI continues to highlight the need to increase the supply of certified interpreters and translators for First Nations languages. Since 2012, NAATI has partnered with Australian governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to make certification testing more widely available in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. While the need always existed, heightened awareness of that need and better language policies are resulting in an increase in demand for quality interpreting services. The main objective of this partnership is to increase the number of certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters, and the number of languages that have certified practitioners, to meet this demand.

First Nations peoples have rich oral traditions and the development of written forms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages began post-colonisation. Translation work between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other languages has historically centred on bible translation and areas where bilingual education has been supported. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language services, communication policies and channels of communication evolve and adapt, NAATI has undertaken to consult with stakeholders on the application of the NAATI certification system to translators.

There are currently 88 practitioners in 22 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

NAATI recognises the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters and translators as central to upholding the cultural and linguistic rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians through language maintenance, social and economic inclusion, and self-determination. We remain committed to growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreting and translating sector by supporting individuals to achieve certification and advocating for trained and certified language professionals.

NAATI will explore opportunities and encourage certified practitioners in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages to be represented within Translating and Interpreting professional associations and be actively engaged in consultations and key decision making related to industry developments.



Focus area: Relationships supports the second pillar of our strategic plan, which is to support the growth and sustainability of the translating and interpreting profession.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	July 2026	COO
	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2026	COO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May to 3 June 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	April 2026, 2027	CEO
	• Organise at least one NRW event each year per state.	January 2026, 2027	COO
	• Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2026, 2027	Strategic Engagement Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	December 2026	HR Manager
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	September 2026	Strategic Engagement Manager
	• Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	July 2026	Strategic Engagement Manager
	• Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	July 2026	Strategic Engagement Manager
	• Target at least 2 events attended in each state office each year.	January 2026, 2027	CEO
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	February 2026	HR Manager
	• Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	February 2026	HR Manager
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	February 2026	HR Manager
	• Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	February 2026	COO
5. Build strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners and professional Translating and Interpreting associations.	• Explore opportunities to encourage certified practitioners in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language to be represented within Translating and Interpreting professional associations.	March 2026, 2027	COO
	• Seek opportunities and be actively engaged in consultations and key decision making related to industry developments that will impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners.	March 2026, 2027	COO

Respect

The United Nations recognises the right to speak one’s own language as a human right. In multicultural societies, interpreters and translators are integral to people’s linguistic rights being upheld. For this reason, NAATI has worked with stakeholders since 1977 to establish interpreting and translation as a profession in Australia.

NAATI was established to enable Australians from diverse language backgrounds to access and participate in social and political life, at a time when Australia adopted a multicultural national policy. However, Australia’s history of cultural and linguistic diversity stretches back many tens of thousands of years - and for many, to the beginning of time. In the late 18th century, when Australia was colonised by Britain, there were hundreds of languages spoken across the continent of Australia and a rich culture of multilingualism. Tragically, because of colonisation, most traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are no longer spoken or are in stages of ‘revival’.

However, there are still many traditional languages, and some new languages (creoles and mixed languages) considered ‘strong’ (being acquired by children as a first language), particularly in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, northern Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands. These vibrant communities of speakers, require and produce highly skilled interpreters.

Interpreting services for these languages were built up through the tireless work of passionate, committed and talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters, training organisations, advocates and government, supported by NAATI. This country’s First Nations peoples have worked hard for the right to be heard in their own languages. NAATI has participated in this work by certifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters since 1981.



Rungtjirpa (Simpsons Gap). Photo credit: Kym McDowell

Focus area: Respect aligns with our strategic objective to enable the existence of an adequate supply of appropriately credentialed translating and interpreting professionals, responsive to the changing needs and demography of Australia’s linguistically diverse society.

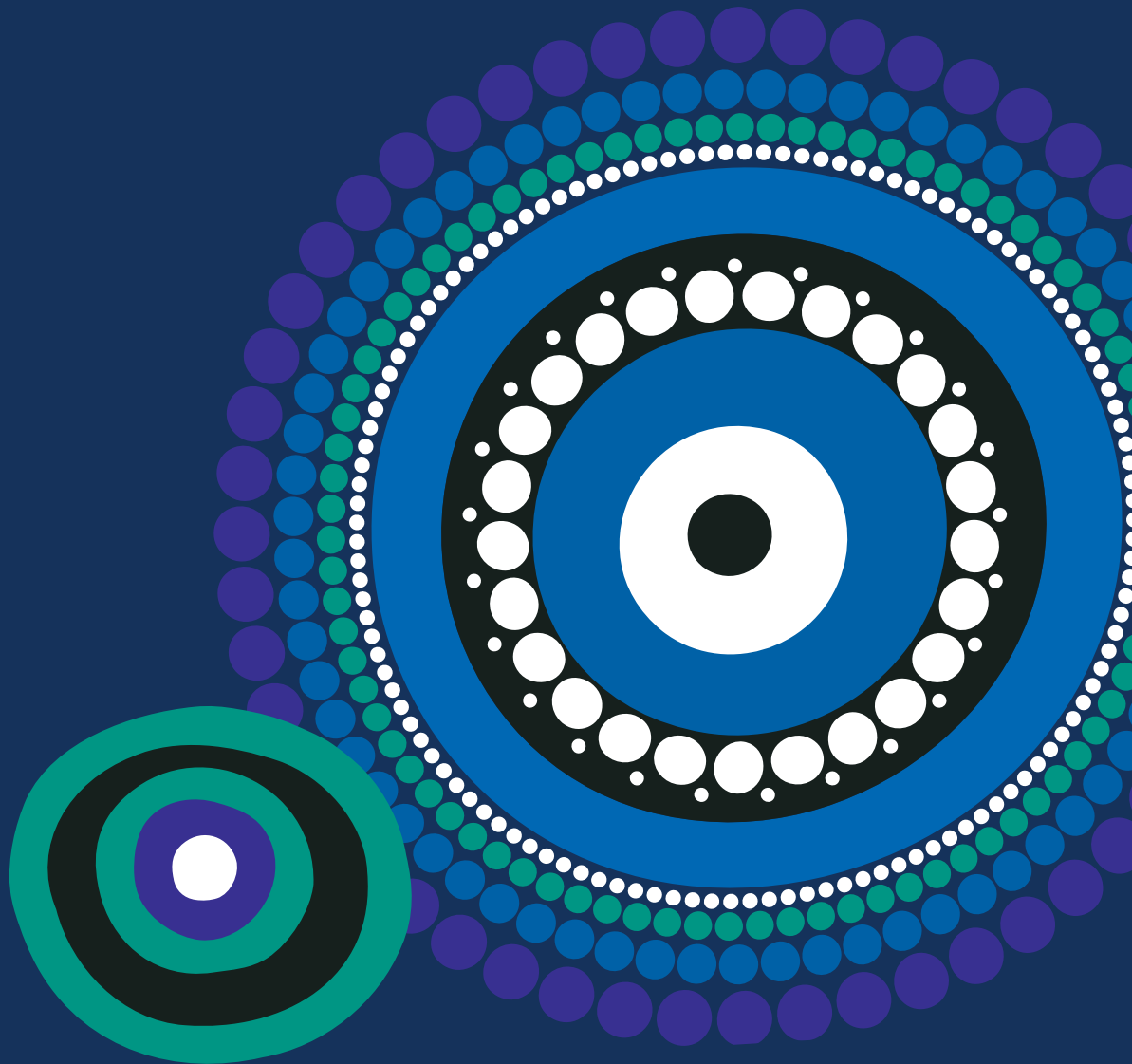
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2026	HR Manager
	• Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	June 2026	HR Manager
	• Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	July 2026	HR Manager
	• Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June 2026, 2027	CEO
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2026	RAP WG Chair
	• Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2026	RAP WG Chair
	• Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	June 2027	RAP WG Chair
	• Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	January 2027	RAP WG Chair
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	• Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	March 2026	HR Manager
	• Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	June 2026, 2027	CEO



Opportunities

Although NAATI's Innovate RAP includes items specifically for the organisation through procurement, employment, and professional development, the broader opportunity that can be realised is through an increase in the numbers, advocacy and respect for interpreters and translators of First Nations languages.

The First Nations interpreters, translators and examiners have a direct employment opportunity as professionals and effective interpreting overcomes cultural gaps, removes languages barriers, reduces misunderstandings and supports better health, education, and socioeconomic outcomes.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2026	HR Manager
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2026	HR Manager
	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2027	HR Manager
	• Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2026	HR Manager
	• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2026	HR Manager
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	June 2026	CFO
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership and Supply Nation JumpStart program.	June 2026	CFO
	• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	July 2026, 2027	CFO
	• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2026	CFO
	• Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	July 2027	COO
11. Increase the number of certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters, and the number of languages that have certified practitioners.	• Identify new languages for certification testing and training based on stakeholder recommendations and population data.	March 2026	IIP Manager
	• Engage with prospective interpreters and translators to determine desire and ability to become certified.	July 2026	IIP Manager
	• Conduct conversations with language service providers (LSPs) and other stakeholders to ensure employment outcomes are possible.	September 2026	IIP Manager
	• Conduct training and development with examiners.	October 2026	IIP Manager
	• Deliver testing and certification on successful results.	March 2027	IIP Manager
	• Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals and an investment in a stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreting and translating industry.	June 2026, 2027	IIP Manager


Governance


Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	January 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and maintain a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	April 2026, 2027	Manager, Corporate Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation. 	February, May, August, November 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation in budget. 	May 2026	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	June 2026, 2027	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	February 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management. 	January 2026, review June 2026, 2027	CEO
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June annually	Manager, Corporate Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. 	1 August annually	Manager, Corporate Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September annually	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. 	March, June, September, December 2026, 2027	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. 	July annually	RAP WG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. 	April 2026	Manager, Corporate Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP. 	December 2027	RAP WG Chair
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	July 2027	RAP WG Chair





Contact details

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