

Reconciliation Action Plan

Reflect

February 2022 - February 2023

Cool Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, sea and waters on which we work, live and engage. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



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CEO STATEMENT



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Cool to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Cool joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program’s potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

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

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

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Cool to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia’s reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Cool, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

In the spirit of Reconciliation with Australia's First Nations peoples, we are pleased to be presenting our Reconciliation Action Plan.

This RAP formalises the organisation's ongoing and deep commitment to listening to the stories, successes and failings of the past and present, to learn from these and to partner in building a just and equitable future.

This process has been an important opportunity for Cool to pause, reflect and evaluate how far we have come as an organisation and to understand how far we still have to go.

Goodwill and intention must transform into action. It is these actions that Cool lives by and weaves into our educational content at every available opportunity.

Our ability to have an impact on Reconciliation is growing in strength every week as more and more educators join our platform, download curriculum-aligned lessons and investigate the stories and cultures of Australia's First Nations peoples.

We build unique partnerships to bring the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into Australian classrooms. We encourage and support educators to embrace the teaching of challenging topics around racism and inclusion.

Cool is dedicated to ensuring the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heard and understood. We are committed to continuing to build relationships with our First Nations partners and to continue to reach out to those whose voices are not yet heard.

In doing so we wish to acknowledge the tens of thousands of years of teaching and learning on Country which took place before colonisation and which continues today.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a guide to the future Australia we want and need to embrace which honours, acknowledges, celebrates and ensures sovereignty for First Nations.

~ Jan Owen AM



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

For more than a decade Cool has been working with First Nations education organisations to get stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into the classroom around Australia. With a presence in more than 90% of Australian schools, it is important for Cool to continue our journey of understanding, learning and growing together. We're committed to providing a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives.

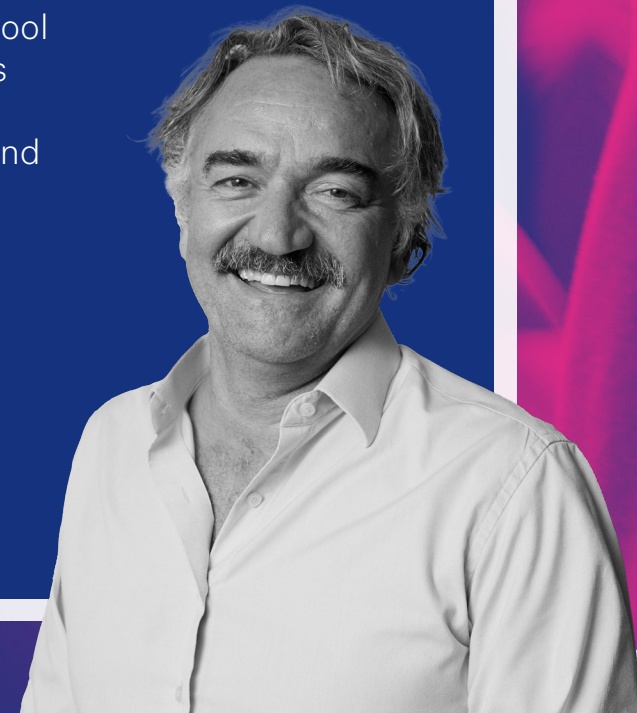
Meanwhile, back at headquarters, it is more important than ever that we learn, embed and immerse the Cool team in better understanding what it means to be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in Australia today; and to be respectful of histories past, of the challenges of the present and the hopes for our shared futures.

The only way forward to true reconciliation is with a shared vision of a future together that is accepting and respectful. As an organisation, Cool is committed to not only achieving the goals set out in our RAP but to thinking about how we can exceed our expectations and spread the story of deep and purposeful understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

What is it like to live in two cultures and have English as your second or third language? What challenges do non-Indigenous Australians have to overcome to truly understand the concept of Country being something that we belong to rather than something that is owned? It is way beyond an idea and a few clever speeches; it is a way of life to be explored with hope and an open heart.

It's all about deep listening, understanding and taking the time to learn from others. It's about being open to knowledge and oral histories that have been handed down through millennia. The Cool Reconciliation Action Plan is a passion project that has brought together all parts of our team with a common purpose. To do better at understanding, recognising and acting on our path to a reconciled Australia.

~ Jason Kimberley



OUR BUSINESS

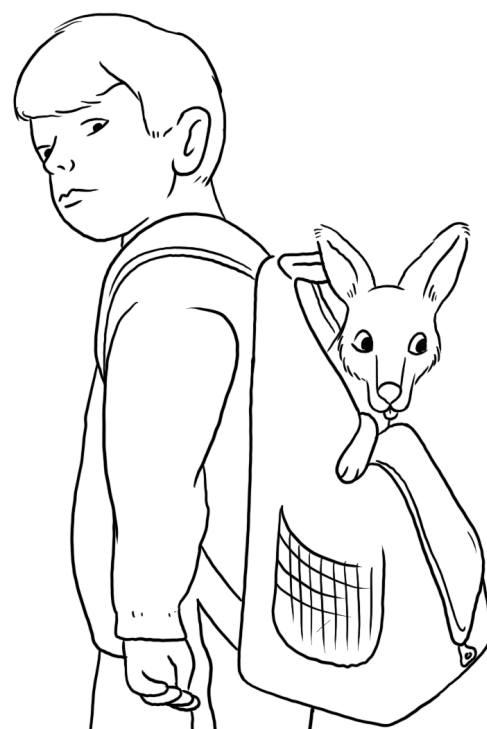
Cool (Australia) provides access to high-quality education so that all students can reach their full potential, now and in the future. We create real-world education resources which are FREE to access and download via our digital education platform.

We build the capacity of teachers, parents and early learning educators to provide quality education. Our resources embed environmental, social and economic issues into core subject areas, such as English, Science, Art and Maths. We use content that kids care about to engage them in their learning. With the aim of empowering each and every student to become an agent of change, we give them the tools and know-how to solve real-world issues. The ultimate problem we are aiming to address is inequality and the precarious state of our natural world. Our lessons cover climate change, biodiversity, social justice issues, creativity in STEM to solve real-world issues, 21st century skills and much more. Our action-based pedagogical approach means that kids are enabled to take action on issues that are important to them.

We support more than 170,000 educators and parents/carers, and 3.6 million students; 52% of Australian teachers use our resources; we also have members further afield in regions like New Zealand, India and the UK.

We are a team of 16 passionate individuals, educators, technology experts, communicators and connectors. Our office is located in Windsor, Victoria, on Wurundjeri Country, and our team lives and works across the Countries of the Wurundjeri, Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, and Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation.

Currently, we do not have any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people on staff, but we regularly consult with (and contract) First Nations people to support the development of our education resources.



OUR RAP

As a leader in Australian education, we have a responsibility to take a leading role in reconciliation. Our small and passionate team is extremely committed to equity in education and society at large. We want to do everything in our power to contribute to a future where First Nations students feel culturally safe and included in every classroom across the country. In addition to our collective aspirations to change societal structures that enable inequality, we are all on individual journeys to really know and understand the histories and cultures of the Traditional Custodians of this beautiful landscape now called Australia.

Every Cool team member is contributing to our RAP actions. Collectively and individually we are engaging in the process of learning and changing our processes and the way we do things. We are holding ourselves and each other accountable via monthly meetings and by using our in-house project-management software to track and report on our progress. Whilst our RAP process is being driven from within the team itself, it has strong support from leadership and the board.



Our nominated RAP Champion holds the position of Head of Community Engagement and heads up our relationships management, funding and reporting team. This role is outward-facing and maintains our relationships with funding partners whilst driving our ongoing connections with First Nations (and other) consultants and experts at the project proposal stage. This makes it the ideal role to drive our RAP commitments.

The following vision statements were developed through a collaborative team process and envision the progress that we hope Cool will have made in five years' time.

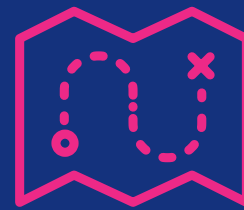
OUR VISION FOR 2026



WORKPLACE

We feel connected to and responsible for the lands, cultures and Countries where we work and know local community members and sites of significance.

Our office displays art, resources and symbols to create a welcoming and inclusive space.



HOW WE DO THINGS

Our solidarity with First Nations organisations and individuals guides how we approach our work and everyday practices.

We value diverse cultural perspectives and are known to be knowledgeable and consultative in First Nations topics and initiatives.



WORKFORCE

We actively pursue opportunities to employ and partner with First Nations peoples and organisations and continue to grow our understanding of First Nations histories and cultures.



HOW WE LEAD

We share our experience and work with other organisations, teachers, educators, parents, caregivers, students and children to support their reconciliation journeys.



WHAT WE CREATE

We create inclusive classroom environments by developing culturally rich and relevant materials that embed First Nations knowledge systems and perspectives across all subject areas.

Our resources support and advocate for genuine and ongoing connections between schools and First Nations individuals and organisations.



HOW WE FEEL

We feel connected to and responsible for the lands, cultures and Countries where we work and know local community members and sites of significance.

Our office displays art, resources and symbols to create a welcoming and inclusive space.

Marie

Jarryd Bendall

OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

Cool.org, our new education hub, is in development and will replace our legacy website in mid 2022.

Cool.org will have an updated design, search engine and functionalities to ensure educators, parents and students have an exceptional user experience. The simplified name and associated branding allows us to continue to expand our international users and partners, whilst remaining relevant to our Australian teacher member base.

Below are organisations we have partnered with to date:

- AIME - IMAGI-NATION{TV}
- Bunya Productions - Blue Water Empire
- Closer Productions - In My Blood It Runs
- NAILSMA and Nature Conservancy - Cool Burning
- Reconciliation Australia - Brave New Clan
- Shark Island Productions - The Final Quarter
- SNAICC - Children's Day
- Take 3 for the Sea - Project-Based Learning Unit

We are currently building relationships with the following organisations and projects:

- Stronger Smarter Institute - Mutual Professional Learning
- Australians Together
- Think Films - Banjo Morton
- Common Ground



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



AIATSIS Training

Our whole team has now completed units from the AIATSIS Core Cultural Learning Program. We met together in a yarning circle on 23rd June 2021 to discuss our thoughts and feelings in response to the content in the online course.

The team reflected a desire to learn more and to develop greater levels of understanding and comfort in listening to truth. A shared desire in the team was to be more conscious about our identities and behaviours as non-Aboriginal people living in Australia and lean into becoming more effective allies.

Stronger Smarter Training

Members of the Education Team and staff in partnership roles will complete The Introduction to Stronger Smarter Online Professional Learning Module which presents the Stronger Smarter Approach™ (SSA) and examines critical elements of practice in schools working to make a difference in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The module introduces key concepts of the SSA and encourages participants to reflect on their capacity to make a difference and explores ways to enhance educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We aim to complete this learning by February 2022.

RAP Learning and Accountability Meetings

The Cool team has held regular meetings to explore reconciliation since March 2021. These meetings included knowledge sharing, connection activities and training about the RAP led by the RAP Working Group. Through in-house sessions, we learned about appropriate terminology, the art of dadirri, communication protocols relating to First Nations peoples and we completed some hands-on activities, including a woven yarn circle where we passed around a ball of yarn to identify and weave together our commonalities as a group.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Koori Heritage Trust River Walk

On the 9th April 2021, several members of the Cool Australia team attended a voluntary, company-funded, river walk led by the Koorie Heritage Trust. We enjoyed walking along Birrarung Marr and learning about the cultural artwork, spears and shields and other points of interest we had regularly walked past but never stopped to consider. It was a good opportunity for the team to get out of the office, connect with nature and each other and consider the impact of colonisation on the natural environment and local peoples. We were most fascinated to hear about the change to the river over time, including the removal of a natural waterfall, and enjoyed exploring the beautiful artworks in the Koorie Heritage Trust exhibit.

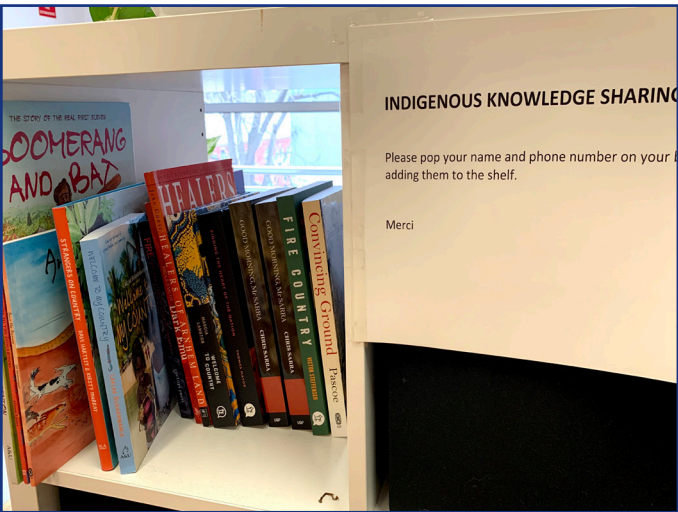


Spinifex Gum Concert

The day continued with some staff members attending a concert at the Myer Music Bowl with Spinifex Gum. Spinifex Gum is a musical collaboration between The Cat Empire's Felix Riebl and Ollie McGill, and Marliya Choir, a talented group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait teenage female singers from Cairns conducted by Lyn Williams (AM) and choreographed by Deborah Brown. The team were deeply moved by the concert, both by the immense talent and the powerful lyrics. Cool and Spinifex Gum are looking to secure funding to pursue a collaborative education project.

Changes in the Office

Our Windsor office now houses a First Nations Knowledge Sharing Library where we share and explore books and information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics. Several members have prioritised reading Dark Emu by Bruce Pascoe to gain a better understanding of what life might have been like prior to the invasion of the British.



Cool Australia’s Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Review and monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	July 2022	General Manager
	Review and monitor application of best practices and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July 2022	General Manager
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2022	Marketing Campaign Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2022	Head of Community Engagement
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Reiterate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	August 2022	RAP Champion
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2022	Education Specialist
	Identify and monitor RAP and other like-minded organisations that we can collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	August 2022	Education Specialist
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	September 2022	Head of Education
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	November 2022	Head of Education

Cool Australia’s Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2022	Head of Digital Marketing
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2022	General Manager
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	September 2022	Education Specialist
	Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	April 2022	Education Specialist
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2022	Head Writer
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2022	Head Writer
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	4-11 July 2022	Head Writer

Cool Australia’s Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	April 2022	Head of Partnerships
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2022	Head of Partnerships
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2022	Office Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 2022	RAP Working Group
Promote Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education to staff and external stakeholders.	Promote Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to schools and early learning services within our network, and encourage them to develop their own RAPs via the Narragunnawali platform.	April 2022	Marketing Campaign Manager
	Encourage all staff to engage with the professional learning (including webinar) resources available via Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education online platform.	October 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Encourage our network to sign up to the Narragunnawali News mailing list.	May 2022	Marketing Campaign Manager
	Host an appropriate link to Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education platform on our website.	May 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Help promote and encourage schools/early learning services within our network who have shown exceptional commitment to reconciliation to apply for a 2023 Narragunnawali Award.	November 2022	Marketing Campaign Manager

Cool Australia’s Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Review and monitor RWG and RAP implementation.	August 2022	RAP Champion
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	April 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March 2022	General Manager
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2022	Head of Community Engagement
	Review and monitor appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August 2022	Head of Community Engagement
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022	RAP Champion
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2022	RAP Champion

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