



AMES Australia Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

September 2020 – September 2021



A message from Reconciliation Australia



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

AMES Australia 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 over 2.3 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 AMES Australia 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 AMES Australia, 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

A message from our Chief Executive Officer

Our work over seven decades with individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds means that we at AMES Australia know very well the importance and value of culture, traditions, history and language.

That is why I am pleased to introduce the very first AMES Australia Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).



The plan is a recognition of our resolve to engage respectfully with first nations' peoples; and it underpins our commitment to the reconciliation process and to the principles of justice, equity, consultation, democracy, and respect for human dignity.

We at AMES Australia endeavour to be welcoming in all our activities, from supporting people from diverse backgrounds to settle in Australia and achieve economic and social participation to fostering social cohesion between communities while promoting Australia's successful brand of multiculturalism.

Indeed, the aims of the reconciliation movement are parallel in many ways to our own organisational vision of 'full participation for all in a cohesive and diverse society'.

We have young indigenous Australians among our client base and, as a provider of education and training, we are committed to sharing the message of reconciliation; while also making our learning and working environments culturally safe spaces and recognising the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In our work welcoming newcomers to the country, we are always mindful of the heritage and customs of Australia's indigenous peoples and the example they have set over millennia of unity and goodwill between diverse peoples.

Our own amazing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members have been central to the creation of this document and I want to thank them.

I also want to thank the team that has developed our action plan and, not least, Reconciliation Australia for their ongoing partnership and collaboration.

I look forward to working with our community partners, board, executive and our staff and volunteers in implementing this plan and bringing about meaningful and sustainable change.

Cath Scarth
Chief Executive Officer
AMES Australia

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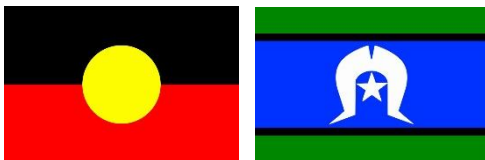
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AMES RAP - September 2020 – September 2021 Plan



AMES Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Introduction to AMES Australia

Our Business

For 60 years AMES Australia (AMES) has helped new and recently arrived migrants to settle in to Victoria. AMES not only works with new arrivals but also with the community, business and Government to develop sustainable and effective settlement solutions for our community.

AMES provides a comprehensive range of settlement services for refugees and migrants. These include on-arrival settlement support, English language and literacy training, vocational education and training, and employment services. These services are primarily delivered through the following federal and state contracts:

- Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)
- Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program
- Skills First
- Jobactive

Delivering all of these programs at the same time gives AMES a unique perspective of our clients' journeys and provides insights that allow us to build individual client pathways and to adapt or create bridging programs between the core services.

AMES is a national organisation, with services delivered from over 26 sites locations across metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

AMES Vision

Our vision is a "full participation for all in a cohesive and diverse society." AMES achieves this through innovation, advocacy, partnership, influence and sustainability.

AMES focus is on the social and economic participation of the community to seek to achieve short and long-term outcomes for individuals, families and the boarder community. This framework drives AMES Australia's strategic priorities to:

- Extend work to improve client outcomes including the economic wellbeing of women.
- Apply digital technologies to achieve better outcomes.
- Contribute to the evidence base to improve settlement policies and practices.
- Promote the benefits of the diverse social capital of newly arrived communities to the broader society.
- Invest in the capacity, diversity, resilience and innovation of AMES Australia, its staff and volunteers.

AMES works closely with a range of advisory and community groups that provide information about ways to increase participation in AMES Services to achieve outcomes for clients undertaking our services. These groups include those representing or providing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people experiencing homelessness and people with disabilities.

AMES Values:

AMES values which are set out in the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees are:

Responsiveness:	We respond in a timely way with our best work
Integrity:	We are honest, ethical and transparent
Impartiality:	We behave in the best interests of the public by making fair and objective decisions
Accountability:	We hold ourselves and others to account for the work that we do
Respect:	We value others and accept their differences
Leadership:	We are genuine, supportive and do the right thing
Human Rights:	We uphold and respect the rights of others

AMES Workforce

Our workforce of 760 staff is comprised of a mix of permanent and maximum/short term contracts, as well as casual staff, with 3 employees who identify as Aboriginal people.

Our RAP Journey

Our reconciliation journey

In 2020, AMES embarked on the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) journey with the creation of the AMES Acknowledgement to Country. Since this time, AMES has been implementing actions to improve the cultural safety of the services including installing cultural symbols such as displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at reception areas, the publication of our Acknowledgement of Country banner on our websites and emails. In addition, AMES engaged an intern as part of the Victorian Public Sector Barring Djinang Aboriginal Employment Strategy. Through this journey, AMES has sought to formalise the organisation's commitment to reconciliation.

As this is the first Reflect RAP, this plan will provide a map to the start of our journey to support reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the wider community. It demonstrates our commitment to learn new ways to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and our communities.

Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to provide all Australians access and support to actively participate in AMES Services. In line with this aim, our vision for reconciliation is the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in programs and workplaces which are truly inclusive.

Through education and personal development opportunities, AMES staff will be equipped with cultural competency, knowledge and compassion to provide culturally safe and appropriate settlement, education and employment services.

By developing organisational capacity to support and build meaningful relationships with the First Peoples of this land, AMES will gain an understanding in order to facilitate trust in the services offered, which will assist in the settlement, employment and education in a diverse society.

Our RAP

AMES has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in order to:

- demonstrate how staff and senior leadership can embrace reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the broader community;
- show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that AMES is motivated to learn about the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate, about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and about challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia;
- seek support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve AMES Australia vision.

Our RAP Champions

At AMES our RAP is championed by the Chief Executive Officer and the General Manager People and Development.

AMES will also establish a RAP Working Group consisting of individuals across the organisation which will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation. The RAP Working Group will be invited to review it's own Terms of Reference and offer guidance and support on the implementation and governance of our RAP.

Our approach to implementing our RAP

Reconciliation is the work of building together relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the wider community for the benefit of all. Inclusion is at the heart of reconciliation, just as it is central to AMES vision.

AMES is committed to supporting a workforce that recognises, encourages and respects reconciliation by providing opportunities for employees to build their cultural understanding and make their own personal journey towards reconciliation.

In addition, AMES will develop culturally appropriate and inclusive services that enable a wider participation, therefore staff need a strengthened understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

This RAP will give AMES Australia an agreed set of measurable, tangible outcomes that demonstrate our commitment to the reconciliation process.

These outcomes focus on:

- building strong and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- developing culturally responsive services for full participation for all in a cohesive and diverse society;
- celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,

- their cultures and histories;
- ensuring greater participation; and
- contributing to the broader social, cultural and economic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.



Relationships

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	October 2020	<i>Human Resource Officer – Employee Relations (ER), People and Development (P&D)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	December 2020	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May- June 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	May- June 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May- June 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	November 2020	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D; Senior Manager Development and</i>

			<i>Innovation, CEO Office</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	November 2020	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D; Senior Manager Development and Innovation, CEO Office</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations, such as TAFE, Settlement and Job Services Australia organisations, that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	November 2020	<i>Senior Manager Development and Innovation, CEO Office</i>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	February 2021	<i>General Manager P&D, Senior Manager HR Shared Services, HR Business Partner, P&D</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	May 2021	<i>HR Business Partner, P&D</i>



Respect

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	October 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D; Learning and Development Manager
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area. 	August 2021	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D; Safety and Wellbeing Coordinator,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	April 2021	Senior Manager HR Shared Services, HR Business Partner, Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 	November 2020, July 2021	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D

and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	November 2020, July 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	November 2020, July 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>



Opportunities

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	March 2021	<i>Recruitment Manager, P&D</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	March 2021	<i>Recruitment Manager, Learning and Development Manager, P&D</i>
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	April 2021	<i>Senior Manager Accommodation & Administration, Administration Services Finance</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	May 2021	<i>Senior Manager Accommodation & Administration, Administration Services Finance</i>



Governance

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	November 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG 	November 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	November 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP Commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	November 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Senior Leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	November 2020	HR Business Partner, General Manager P&D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP Commitments. 	November 2020	Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP Achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	September 2021	Senior Manager HR Shared Services, HR Shared Services P&D

13. 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 2021	<i>Human Resource Officer – ER, P&D</i>
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