



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

STRETCH

STRETCH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

May 2022 - May 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

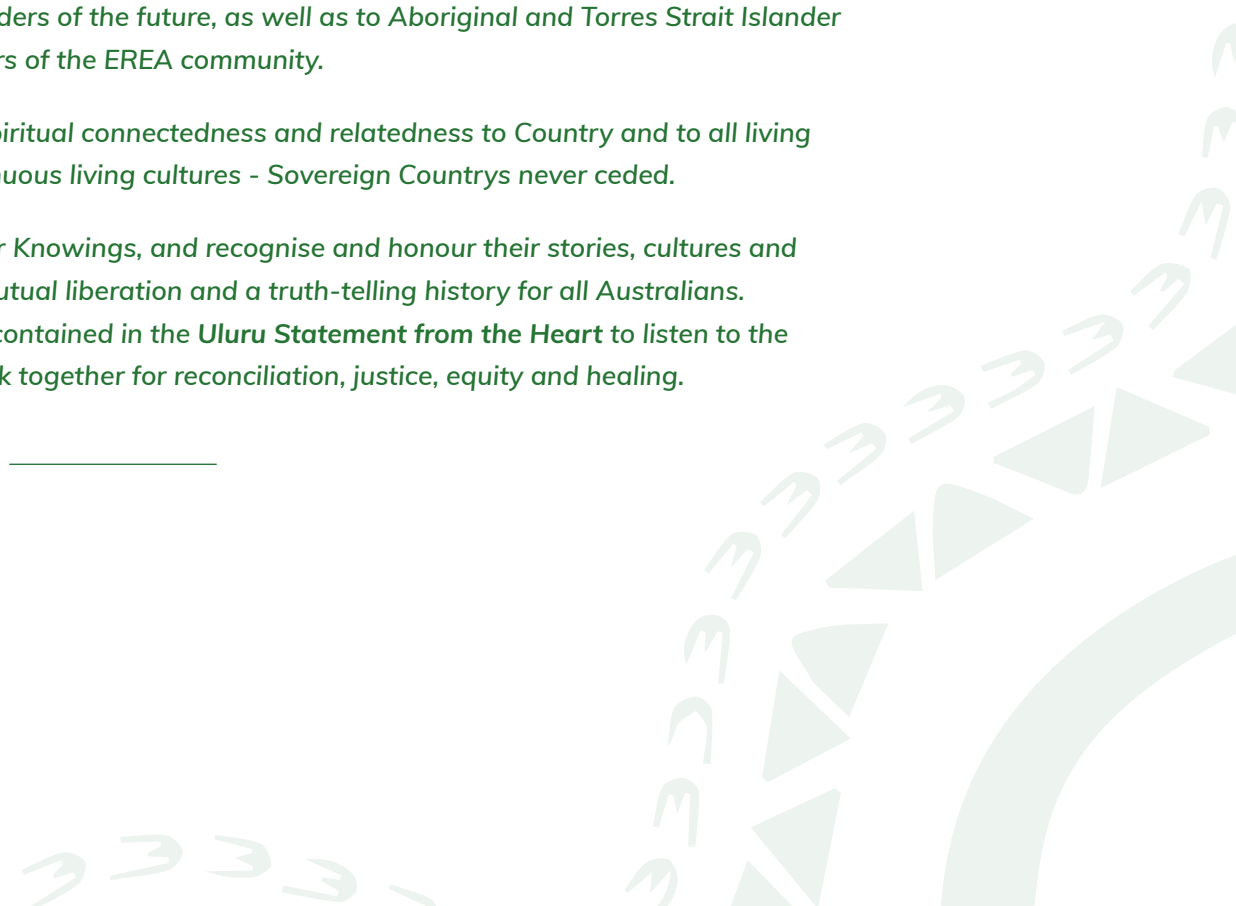
We acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Countrys on which our schools and offices are located. We also acknowledge Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Torres Strait Islands.

We pay our respects to Ancestors, Elders and leaders of the future, as well as to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the EREA community.

Edmund Rice Education Australia values the spiritual connectedness and relatedness to Country and to all living systems of the world's oldest, continuous living cultures - Sovereign Countrys never ceded.

We value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowings, and recognise and honour their stories, cultures and achievements, as we walk together for mutual liberation and a truth-telling history for all Australians.

In this spirit, we are accepting the invitation contained in the **Uluru Statement from the Heart** to listen to the First Peoples of Australia and to work together for reconciliation, justice, equity and healing.



Message from the Executive Director: Dr Craig Wattam

On National Sorry Day in 2022, we acknowledged the fifth anniversary of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, in which First Nations Peoples, “coming from all points of the southern sky”, extended the invitation: “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.” As members of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), we have publicly endorsed the *Uluru Statement* as a sign of our commitment to act for reconciliation and to provide a liberating education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and non-Indigenous children and young people, in our early learning services and schools.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation and Learning

We have committed to reconciliation, noting that the “Reconciliation movement in Australia is at a tipping point, and that we as a nation need to move from a space of ‘safe’ to ‘brave’ on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”¹ EREA’s Stretch RAP seeks to further embed reconciliation initiatives in our organisational culture. The Stretch RAP has been developed at the same time as our new EREA Learning Statement “Implementing Liberating Practice to Co-create a Better World”. The key deliverable of this statement is “to explicitly co-creating the learning conditions, dispositions and relationships to enable deep listening, confidence, agency and freedom”.

Furthering our commitment to Reconciliation through a Stretch RAP

In advancing the five dimensions of reconciliation – Race Relations, Equality and Equity, Institutional Integrity, Historical Acceptance and Unity – EREA

wishes to provide strong leadership in promoting respectful relationships and creating meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The EREA National Stretch RAP will provide guidance and momentum for each EREA school to integrate and embed the values and priorities of the reconciliation movement into the fabric of their school cultures – their daily ways of being, knowing and doing.



In creating a Stretch RAP, our commitment to reconciliation is further extended. We will continue to review and expand the embedding of reconciliation principles in all domains of Governance within our organisation, to ensure that we identify and provide opportunities, remove barriers to inclusion and listen respectfully to the voices of First Nations Australians.

Our Actions for reconciliation will ensure that First Nations ways of Knowing, Doing and Being are recognised, valued and represented in the fabric of our organisational structures and leadership development, and in all facets of daily life in our school communities. Finally, on our reconciliation journey, we commit to continual cycles of learning, unlearning and relearning, to improve the cultural competency of all non- Indigenous employees, so that we become proactive in our pursuit of justice, healing and restoration, in order to create a shared identity as Australians which reflects the best of all of us, as we ensure that past wrongdoings are never repeated.

¹ 2021 State of Reconciliation Report, p.4. Retrieved from [State-of-Reconciliation-in-Australia-report_2021_full.pdf](#)

Message from Chair of EREA RAP Working Group: Dr Nerida Blair

Reconciliation requires acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's sovereignty, never ceded. As Chair of the Stretch RAP Working Group (EREA Reconciliation Executive Reference Group), I acknowledge this. Reconciliation requires vulnerability: vulnerability that is personal, spiritual, intellectual, physical and institutional.

Our storying as a nation comprises many nations' storys, storys which add depth, meaning and context. EREA has a national footprint capable of bringing these storys to the forefront of transformative education. The creation of a Stretch RAP is one thing. The commitment to transformative practice within continual cycles of learning, unlearning and relearning is another. This can be challenging business. It is in this context that vulnerability and honesty are fundamental. If in the implementation of this Stretch RAP mistakes are made, it is essential to acknowledge and own them and to learn from them.

Systemic change is challenging. It is important to celebrate real change at every level and at every opportunity. Within the same organisation people feel and experience elements of reconciliation at different levels. The process of reconciliation begins with self and embraces collaboration.

This Stretch RAP asks that EREA go beyond cultural competence, that EREA embody Indigenous Knowings through its pillars, through all its layers as an organisation. I thank the members of the Stretch RAP Working Group for sharing their insights and experience throughout the process of creating this Stretch RAP. I thank the staff of EREA for their commitment, for their voices and their passion for this process. I particularly thank Thelma Parker who, as a Waluwarra, Wangkamana and Wangkayujuru woman, has demonstrated leadership in complex and difficult circumstances.

Enjoy the transformative practice from here.

Dr Nerida Blair
EREA Stretch RAP Working Group Chairperson



Message from Reconciliation Australia's CEO: Karen Mundine

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Formed around the pillars of *relationships, respect, and opportunities*, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise. Through the creation of this Stretch RAP, EREA continues to contribute to the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have taken this consideration and goodwill and transformed it into action.

EREA has made significant strides on its reconciliation journey so far, focussing on making its schools culturally safe, welcoming environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This has included creating a cultural practice tool for the whole EREA community to use, as well as creating tailored processes for schools with high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. The latter has involved making sure to gain input from First Nations community members on the recruitment of school leaders, to better meet the needs of the school and its students. EREA has also championed and pushed for reconciliation across its sphere of influence, encouraging its schools to get involved with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program. With 90 per cent of its schools now engaged in the program, and its own St Virgil's College in Hobart, Tasmania taking home the schools category award at the Narragunnawali Awards 2021, this encouragement is having far-reaching effects. These successes are indicative of the strong foundations that EREA has built through its reconciliation activities so far – and a signal of what is to come.

This Stretch RAP sees EREA continue this impressive trajectory, developing its commitments and capabilities for further impact. It plans to expand the professional development of its staff, deepening its engagement with the Narragunnawali program, and going one step further, providing its employees with resources on the Uluru Statement from the Heart. EREA is also forming partnerships with universities and First Nations researchers to create research that improves the lives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and young people at its schools. It will work alongside AIATSIS to make sure its research practices are culturally safe and respectful. The learning and experience garnered through these initiatives will be crucial sources of information and guidance as EREA continues to advance reconciliation through its work.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend EREA on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



EREA Core Business and Spheres of Influence

Our National Offices, located in Melbourne and Brisbane, have responsibility for the governance of 55 schools. EREA schools are a diverse collection of educational centres offering a liberating education, based upon a Gospel spirituality, within an inclusive community committed to justice and solidarity. These schools reflect the diversity of the Australian community – early learning, primary and secondary, all-boys and co-education, alternative education, boarding schools, education for those with disabilities and for refugees, within inner-city, urban, rural and remote schools. EREA educates more than 40,000 children and young people across Australia and employs 4,500 staff, of which 98 are Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander people.

EREA acknowledges that it governs schools which are situated on the Country of 27 Traditional Owner groups. This includes schools in every state and territory of Australia. Across our 55 schools, 98 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Staff are employed in a range of roles. This equates to 2.15% of the total staff across EREA schools. More specifically, in EREA colleges, 11 teachers and 24.4 (FTE) non-teaching staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. In EREA Flexi Schools, 12.3 teachers and an additional 50.4 (FTE) non-teaching staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. The 2021 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staffing numbers demonstrate an increase on the 2019 numbers shown in the Innovate RAP. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people make up 4.4% of the total enrolment in EREA schools in 2021 (2.9% of total mainstream enrolments / 28.4% of total flexi school enrolments).

Within the National Office staff, 1 of 43 employees (2.32%) identifies as an Aboriginal person. The Stretch RAP identifies the goal of increasing this number to 3 of 43 in the National Office (6.97%).

The EREA National Offices and its 55 schools provide points of connection and influence for students, young people, parents, carers and ex-students across Australia. EREA schools collaborate with broader educational communities and organisations in the Catholic, independent and government sectors as well as higher education and non-for-profit agencies. EREA has global influence through Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders which connects EREA Schools with Edmund Rice schools in India, Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Canada, the United States of America, Peru, Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay.

For the last four years, EREA has had a Memorandum of Understanding with KAIROS First Nations Canada in relation to the use of the “Blanket Exercise”, a First Nations Canada expression of Truth Telling. EREA has written its own version titled “The Waterhole Exercise”, an immersion into the First Nations experience of intergenerational trauma.

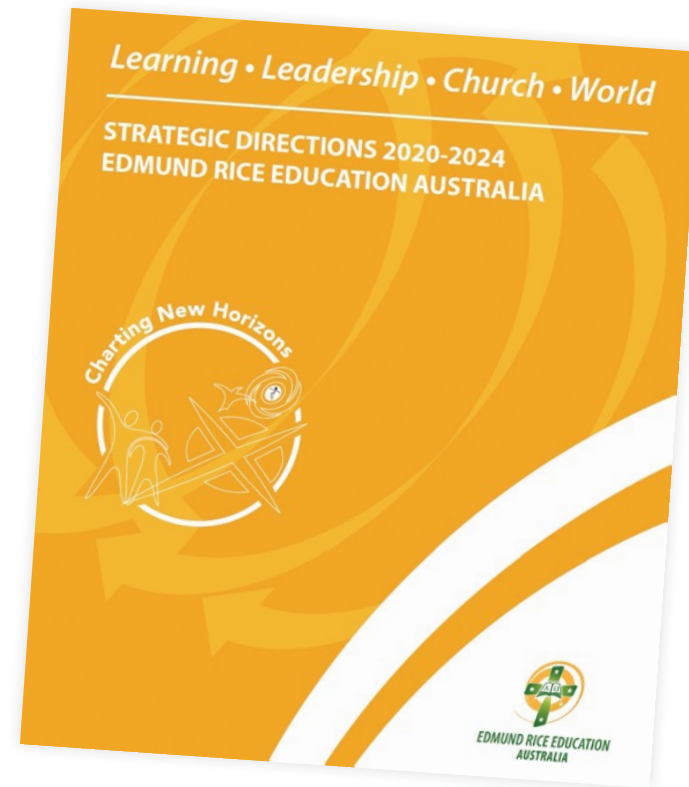
Our Vision for Reconciliation

Edmund Rice Education Australia continues to walk in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Through respectful partnerships, EREA is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and sustaining environment and a culturally enriching education for all children and young people. EREA values the wisdom and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and aspires to deepening an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowings throughout the curriculum, the cultural life and leadership of EREA schools.

Building on the achievements and challenges of our Innovate RAP, EREA commits to a Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan to embed our practices, to influence and learn from our communities and stakeholders, and honour our accountabilities in relation to Respect, Relationships and Opportunities.

EREA's vision for reconciliation requires new levels of accountability and shared responsibility for the work of reconciliation. With 90% of schools and early learning services engaging with the Narragunnawali RAP process to develop their Vision and a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation, we aim to increase this to 100%. This will be achieved through identified practical actions within their local school contexts.

EREA acknowledges the harm which has been done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by British colonisation and the extensive loss and pain which has resulted, including the Stolen Generations. Our vision for reconciliation incorporates significant and ongoing truth-telling processes to counteract and transform our systems to ensure that cultural practice is instilled and integrated within our schools. This will strengthen our national identity.



In this context, and inspired by the Spirit in urgently recognising the past, present and responding to current realities and alternative futures, EREA commits to:

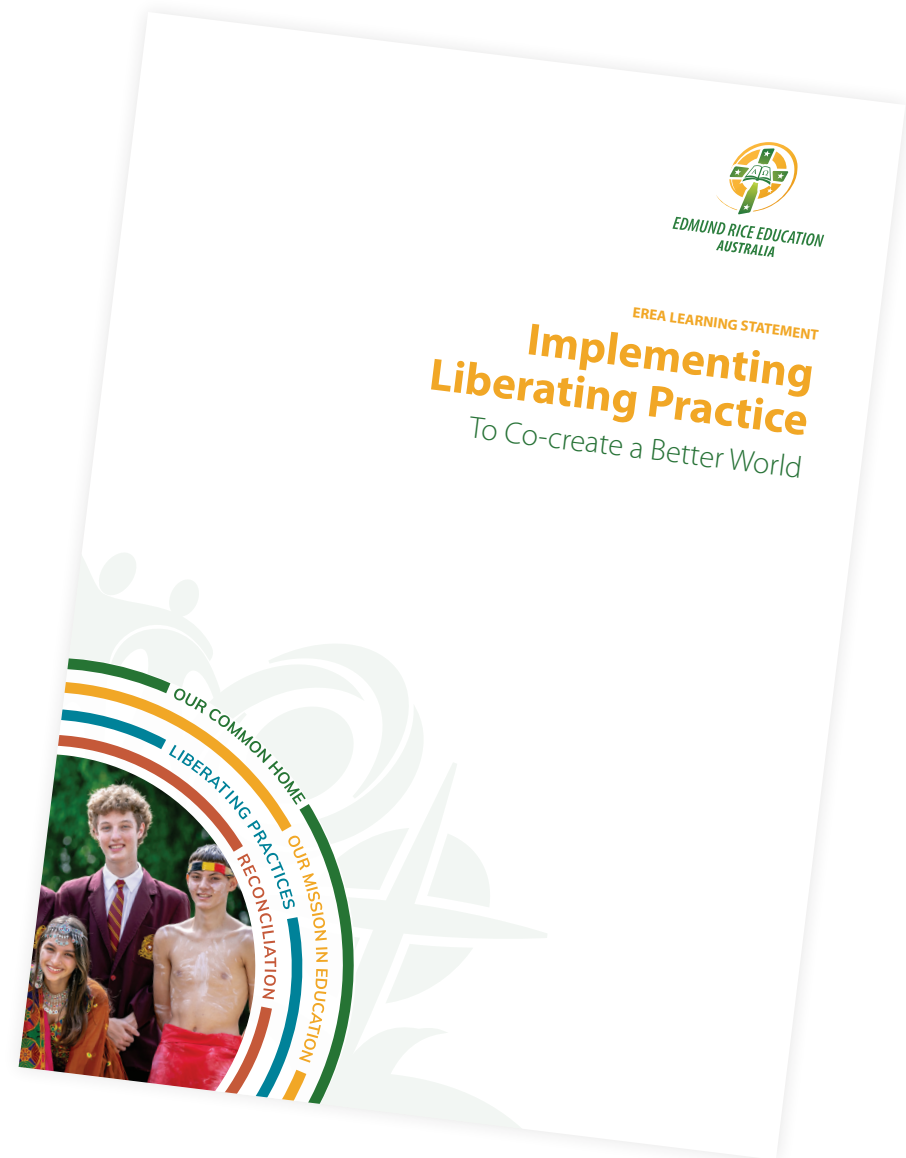
A vision for reconciliation through walking together for mutual liberation, valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowings and recognising Australia's shared histories, cultures and achievements.

EREA's Vision for Learning

EREA's learning intention is to deepen the understanding and application of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowings throughout the cultural life, leadership and, most critically, the learning processes of EREA Schools.

In solidarity with this vision, our Learning Statement provides an educational pathway that honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures and enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to 'see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas' (ACARA, 2021). Additionally, EREA strives to align with the challenges of 'unlearning, learning, and re-learning' proposed by Reconciliation Australia (2021).

The wisdom of Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann is highlighted by her inclusion as one of four "liberating educators and practitioners" as she addresses the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have a voice in the sharing of knowledge. Her concept of Dadirri, a way of life emphasising deep listening, provides an ancient insight into contemporary, transformative educational practice.



Why is EREA Developing and Actioning a Stretch RAP?

As a National Catholic Education provider, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership through example, modelling inclusion and respect for the rich and diverse First Nations Cultures of Australia. As we refocus on the five dimensions of reconciliation, we commit to providing a truth-telling history in order to recognise, value and learn from Australia's First Nations Peoples as the oldest living culture in the world. As a Catholic organisation in the Edmund Rice Tradition, we take responsibility for the historical abuse and neglect, and the patriarchal missionary benevolence which has diminished the rich cultural heritage of First Nations Peoples.

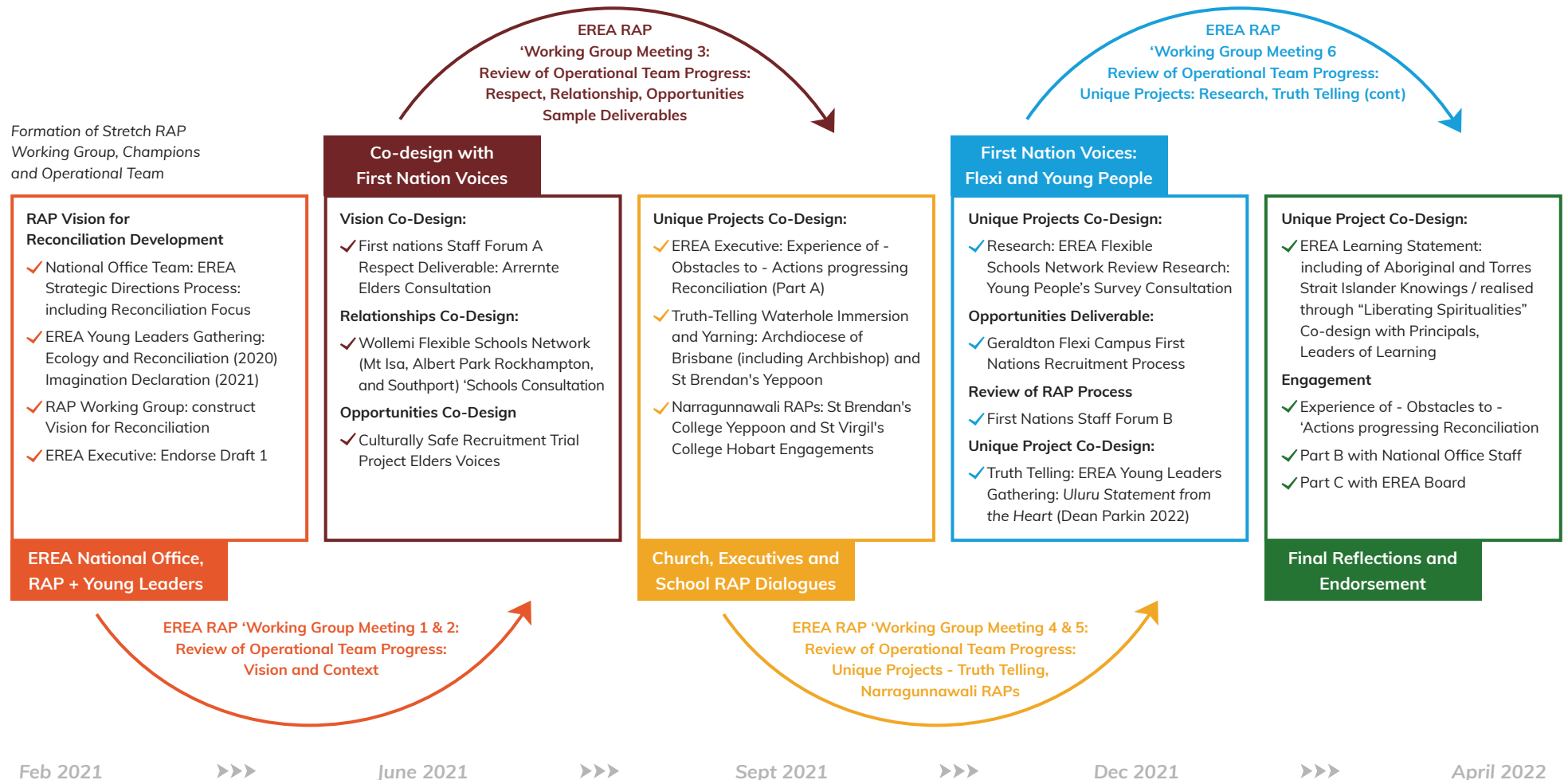
Our cultural practice model aligns with the five dimensions of reconciliation and includes an explicit intention to enhance the participation and self-determination, cultural safety and educational outcomes of First Nations Peoples across EREA. Our organisation's development of the EREA Strategic Directions 2021-2024 has provided an opportunity to reflect critically, reassess, renew and integrate our strategic priorities with our reconciliation commitments. Our growing partnerships with First Nations Elders, organisations and communities offer unique opportunities to engage in authentic relationships which enrich our educational offerings and the life and cultures within our many and diverse school communities.

EREA recognises the importance of measuring and tracking our progress in order to create more respectful relationships with First Nations Australians. Right relationships will enhance opportunities and improve educational outcomes for our young people, children and families, staff and leaders. We are better human beings because of our reconciliation engagement and our commitment to learn, unlearn and relearn the lessons from our colonial past. We need to improve in terms of delivering educational outcomes for First Nations young people and families. By daring to imagine our schools as places of radical inclusion, justice and liberation, we believe we can make a contribution towards, truth, justice, healing and historical acceptance by stretching ourselves to bravely influence learning, leadership, the Church and the world through our global partnerships. These aspirations connect to and embrace the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education.

How was the RAP Developed? Who was Involved?

A Co-Designed Stretch RAP

First Nations Australians and EREA Schools provide advice and input in partnership with National Office Staff, Executive Reference Groups, National Executive, EREA Board and Australian Church on decisions and actions which will improve the learning and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their communities.



EREA Stretch RAP Working Group

During the implementation of the EREA Innovate RAP, the organisation convened an advisory RAP Working Group which continues today. The RAP Working Group meets four times per year.

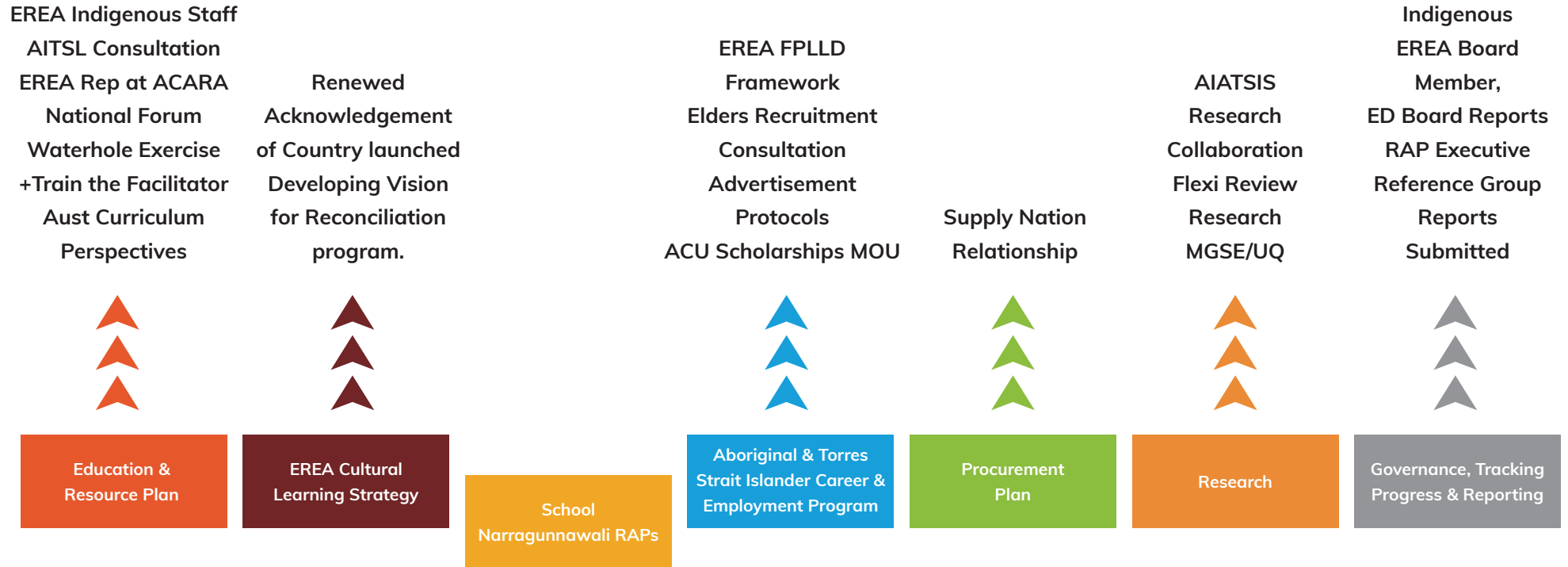
Membership of the EREA RAP Working Group includes:

- *First Nations' Roles:* Traditional Owners, Elders, First Nations' Researchers, School Leaders, Teachers and Education Officers.
- *Non-Indigenous Roles:* National Director, College Principals, EREA Education Officer.

The Stretch RAP Working Group is an advisory group responsible for advancing reconciliation in EREA by developing and monitoring the Stretch RAP, providing input to policy development, and giving strategic advice to EREA across areas likely to impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including leaders, young people and staff. The Working Group works with the principles of co-design.

Dr Nerida Blair*	Wulli Wulli Wakka Wakka	Chair	Nerida Blair Consultants
Ray Paxton		Champion	EREA National Director Liberating Education
Thelma Parker*	Waluwarra Wangkamana Wangkayujuru	Champion / EO	EREA Leader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Exec Officer
Cynthia Rowan*	Birra Gubba	Member	EREA Board, Archdiocese of Brisbane RAP Co-ordinator
Matt Hawkins		Member	Principal Marlene Moore Flexible Schools Network
Ann Rebgetz		Member	Principal St James College Brisbane
Ivan Mahoney		Member	Principal Eastern Flexible Schools Network
Marie Barton		Member	Principal Edmund Rice College Bindoon
Karina Blackman*	Waanyi Birra Gubba Gurang	Member	Education Officer / Xavier Flexible Schools Network / Townsville Campus
Brad Copeland*	Maranungga	Member	Indigenous Programs Officer, St Kevin's College Toorak
Mark Walsh		Exec Officer	Education Officer Liberating Education
Dr Marnie Shay*	Wagiman	Member	External Critical Friend / University of Queensland Indigenous Research
Andrew Kirkpatrick*	Gubbi Gubbi	Member	Indigenous Programs Co-ordinator, Ignatius Park College Townsville EREA Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
*First Nations			

Innovate RAP Achievements EREA National Office 2019-2021



Innovate RAP Goals

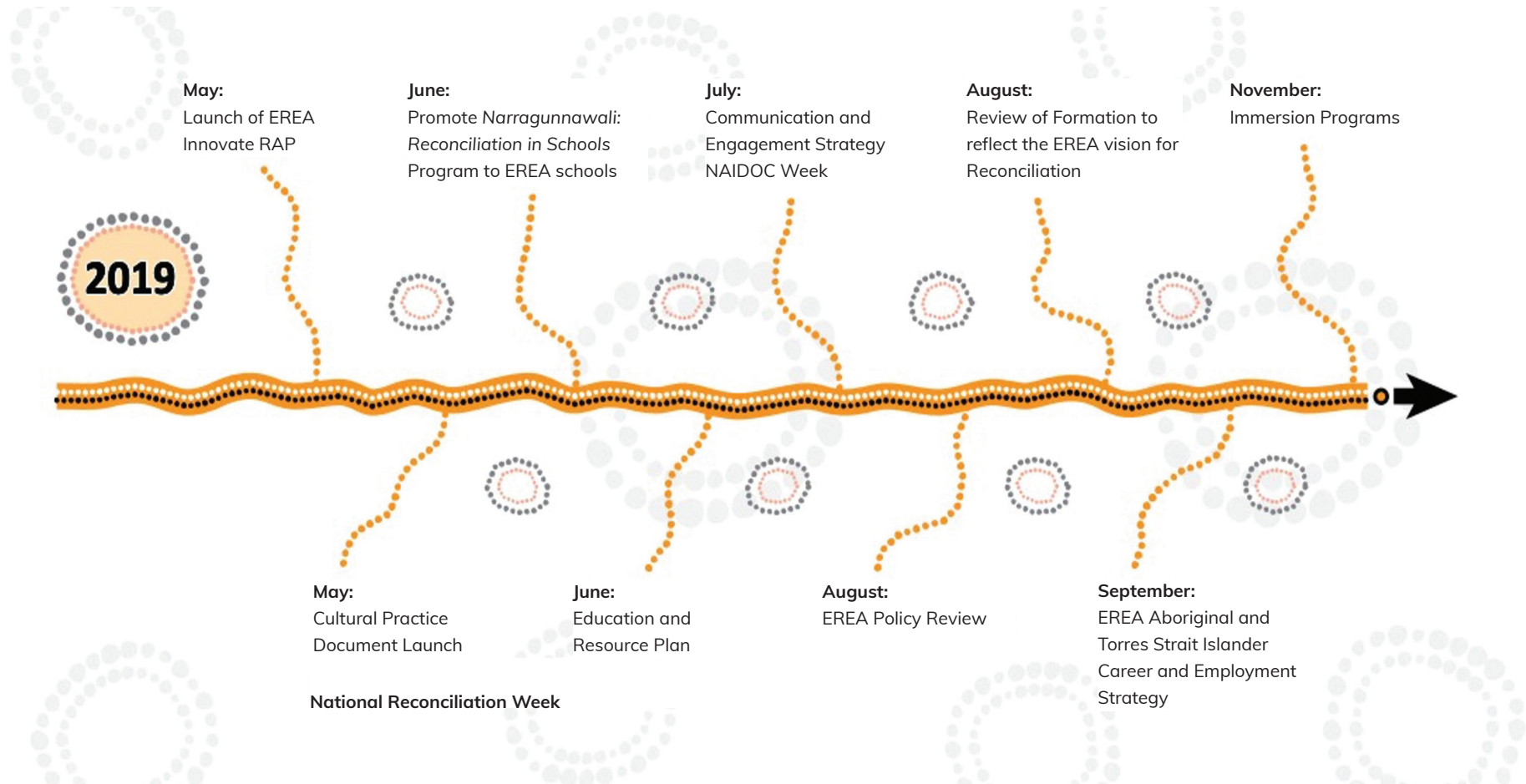
- 15.1 Promote Narragunnawali RAPs to schools and encourage them to develop their own RAPS.
- 15.2 Promote and encourage schools to apply for the Narragunnawali awards.
- 15.6 Develop and implement a strategy to encourage every EREA school to develop a Narragunnawali RAP.

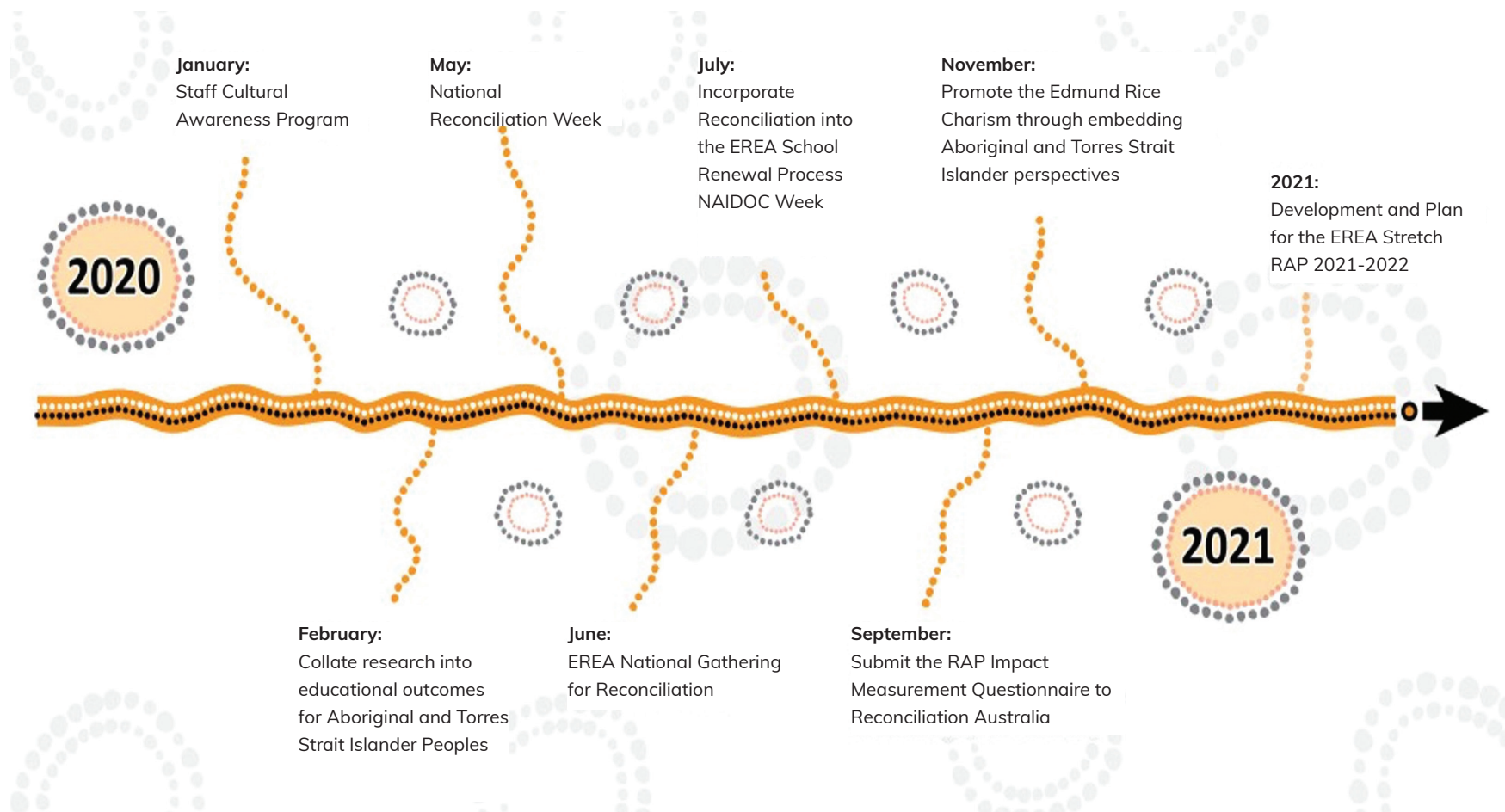
Successes

- 15.2 Ignatius Park College and St Virgil's College both strongly encouraged by EREA and Reconciliation Australia to apply for Narragunnawali 'Awards.
- 15.1,6 25% of EREA schools have published a RAP (16% currently public and 9% in refresh mode).
56% of EREA schools have registered to commence the Narragunnawali process.
30 schools have commenced the RAP process since 2019.



2019 Innovate RAP Timeline



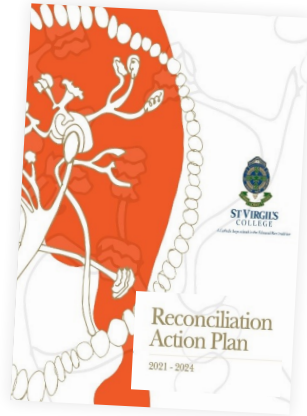


Case Studies Illustrating Achievements from the Innovate RAP

St Virgil's College Hobart: Winner National Narragunnawali RAP Awards 2021

In December 2021, Reconciliation Australia selected St Virgil's College Hobart as the winner of the National School category at their recent award ceremony. Acting Principal Mrs Heidi Senior acknowledged the award as being a special day in the life and history of the College. "We continue to walk hand in hand with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to achieve a just and reconciled island for all First Nations people," she said. "This is a great platform to build upon our work to date and to re-set our goals for an even brighter future." Awards judging panel member Sharon Davis said "St Virgil's College views reconciliation as a living, authentic and powerful means of achieving justice and peace for a collective future".

St Virgil's, which is located on the Country of the Muwinina people, showcased the Tunapri Makuminya Project, created by young Palawa scientist Jamie Graham Blair. Jamie was initially commissioned by the College in 2020 to create a biocultural survey of the Austins Ferry campus, one in which he hoped to identify every plant species on the campus which was of cultural significance to Tasmanian Aboriginal people. However, the final project was much larger and came to include conservation and regeneration suggestions and proposals to expand cultural practice and cultural learning opportunities within the surrounding landscape. The Tunapri Makuminya Project provides the capacity to significantly strengthen and deepen learning programs both in the classroom and beyond for St Virgil's students and the wider EREA network.



Waterhole Exercise: Truth-Telling Immersion

The "Waterhole Exercise" is an Australian adaptation of the "Blanket Exercise", a program run since 1996 by the multifaith Canadian organisation KAIROS.

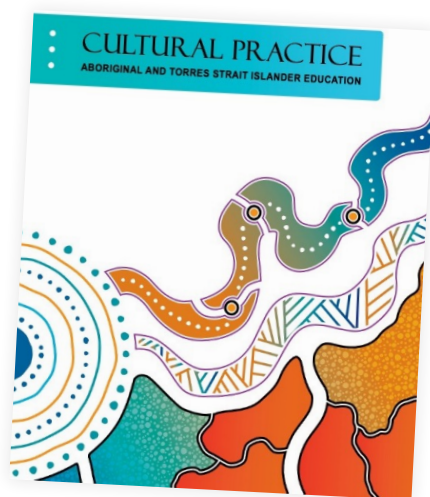
Representatives of EREA visited Canada in 2017 where they experienced the "Blanket Exercise". In 2018 EREA entered a formal partnership with KAIROS to enable an adaptation of the content for the Australian context. EREA acknowledges the generosity of KAIROS and support of KAIROS and their commitment to the truth-telling, justice and healing journeys of reconciliation.

Representatives of KAIROS visited Australia at the invitation of EREA in 2019 where the formal partnership was signed. EREA holds the license for the Waterhole / Blanket Exercise in Australia. It has been collaboratively designed with First Nations Australians, supported by research resources at AIATSIS, and workshopped in a range of settings: EREA National Gatherings, Young Leaders Gatherings (for which a shorter version was developed), Australian Church Leaders' Gatherings as well as school settings. In order for the Waterhole Exercise program to remain sustainable, EREA has developed "Train the Facilitator" sessions, always mindful that First Nations cultural leadership is key to the authenticity of the program.



EREA Cultural Practice Support Document

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is committed to the task of reconciliation. To assist the EREA community on this journey, a Cultural Practice tool has been developed. It provides guidelines for all in the EREA community, including those in offices and schools, in how they respectfully engage/work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



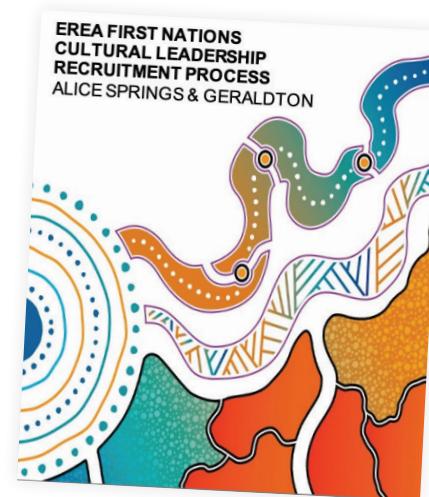
Cultural Practice, in the context of this document, engages ethical principles which guide people's behaviour in a western structural setting. These practices are designed to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property rights. These practices provide support in the establishment and development of working relationships between EREA, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve educational outcomes and journey towards reconciliation.

Useful, practical tips - such as Using Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology, Acknowledging Diversity, Referring to Aboriginal and Torres Peoples, Capitalisation, Avoiding Deficit and Dichotomous Language and a Glossary of Acronyms and Concepts – will provide a foundation for future documents and training. It is envisaged that a Cultural Capabilities document will be the next step in EREA's ongoing support for cultural practice.

EREA First Nations Cultural Leadership Process

In 2020-21 Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) recognised the need for a culturally safe process for the recruitment of leaders in schools with significant population of First Nations Young People and Staff. Up to this point, recruitment processes were the same as those carried out in all EREA schools. With the primary aim of recruiting more First Nations staff and leaders in all its schools, EREA developed a process where all stakeholders had a voice in the type of leader they sought. This included elders connected to Church, parish leaders, elders from town camps, First Nations staff (teachers, Youth Workers, Educational Assistants), First Nations Young People, First Nations Land Councils, and agencies/organisations supporting First Nations people (Church, government, not-for-profit).

Key to this engagement was the commitment by the EREA Leadership to engaging directly with Elders, walking on Country, and valuing the wisdom and Knowings of First Nations people, whose children they are entrusting to EREA schools. This new process was implemented in Alice Springs (St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre) and Geraldton / Carnarvon Flexible Learning Centre in 2021.



Further Achievements and Broader Influence Beyond EREA

Engagement with Traditional Owners and Elders has been paramount in our cultural practices.

Research

The EREA National Review of Flexible Schools incorporated significant principles of First Nations research as per the AIATSIS Code of Ethics and the AIATSIS Guide to Applying the Code of Ethics. This review model was co-designed with the project team of First Nations and non-Indigenous leaders and researchers, to incorporate culturally appropriate and safe research design, methodologies and data collection. This experience has influenced our Stretch RAP Research plan, with a view to continue to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in research.

Navigating the Pandemic

A challenge in realising our reconciliation commitments has been the COVID 19 epidemic. Throughout 2020 and 2021 EREA schools have been agile in finding new ways to meet and learn through online forums, online learning programs and virtual networking. One example of this is the movement of face-to-face regional Narragunnawali RAP forums to an online format using Zoom. We have conducted seven of these to date and see this as a practice worth continuing beyond COVID, in order to enable greater participation.



Narragunnawali RAPs

In 2020 and 2021 EREA saw the fruits of a strategic effort to engage EREA schools with the Narragunnawali program through a series of truth telling and professional learning experiences—many in partnership with Reconciliation Australia.

- Schools have embraced the Narragunnawali program, and, as of November 2021, almost 90% of schools engaged in the process in some way.
- Almost 30% of EREA schools have published a RAP in the past two years—most of these for the first time, which is a testament to the work that has been done in supporting schools.
- In November 2021, St Virgil's College, Hobart, won the 'Schools' category of the Narragunnawali Awards 2021. This school, and many other learning communities provide exemplars and model consultative practices to communities beginning the journey.

Truth-Telling: Uluru Statement from the Heart

On 24 September 2021 Catholic Archbishop Mark Coleridge, in full view of Stradbroke Island, home to the Quandamooka people, publicly endorsed the “Uluru Statement from The Heart” on behalf of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. This endorsement came at the end of a speech by Dean Parkin, Director of From the Heart. The Archbishop said “The Statement is a very important document that calls for leadership, discussion and reflection by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders leaders. Our role is not to do things on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but to listen to them, to learn from them, to accompany them, and to support them to determine their own future. Archbishop Coleridge called on all people of goodwill and intention to support the journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by endorsing the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and by putting it into action. The public endorsement was the culmination of a series of milestones for the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane:

- The Archdiocese launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan in November 2020.
- The Laurel Blow Speaker Series featured Minjerribah woman Evelyn Parkin speaking about her Catholic faith and Aboriginal spirituality.
- The Archbishop and Archdiocesan Executive Directors participated in cultural awareness and immersion program [The Waterhole Exercise](#) in collaboration with EREA (Edmund Rice Education Australia Services).

Learnings from the Innovate RAP Experience

Cultural Capital

There is a need to ensure First Nations Peoples' cultural capital, connections and safety are recognised and valued in the employment of First Nations People at all levels, including leadership. This will ensure the transformative actions required for the effective implementation of this Stretch RAP are put into operation.

Relationships

We learn through relationships; we recognise that we need to unlearn things out of respect, and we see relearning as providing opportunities for all. We recognise that each of these ways of learning influence and build on each other.

Collaboration

Reflecting on our experiences, we must ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed at every level across the organisation, including leadership roles, through policy evolution, engaging with and educating the leaders in our organisation, targeting, listening, mentoring, and challenging models which are not culturally appropriate for developing First Nations leaders.

Decision making

As we embark on change and transformation within our school communities, we recognise that leaders are key decision makers who influence policy, procedures and strategic priorities. They can collaborate and co-design with First Nations Peoples, to influence how resources are used to address inequity and to provide access to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, families, carers, staff and communities.

International Statements

We have learned that these important, collaboratively designed declarations reflect developing ways of thinking and practice in relation to the place of international statements of rights and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples are essential. These include the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"; and "The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education".

Unlearning: Unconscious Bias

We know that all Australians have been influenced by our colonial history and need to unlearn many of the myths and deficit stereotypes wrongly attributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We recognise the need to create an organisational and systemic culture which is vulnerable and open to recognise and address the influence that unconscious biases and dominant perspectives exert in creating conditions in which safety and inclusion are compromised.

Relearning: Strengths-Based Perspectives

We are required to adopt strengths-based perspectives which enable us to see the potential and capabilities of our First Nations young people, families and communities. The 2019 Imagination Declaration of the Youth Forum² read at Garma 2019, challenged Australian leaders and educators: *"With 60,000 years of genius and imagination in our hearts and minds, we can be one of the groups of people which transform the future of life on earth, for the good of us all... and we can unite around kindness. We are not the problem; we are the solution."*²



Relationships

EREA acknowledges and recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining genuine and respectful relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders. We understand the strength of these relationships holds the key to an authentic reconciliation journey of the National Office and subsequently, this is to be modelled by EREA schools nationally if significant reconciliation outcomes are to be achieved in collaboration with the wider community.

EREA commits to LEARNING:

- The importance of the cultural capital of First Nations staff, young people, children and community/s
- Understanding and acceptance of Australia's shared history
- The valuing and trusting of two-world experiences and 'power-with'

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	Review May 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Director National Director, Liberating Education
	1.2 Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Review October 2022 Complete October 2023	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	1.3 Establish and maintain 10 formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIATSIS • NATSICC • GO Foundation • ACU First Peoples and Equity Pathways • Turrbul Traditional Owners of Brisbane • Uluru Statement from the Heart Campaign • Wurundjeri Tribal Council – Melbourne • Let's Talk Program • Tangentyere Council Alice Springs • Aboriginal Studies Association (NSW) 	Review November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all National Office staff.	May 2022, 2023,2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in 10 external NRW events.	May 27 - June 3 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education EREA Stretch RAP Working Group
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in 2 external events to recognise and celebrate NRW each year including, for example: Brisbane City Council NRW events and Wurundjeri (Melbourne) NRW events	May 27 - June 3 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	2.4 Organise 3 internal NRW events, including at least one organisation-wide NRW event, each year.	May 27 - June 3 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	2.5 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	2.6 Celebrate schools that are actively engaging students in reconciliation activities during NRW	May 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Director Communications
	2.7 Circulate NRW resources and materials specific to a school setting to relevant school contacts and encourage each school community to use in an appropriate context that engages students.	May 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Champions informing key elements of the RAP to build awareness of purpose and proposed outcomes at nominated forums • Engaging with EREA Student Leaders at their annual forum, allowing dialogue and reflection of RAP progress; • Engaging with stories of young people in promotional materials on reconciliation 	Review December 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through The Ricean publication and other means of communication with EREA's networks of schools and stakeholders.	May 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Director Director Communications
	3.3 Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders by engaging in collaborative research projects or similar, that are aimed at advancing reconciliation outcomes and the reconciliation journey.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, School Engagement Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	3.4 Collaborate with 3 RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement innovative approaches to advance reconciliation: a) Archdiocese of Brisbane b) Melbourne Graduate School of Education c) Australian Catholic University	September 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	3.5 Further engage all staff in the reconciliation journey with encouraged participation, reflection and dialogue on the topic of Australia Day/Survival Day with an on-line National Office Staff Forum	January 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	3.6 Provide opportunities for all National Office staff to participate in and engage with 2 RAP leadership gatherings each year.	February 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination.	October 2023, 2024
4.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.		October 2023, 2024	National Director, Governance National Director, Stewardship
4.3 Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.		November 2023, 2024	National Director, Governance National Director, Stewardship
4.4 Provide ongoing education to senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.		August 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
4.5 Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, and stances against racism.		September 2023, 2024	Executive Director National Director, Liberating Education

Relationships

EREA Narragunnawali Plan 5. Embed reconciliation in all EREA schools through the Narragunnawali RAP framework.	5.1 Provide an understanding and awareness of the importance of the Narragunnawali 'Reconciliation in Education' platform to all EREA schools and encourage the commencement in this RAP journey specific to each school's context.	Review June 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	5.2 In collaboration with Reconciliation Australia, provide professional learning to support schools in their engagement with the Narragunnawali 'Reconciliation in Education' platform.	June 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	5.3 Embed the use of ICT as a means of naming challenges, sharing ideas and resources, and celebrating successes as schools engage with the Narragunnawali Reconciliation in Education platform.	June 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
EREA Learning Statement 6. Provide professional development to encourage and support schools to further embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the Learning Culture of EREA Schools.	6.1 Strengthen understanding and practical application of the EREA Learning Statement: Implementing Liberating Practice to Co-create a Better World", by supporting its implementation through contextualised learning strategies, particularly in relation to Dadirri (deep listening) and attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Practice.	August 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Director of Learning
	6.2 Provide professional development on the EREA Learning Statement to schools and ensure First Nations staff are providing understanding and feedback.	August 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Director of Learning Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Respect

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Knowings are integral to the reconciliation journey of our nation. EREA acknowledges this and honours stories, cultures and the process of truth-telling in its vision and strategic direction moving forward. Respecting, appreciating, and understanding the longest continuous cultures on earth is crucial in shaping who we are as an organization and where we are going.

EREA commits to UNLEARNING:

- Racism - the dominant cultural norms of 'power-over' based on notions of race
- Fixed attitudes and dualistic thinking (for example, needing to be right and making others wrong, being judgemental)
- Behaviour management based on punitive/controlling attitudes

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	7.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Review May 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Director National Director, Liberating Education
	7.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	Review October 2022 Complete October 2023	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	7.3 Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	Review November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	7.4 Commit all RAP Working Group members, HR managers, senior executives and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	7.5 National Office staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learnings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% face to face participation of all National Office staff in the Waterhole Exercise Truth Telling activity. New staff to participate each year. • Commencement of Your Mob online cultural learning program for new staff each year. Existing staff to commence in 2023 and complete by 2025. • Encourage participation in Let's Talk Aboriginal Immersion program for all staff • All National Office staff to receive disseminated specific Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural Knowings and information at forums and significant events. 	Review December 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Director Formation

8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	8.1 Increase and maintain understanding of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols for staff through communication resources that highlight the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.	November 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	8.2 Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	February 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	8.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or appropriate cultural protocol at 2 significant events each year (1 each for the Melbourne and Brisbane National Office), including Opening National Office Staff Gatherings, NRW and/or NAIDOC Week events.	February 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	8.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	8.5 Staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	8.6 Display 2 Acknowledgment of Country plaques in EREA Melbourne and Brisbane National Offices.	January 2023	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education



9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	9.1 Each member of the RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	9.2 Review and maintain HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week through access to provisional cultural leave.	May 2023, 2024, 2025	National Manager, Human Resources Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	9.3 Support all staff to participate in 2 external NAIDOC Week events yearly, including Brisbane and Melbourne City Council NAIDOC events.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	9.4 In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support 1 external NAIDOC Week event each year, including NAIDOC Awards in Brisbane or Melbourne, or events coordinated by Wurundjeri, Turrbal or Kurna Traditional Owner groups.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	9.5 Support all National Office staff to participate and engage in NAIDOC Week related face to face or online forums in Brisbane and Melbourne National Offices.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
EREA Truth-telling 10. Increase in EREA an understanding and recognition of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the EREA Waterhole Exercise as strategic roadmaps to reconciliation and justice	10.1 Informed by the online Supporter Kit, introduce staff to the underlying values and principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart as a strategic roadmap to peace by providing informed communication and professional development forums.	May 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	10.2 Encourage EREA schools to engage in the Uluru Statement from the Heart Supporter Kit resources and platform.	May 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	10.3 Following a successful first phase of implementation during the Innovate RAP, complete a review of the 'Waterhole Exercise' as a Truth-Telling immersion.	September 2023	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Opportunities

EREA commits to providing a supportive environment that fosters an inclusive community and promotes opportunities for all. EREA acknowledges the significant role we play in ensuring positive outcomes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples in the operation of the National Office and throughout our EREA schools are achieved. Through collaborative partnerships, employment and procurement strategies will guide us in shaping change for the benefit of the wider EREA community.

EREA commits to relearning:

- The role of Indigenous Knowings
- The involvement of generational roles & responsibilities
- Strengths-based perspectives - seeing the strengths and richness of the oldest living cultures in the world

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	11.1 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on the effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	11.2 Review and update an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	December 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship National Manager, Human Resources
	11.3 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	October 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship National Manager, Human Resources
	11.4 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	December 2022 Review Dec 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship National Manager, Human Resources
	11.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be mentored and assisted in acquiring skills to support taking on management and senior level positions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuation of cadetship program for further study - Creation of positions specially related to First Nations programs (First Nations Education Leader) 	November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	11.6 Increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment in the National Office with an aim of achieving 6.97% (3 staff) representing all teams, with a baseline of 2.32% (1 staff). Currently, there is 1 staff member identified as Aboriginal.	Review November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship National Manager HR

12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	12.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy to assist in facilitating EREA's procurement goals.	Review November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship National Manager HR
	12.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership with the aim of exploring opportunities to assist Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2023 Review March 2024, 2025	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
	12.3 Develop and communicate opportunities, including training, for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2023 Review March 2024, 2025	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
	12.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2023 Review March 2024, 2025	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
	12.5 Maintain commercial relationships with 5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses, including: - RP Designs - Engagement of Elders and/or Traditional Owners in Welcome to Country practices - Clothing the Gap - Your Mob - Individual First Nations Guest Speakers	Review June 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
	12.6 Maintain commercial based relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander businesses in line with EREA's procurement strategy that aims at 5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement by 2025, with a baseline of 3%.	Review June 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
EREA Research 13. Enhance the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research principles which shape research design with a view to action evidence- based strategies which improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.	13.1 Strengthen the relationship with AIATSIS to ensure culturally safe research frameworks which strengthen EREA policies and cultural practices.	Review October 2022,2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	13.2 Develop partnerships through a research plan with First Nations' Researchers and university partners, namely Australian Catholic University, University of Queensland, and Melbourne Graduate School of Education; to engage in research which improves life, wellbeing and educational outcomes for First Nations staff and Young People in EREA schools.	Review October 2022,2023, 2024	National Director, School Engagement Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	14.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July, October, December, March, May 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	14.2 Review and update the Terms of Reference for our RWG.	Review June 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	14.3 Meet at least five times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	July, October, December, March, May 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	15.1 Embed resource needs for RAP implementation, including the funding of targeted regionally delivered programs for schools.	November 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Stewardship Chief Financial Officer
	15.2 Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	National Director, Stewardship National Manager, Human Resources
	15.3 Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	National Directors
	15.4 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	January 2023, 2024, 2025	National Director, Liberating Education
	15.5 Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director Liberating Education

16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	16.1 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 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2022, 2023, 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	August, November, February, May 2022, 2023, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.5 Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	May 2023, 2024, 2025	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2022, 2024	National Director, Liberating Education Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
	16.7 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	April 2025	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	17.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

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based on a gospel spirituality, within an inclusive community
committed to justice and solidarity*

