







# **Acknowledgement of Country**

RIC (Regional Investment Corporation) acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.



# 2025 progress

Our RAP Working Group has progressed our Reflect RAP through the year to near completion. This being our very first RAP, we focused on the following themes which achieved appropriate Reflect RAP outcomes.

## **Employment**

As an employer, our key contribution to reconciliation centred on: Finding ways to improve Indigenous employment outcomes. Through the course of the year, we developed and established two full-time First Nations trainee positions based in Orange, NSW, one in Agri-Lending and the other in Business Administration. We worked in collaboration with a traineeship provider and were pleased to welcome our new trainees during the year.

Reviewing legislation and best practice and applying our learning to our employment policies and procedures. As a result, we increased cultural leave from 1 to 3 days per annum, updated the definition of family in our Leave Policy to allow carers leave when caring for family in kinship circumstances for First Nations employees, and updated our Flexible Work Policy to consider connection to country and cultural obligations for First Nations employees when approving change-of-work-location requests.

#### Education

We conducted an employee Barometer Survey to ascertain cultural awareness levels and inform our learning and development approach. Key actions resulting from the survey predominantly connect to activities planned for our Innovate RAP.



Reconciliation Australia RAP Annual Conference 2024

Some of our key activities in the Education space included rolling out cultural awareness and unconscious bias training to all staff; training for our RAP Working Group members; and developing our Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.

### **Engagement**

Diving into our first RAP involved getting to know a lot of Indigenous stakeholders in our local community, government agencies also undertaking RAPs, attending Reconciliation Australia led RAP Learning Circles to share information and insights, and establishing relationships with Indigenous training providers and suppliers. Reconciliation Australia also engaged with the RIC Board.

We reviewed initiatives to encourage engagement with and procurement from Indigenous businesses and updated our policies accordingly.

## Next steps



# 2025 progress

Action	Deliverable	Progress status
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.  Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Achieved goals   To assist in developing positive and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders, we developed a list that identified organisations, businesses, not-for-profits and other stakeholders that are within our local area (Central West NSW) or our sphere of influence.  We researched the best practice and principles in the following areas: - Community engagement - Diversity and Inclusion and anti-discrimination policies - Cultural learning education and training
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Achieved goals   Resources and materials were circulated as part of National Reconciliation Week promotional activities. The RAP Working Group members attended local Reconciliation Week events in Orange NSW. Information on external National Reconciliation Week events were circulated to all staff so they could attend in their local areas. RIC held an internal Reconciliation Week event with all staff.
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event	
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Launch our Reflect RAP formally and communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff	Achieved goals   Our Reflect RAP was formally launched in November 2024 to all staff and the RIC Board.
	Establish relationships with external stakeholders we have identified, to further engage with on our reconciliation journey	Achieved goals   Relationships established with Reconciliation Australia, Mission Australia, Roy Training Solutions, our RAP artist Darren Charlwood, and other organisations through the Small Agencies Forum who are on their reconciliation journey. We see this as an ongoing task.
	Build deeper engagement with other like-minded organisations that we could collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	Achieved goals   Continuing to build deeper engagement with other like-minded organisations. A list of organisations we are engaged with, who have RAPs has been developed and continually updated. We see this as an ongoing task.

Action	Deliverable	Progress status
Promote positive race relations through anti- discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination	Achieved goals   In addition to researching best practice, we have updated relevant policies, rolled out Cultural Awareness and Unconscious Bias training to all RIC staff, and began engaging with local First Nations community organisations.
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Achieved goals   Updated Diversity and Equity Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure to reflect legislative changes. We reviewed and updated employment conditions to include First Nations provisions and considerations.
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop an analysis for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.  Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Achieved goals   Cultural Awareness and Unconscious Bias training was completed in August 2024 by all staff. Our RAP Barometer Survey data has been analysed, and a report was provided to RIC's executive leadership team (ELT) and staff with the key findings and associated actions towards increased internal education and understanding.
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Achieved goals   Cultural Awareness training has been undertaken. Analysis has been undertaken and provided to the ELT incorporating insights from the RAP Barometer survey data.
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.	Achieved goals   Cultural Awareness training completed. A Wiradjuri Cultural Tour on Country is booked in for Orange NSW staff.
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Achieved goals   Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Guidelines have been approved by the ELT and communicated to all staff. The resource is readily available on RIC's intranet for all staff to access.

Action	Deliverable	Progress status
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.	Achieved goals   Initial awareness information was communicated with staff in early July 2024. Further information was provided to all staff as part of an internal email communication.
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events.	Achieved goals   External events were promoted to staff in November 2024 in line with Orange NAIDOC Week.
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Achieved goals   The RAP Working Group attended NAIDOC Week events in November 2024 in line with Orange NAIDOC Week.
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop an analysis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Achieved goals   An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment analysis was provided to ELT, and 2 new targeted indigenous trainee roles have been filled as part of the workforce plan.
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop an analysis for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Achieved goals   A procurement analysis has been completed.
	Investigate and come to a determination on participating in Supply Nation membership.	<b>Achieved goals</b>   Research has been completed on Supply Nation membership with a recommendation provided to the ELT.

Action	Deliverable	Progress status
Maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP	Maintain senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Achieved goals   RIC senior leader champion has been maintained & will continue via an annual membership review.
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Achieved goals   Resources have been identified and are in place and will be reviewed annually.
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Achieved goals   Tracking template has been developed with progress updated monthly in line with RAPWG meetings and quarterly reporting cadence has been set for ELT and Board. Aug and Nov reporting completed with Feb report in progress.
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	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	Achieved goals   RIC's contact Details are up to date with Reconciliation Australia. Our annual RAP Impact Survey was completed in late 2024.
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey	
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia	
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our Innovate RAP	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <u>website</u> to begin developing our next RAP.	Achieved goals   Registration is complete for our Innovate RAP. The draft RAP was taken to May Board Meeting with the final document taken to the August Board Meeting.