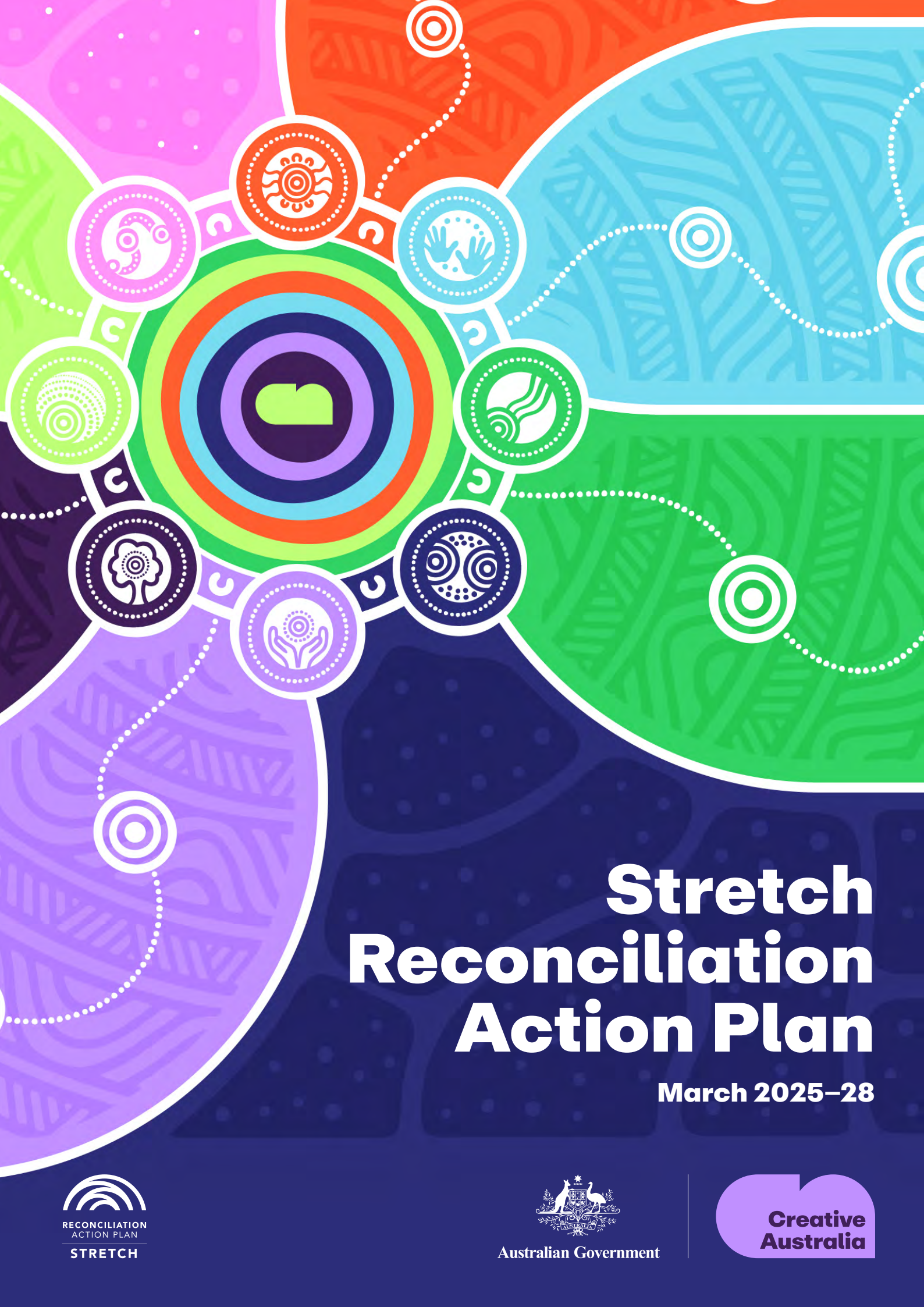




Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2025–28

Our vision for reconciliation

Creative Australia's vision for reconciliation is a fair, connected and creative nation that embraces the unique places, cultures and histories of First Nations peoples as central to our shared humanity, to our development, and to imagining our future.

We work towards this vision by centring self-determination, observing First Nations protocols and embracing First Nations guidance. We walk together with respect and take responsibility for the work of making change.

Our investment, leadership and industry collaboration help shape a fair, safe and respectful creative work environment for First Nations self-determined arts and cultural expression to benefit all Australians.

Acknowledgement of Country

Creative Australia acknowledges the many Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and honours their Elders past and present.

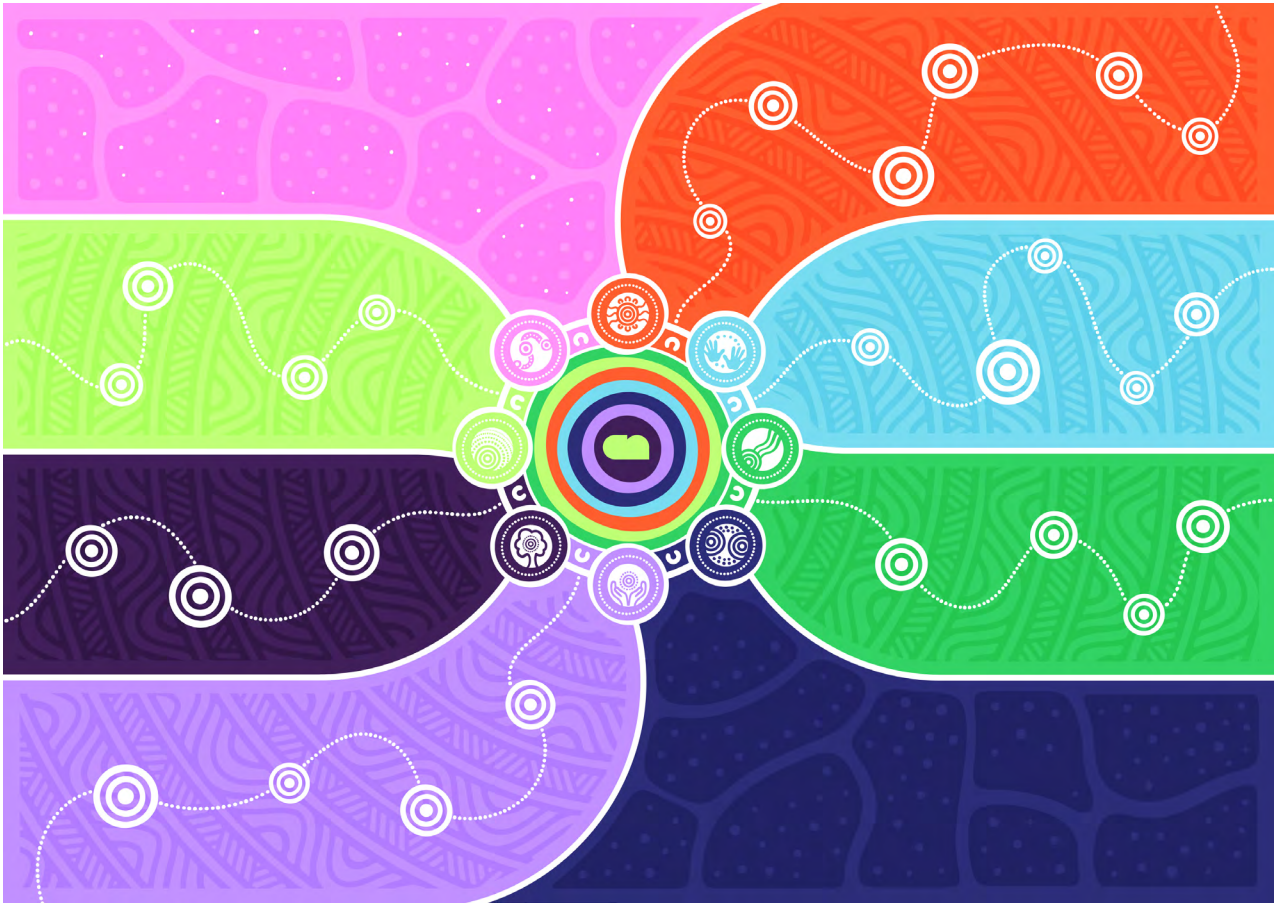
We respect their deep and enduring connection to their lands, waterways and surrounding clan groups since time immemorial. We cherish the richness of First Nations peoples' artistic and cultural expressions.

We are privileged to gather on this Country and to share knowledge, culture and art, now and with future generations.

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Our artwork



The artwork by Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove represents Creative Australia’s journey towards reconciliation and its commitment to fostering connections through creativity. At its heart lies the central meeting place, symbolising Creative Australia as a space where diverse voices, stories, and artistic expressions converge. Surrounding it are eight smaller meeting places, each representing a core RAP principle—foundations that guide the organisation’s responsibility to truth, respect, self-determination, and accountability.

Flowing outward, white journey lines and interconnected meeting places depict the many people and communities across Australia coming together. These pathways embody shared responsibility, open dialogue, and the continuous act of listening and learning. The colourful backgrounds represent the diverse lands from which these communities originate, emphasizing the strength found in cultural exchange and storytelling.

Rooted in the theme Creativity Connects Us, this piece reflects the power of the arts to bridge gaps, heal wounds, and build meaningful relationships. It is an invitation for all to walk this journey together, with respect, reflection, and a commitment to lasting change.



Jordan Lovegrove is an accomplished Ngarrindjeri contemporary artist, graphic designer and owner of Karko Creations, with over 12 years of experience on corporate, government and for-purpose creative projects. Inspired by his ancestral lands and culture, Jordan’s artwork explores themes of identity, spirituality, and the connection between land and community. Alongside his artwork, Jordan excels in graphic design, crafting impactful visuals for reports, logos, promotional materials, and various branding projects. His expertise in vector artwork enables him to create intricate digital pieces that celebrate his cultural heritage.



Message from the CEO



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their arts and cultures are an integral part of Australia's national identity, connecting us to thousands of years of living cultures and knowledge.

Their creativity and innovation are a wellspring of strength, connection and resilience for First Nations communities.

Self-determination, creative agency and sustenance for First Nations enterprise and development are vital for a thriving First Nations arts and cultural sector. So too is truth telling about our shared histories and cultures, and the reconciliation of our nation. To make impactful and meaningful change, we must all contribute through dedicated action.

Creative Australia's vision for reconciliation builds on our 50-year legacy of advocating for and investing in First Nations arts and culture. Creative Australia's vision for reconciliation is of a fair, connected and creative nation that embraces the unique places, cultures and histories of First Nations peoples as central to our shared humanity, to our development, and to imagining our future.

Creative Australia has a long-term commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to strengthen Australia's First Nations arts and cultural ecosystem. Aligned with the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, Creative Australia's Corporate Strategy 2024–28 and Corporate Plan 2024–28 reflect our commitments to supporting self-determined decision-making in First Nations creativity.

This is a strategic priority that delivers strong cultural, social, and economic returns for all Australians.

The establishment of First Nations Arts and the First Nations Board through *Revive* is a vital mechanism to drive sustainable change throughout our sector, ensuring investment, development and advocacy for First Nations arts is First Nations-led. Creative Australia recognises the significance of this moment and commits the wider organisation to shifting the load and contributing to the work of driving change through our processes and engagement.

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (March 2025–28) has been borne out of deep engagement with First Nations leaders, artists, communities and reflections with Creative Australia staff and leadership. It has been developed following a period of significant transformation, both for our organisation and for the arts and cultural sector more broadly. This process has asked us to account for the steps that non-Indigenous peoples need to take alongside our First Nations colleagues and stakeholders.

Creative Australia recognises meaningful change requires a cultural shift, ensuring our systems, processes and actions are fit-for-purpose. Our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) embraces our role as the principal arts investment and advocacy agency for the arts and cultural sector. Guided by our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28), and by embedding the First Nations Protocols in all that we do, our work will build towards reconciliation.

Getting to this moment is owed immensely to the dedication and commitment of First Nations peoples, Creative Australia staff, our RAP Working Group, and allies across the industry. These commitments and actions have been built from the wisdom and leadership of our predecessors of the Aboriginal Arts Board and the First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel. It is with deep gratitude that Creative Australia recognises this hard work and thanks all for their leadership.

By centring self-determination, observing First Nations Protocols and embracing First Nations guidance, we will walk together towards reconciliation.

Adrian Collette
CEO, Creative Australia

Message from Executive Director, First Nations Arts



As Creative Australia establishes self-determination in First Nations arts and culture, this vital moment has the potential to transform futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sacred stories of Country, creation and tradition have been passed down through the generations, told by First Nations peoples with authority through languages, rhythms, song cycles and images.

Our arts and cultures are foundational to First Nations' wellbeing, supporting empowerment, community connectedness and connection to culture.

First Nations artists, designers, creative practitioners, performers and creative workers infuse our cultural landscape with their cultural knowledge, skills and capability, talent and artistic expression. But greater agency is needed for First Nations peoples to determine our own paths and our own futures, free from systemic harms that have shaped recent history.

We are at a critical moment to reflect on our past and move towards reconciliation together. The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place* centres self-determination for First Nations arts and cultures, recognising the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture.

Building on the Australia Council's 50-year history of supporting self-determination and investing in First Nations arts and culture, Creative Australia established First Nations Arts in 2024 as a newly legislated part of the organisation. This was a key commitment of *Revive*.

Governed by the First Nations Board, First Nations Arts will be guided by the First Nations Protocols, which act as a framework to support self-determination and help to build a strong and diverse First Nations arts and cultural sector. The First Nations Board builds on the hard work and dedication of the First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel and the Aboriginal Arts Board at Creative Australia.

This requires a significant shift in decision-making and ways of working. Creative Australia's RAP Working Group has carefully developed our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28), taking time to engage deeply with Creative Australia staff and First Nations stakeholders. Central to this dialogue has been a willingness to listen and reflect, recognise cultural load, and set out careful steps needed to make changes to ways of working that will contribute to the conditions for self-determination.

It is with deep gratitude that I thank all those involved for their deep engagement, reflections and contributions to developing this plan.

By embedding the First Nations Protocols across our systems, processes and engagements, Creative Australia's actions will be shaped by genuine dialogue with First Nations peoples. It will help drive self-determination of First Nations arts and culture and support agency for First Nations leadership across wider organisational activity and all areas of work.

We look forward to driving better outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through this deeply engaged approach.

Franchesca Cubillo

Executive Director, First Nations Arts and Culture, Creative Australia

Message from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Creative Australia on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its fourth overall.

As one of Australia's principal arts investment and advisory bodies, Creative Australia has a mandate to invest in people, artists and organisations that represent a range of voices, perspectives and stories. This work and much critical reflection has led Creative Australia to a reconciliation vision that centres Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, protocol and guidance.

This Stretch RAP is the product of learnings from Creative Australia's previous RAP and the launch of the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*. While this RAP is grounded in our program's pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, it has been adapted to also align with *Revive's* First Nations First pillar.

This has resulted in an approach that more intentionally distributes the efforts of Creative Australia's RAP commitments and outlines how non-Indigenous employees will support and uplift the strategies of Creative Australia's First Nations self-determined body. This prioritises genuine relationship-building over one-way consultation practices and affirms the centrality of First Nations protocols as vital mechanisms for building the conditions for self-determination.

With the RAP pillars supporting the First Nations First objectives, Creative Australia proceeds with a solid foundation upon which to expand its reconciliation commitments. Most notably, it seeks to prioritise First Nations perspectives and knowledge while aiming to mitigate the cultural load on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. To ensure this commitment is met, Creative Australia is integrating First Nations perspectives into team planning, facilitating peer-to-peer sessions and creating safe spaces such as the Warami Listen + Connect Sessions to foster meaningful conversations.

This Stretch RAP is a roadmap for the work that the whole of Creative Australia needs to do, with particular focus on the essential roles and responsibilities of its non-Indigenous stakeholders. It is the result of a unique collaboration and meaningful partnership between Reconciliation Australia and Creative Australia and I look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia



About Creative Australia and First Nations Arts

Creative Australia is the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body. We were founded as the Australia Council for the Arts in 1968 and established by the *Australia Council Act 1975*. In 2023, the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, announced Creative Australia as an expanded and modernised Australia Council.

Established under the *Creative Australia Act 2023*, Creative Australia builds on this long history of investment in arts and creativity to deliver strategic investment for a thriving, modern creative sector.

Our purpose is to champion and invest in Australian creativity. We do this by investing in artists and organisations and their audience and markets; developing skills and workforce capability; promoting fair, safe and respectful workplaces; building partnerships to bring together public and private investment; and undertaking research, evaluation, impact measurement and advocacy to inform government policy. Creative Australia works with other government portfolios and across all levels of government to achieve positive outcomes for the creative sector.

Creative Australia is committed to First Nations self-determination, cultural authority and leadership. We are proud of the Australia Council's 50-year history of investing in First Nations arts and culture and supporting First Nations self-determination. Creative Australia is built on that legacy, with the creation of First Nations Arts in 2024 as a newly legislated part of the organisation. First Nations Arts will receive significant additional Australian Government funding to further expand Creative Australia's investment in First Nations arts and culture and build the capacity of First Nations communities and creative work. First Nations Arts is led by the newly established First Nations Board. The Board builds on the work of the previous First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel to oversee strategic investment in First Nations arts and culture and promote best practice in First Nations cultural protocols and principles.

As of 1 November 2024, Creative Australia employs 153 people. Most staff are based in Sydney, followed by Melbourne, and a small number of employees are based in other states and territories. 6.5% of Creative Australia's employees are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.





FestPAC - Neville Bonney, Arpaka Dance Company performance at Hawai'i Convention Centre. Credit: Benjamin Bayliss



Tim Bishop at Reconciliation Week 2023 performance by Matthew Doyle, Nathan Leslie, Katie Leslie and Tim Bishop at Creative Australia (Sydney office)



About the Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts

The *Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts* (the First Nations Protocols) clearly articulate the legal, ethical and moral considerations for the use of Indigenous cultural material in arts and cultural projects.

Creative Australia-funded organisations and creative practitioners who work with First Nations artists or engage with Indigenous cultural heritage in projects are required to comply with the First Nations Protocols as a condition of funding. They are also used more broadly throughout the arts and cultural sector and are accepted and used by many First Nations artists and organisations.

In 2002, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of Creative Australia (then the Australia Council for the Arts) engaged Terri Janke and Co to develop the First Nations Protocols. They were revised in 2007, and again in 2019.

Centred on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the First Nations Protocols set out appropriate ways of engaging with Indigenous cultural material, peoples and communities. They encourage ethical conduct and promote interaction based on good faith, mutual respect and cultural values. Responsible use of Indigenous cultural knowledge and expression ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures can maintain, protect and pass their cultures on to future generations.

Shaped by ten principles, the First Nations Protocols are, by definition, ways of applying the principles. For example, a cultural protocol to implement the underlying principle of respect is to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country at the site of each exhibition, performance, installation or event launch. This can also be done beforehand in the acknowledgement of a project that is about a specific Country, as well as on inscriptions that accompany art displays. The First Nations Protocols guide identifies approaches that can be applied or adapted by artists, writers, producers, directors, designers, musicians, singers, songwriters, choreographers, arts organisations, event managers, and others working in the creative arts.

The First Nations Protocols also identify issues arising from the interaction between Indigenous cultural concerns and the law protecting the rights of artists. The current Australian legal system incorporates some but not all of these concerns. The process of following the First Nations Protocols supports the recognition of Indigenous heritage rights. It encourages culturally appropriate working practices and promotes communication between all Australians with an interest in First Nations creative arts.

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) March 2025–28

Creative Australia's Stretch RAP March 2025–28 was developed with learnings from our RAP (2018–21). It was conceived after a period of unprecedented disruption from COVID-19 and significant organisational transformation, and the launch of the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*.

We learned from our 2018–21 RAP reflection that significant change is required to bring about self-determined governance and First Nations-led delivery. In developing our RAP, guided by the First Nations Protocols, we sought to articulate the actions and responsibilities of non-Indigenous teams and staff to contribute to this change.

As a result, our Stretch RAP March 2025–28 does not include the work performed by our First Nations Board and Division. This represents a significant shift from our previous RAP, and from what one might expect in a Stretch RAP more generally. Instead, it is a roadmap setting out the work that the wider organisation needs to do – and to account for this discretely without relying on the achievements and actions of the First Nations Division.

The choice to develop a Stretch RAP for March 2025–28 in this way is an expression of confidence in where we are at in our reconciliation journey, and sets out the steps we agree to take to move forward in genuine and equal partnership.

We have worked closely with Reconciliation Australia (RA) to develop and express this in our RAP, especially where the language and content differs from RA templates. We are grateful to RA for their collaboration.

Informing our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28)

Creative Australia's Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) is informed by:

- learnings from our RAP (2018–21)
- Creative Australia staff engagement
- First Nations stakeholder feedback
- organisational change following the implementation of *Revive*
- an evolving environment.

Our RAP 2018–21

Creative Australia's previous RAP (2018–21) was developed after a period of significant organisational change.

A major achievement was recognition of the need for more senior First Nations roles within the organisation, leading to the creation of a number of new senior roles.

An anchoring project to support First Nations self-determination at Creative Australia was the First Nations-led renewal of Creative Australia's *First Nations Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts* (First Nations Protocols) in 2019 (see page 13 for more detail).

But as we began to walk forward with renewed guidance and focus, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our entire sector. The unparalleled disruption from the immediate and lasting impacts of COVID-19 were acutely felt among our First Nations artists, organisations and communities. Impacts included threats to lives and livelihoods, closures of venues, cancellation of events, and a loss of connection and wellbeing.

As the RAP (2018–21) came to its conclusion, the world had changed, as had our organisation.

Staff and stakeholder engagement and activity 2021–24

Between 2021 and 2024, Creative Australia undertook multiple projects to support First Nations self-determination, incorporate First Nations approaches to our ways of working, and engage staff and stakeholders to inform a new RAP.

Throughout this period, we:

- established informal dialogue avenues for staff
- conducted a staff survey and reflection of our reconciliation efforts
- engaged widely with First Nations stakeholders
- consulted with First Nations artists and communities on First Nations Arts at Creative Australia.

Staff dialogue and engagement

As a way to reconnect with each other as we returned to work, Creative Australia opened up a new space informed by First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing.

Established in 2022, *Warami: Listen and Connect* is an informal space for conversation and dialogue, without agenda, where staff meet as equals. Starting with connections to local Custodians in the Sydney region, these sessions provide a way to open up and develop dialogue between Creative Australia staff and Custodians, communities and cultural advocates across the country.

Staff survey and reflections

In dialogue with First Nations staff and our First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel, we undertook **whole-of-organisation reflections** on our commitments to reconciliation and to First Nations arts, culture and communities.

The whole-of-organisation reflection found:

- **Working at Creative Australia provides important opportunities for non-Indigenous staff** to learn, develop and engage with First Nations people and culture as part of their employment. Many highlighted that this experience had changed their understanding.
- **93% of Creative Australia staff engage with First Nations people in their daily work** (compared with 47% in a previous workplace), reflecting both the value and respect we place on First Nations leadership, but also the enormous demand on First Nations staff and stakeholders.
- There is **high commitment and willingness** across the wider organisation; but also, **hesitancy** that can impede action and change.
- There are substantial **disparities of experience, confidence, exposure and activity** across the organisation.
- **There is demand for expanded staff induction and training** to improve our cultural capability and confidence, including deepening our understanding of Creative Australia's First Nations Protocols which are a key foundation of our engagement.
- There is a need for Creative Australia to **lead ongoing dialogue and capability building about use of the First Nations Protocols in the sector**. The First Nations Protocols are key to Creative Australia's reconciliation commitments and a vital mechanism for our sector to contribute to the transformational work of reconciliation.
- **There is a need to put systems and structures** in place for better visibility, tracking and reporting on our RAP commitments and actions.

First Nations-led stakeholder research

In dialogue with First Nations staff and our First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel, we commissioned **First Nations-led stakeholder feedback research** to capture feedback from First Nations staff and stakeholders in a culturally safe way.

The First Nations-led stakeholder research found:

- **Creative Australia demonstrates effort, plays a leadership role and has good relationships** with First Nations stakeholders, who recognise the organisation's First Nations commitments guide action and strategy.
- **First Nations stakeholders have positive experiences and find us open to feedback.** They highlighted that Creative Australia provides vital opportunities, including national connection, investment and skills.
- **First Nations staff and stakeholders value engagement with First Nations arts and culture and expertise across the continent.** Creative Australia celebrates and recognises First Nations arts and culture and provides pathways for employment and some growing tenure.
- **There is room for improvement.** In particular there was a need for more consistent communication and cultural capability across different parts of the organisation to ensure more consistent experiences for our First Nations stakeholders.
- **There is a need for more accessible and culturally responsive processes, spaces and systems** to support cultural safety and enable First Nations representation and leadership.
- **We need to consult with First Nations staff and stakeholders** earlier in planning cycles and include time for reflection and learning.

Critical insights and directions from our First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel included:

- As an organisation, we must not **'hide behind' the work of our First Nations staff and team.**
- Our Reconciliation commitments must focus on the **actions and performance of the wider organisation** in working with and for First Nations peoples.
- We need to **distinguish between self-determined work, and First Nations-informed, relational work of the wider organisation:** 'It's not about consultation, it's about relationship.' (First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel member, Nardi Simpson, 2023).

Revive and learnings from First Nations consultations

As our RAP conversations were unfolding early in 2023, the Australian Government launched its National Cultural Policy, *Revive*. The policy sets out a new direction for arts and culture to build momentum for the creative sector.

Revive centred **self-determination for First Nations peoples**, recognising the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture. Throughout 2023–24, **consultations with First Nations artists and communities helped shaped the governance and priorities** for First Nations Arts. The consultations highlighted the **priorities of First Nations artists and communities**, and affirmed the centrality of the First Nations Protocols as the vital mechanism for building the conditions for self-determination.

New legislation was passed in July 2024 to **establish First Nations Arts**. This includes a dedicated **First Nations Board within Creative Australia** charged with overseeing self-determined investment, workforce development and promotion and implementation of the First Nations Protocols across arts and cultural organisations. The **First Nations Board and First Nations Arts** build on the strategic leadership previously undertaken by the First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Panel and First Nations team within Creative Australia (see page 10 for more detail).



About our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28)

Our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) is a **commitment from our whole organisation**, recognising we are all responsible for its delivery. Our Stretch RAP is a reflection of our First Nations stakeholder needs, learnings from staff engagement and a recognition of the need to centre the First Nations Protocols as a mechanism and framework for action and change.

In recognition of Creative Australia's commitment to First Nations self-determination, our Stretch RAP focuses on **actions for the wider Creative Australia organisation** to support First Nations-led areas of activity. It supports our wider work to be First Nations-informed, while recognising and accounting for the additional cultural load carried by our colleagues.

Our RAP and the principles that inform it are **championed by the Creative Australia Executive team and led by the RAP Working Group**. With continuing dialogue and accountability to First Nations staff and the new First Nations Board, we have established structures to govern our commitment to transparency and progress reporting.

Our principles

Informed by learnings from deep engagement, our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) **actions and measures are guided by the following principles**, which have informed its development and will guide us through implementation:

- **Truth and reflection:** Truth telling of past and present injustices, as well as the strengths and contributions of First Nations peoples, is vital to reconciliation.
- **Centring the First Nations Protocols:** We apply the principles in our organisation that we expect to be upheld in the arts and cultural sector.
- **First Nations-led:** We recognise the change required in our organisation to support the conditions for self-determination.
- **First Nations-informed:** We take guidance from our First Nations Board, colleagues, artists and communities while leaning into our responsibilities.
- **Shifting the load:** We acknowledge and resource the demands that our wider organisation places on our First Nations colleagues for guidance and leadership.
- **Building capability:** We encourage all staff and teams to learn, consider and include First Nations perspectives and experiences.
- **Feedback and reflection:** We recognise the need to keep track of our own actions and engagement with First Nations artists and communities, and reflect on their feedback.
- **Resourcing and accountability:** We build RAP actions into ways of working and make them business-as-usual, properly resourcing them, and ensuring there is governance and accountability.

Our Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) deliverables and measures

Creative Australia's Stretch RAP (March 2025–28) is mapped to four themes to support reconciliation:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Governance.

It covers deliverables, responsible departments and lead staff, as well as expected timeframes to ensure accountable reporting.





Relationships

Creative Australia respects the vital relationships held and sustained by our First Nations Board and Division with First Nations artists, cultural advocates and communities across the continent. We also recognise that non-Indigenous leaders and staff must foster, strengthen and maintain reciprocal relationships. Our aim is that First Nations artists and communities encounter cultural safety and reciprocity wherever they connect, collaborate and access Creative Australia services. We also leverage our leadership role and influence to build capacity of the arts and cultural sector to adhere to First Nations Protocols and uphold Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights.



Action 1: Deepen and grow mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Build shared responsibility and capacity among non-Indigenous staff for First Nations engagement, including through peer to peer sessions to share best practice and learnings.	RAP Working Group (in collaboration with Communications and Human Resources)	RAP Working Group	June 2025	- At least 3 peer sessions convened annually - Quarterly updates on Reconciliation Hub - Annual all-staff update
Reflect on learnings from engagement with First Nations artists and communities at regular team, Divisional and Executive meetings.	Executive Directors Team leaders RAP Working Group	RAP Working Group Executive Assistants	June 2025	- Monthly team meeting agendas - Quarterly Divisional meeting agendas - Reporting twice yearly monitoring meeting

Action 2: Use our sphere of influence to increase ethical interactions with First Nations artists, arts and cultures.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Build commitment and capability of Australia's National Performing Arts Partnership Framework Organisations to apply the First Nations Protocols, including provisions to safeguard Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) when working with First Nations artists and communities.	Multi-Year Investment team	Director, Multi-Year Investment	March 2025 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027	- Contracts updated for 2025–28 - ICIP resources developed and delivered - Organisational ICIP reporting implemented - MYI team progress report to twice yearly monitoring meetings
Promote engagement with and integration of First Nations Protocols in creative organisations and practice.	All teams	Executive Directors	From March 2025 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027 and March 2026, 2027	Annual progress report, including updates from all teams
Evaluate implementation of the First Nations Protocols across National Performing Arts Partnership Framework Organisations and the wider sector.	Evaluation and Impact Measurement	Director, Evaluation and Impact Measurement	December 2027	Evaluation delivered

Action 3: Build relationships through celebrating First Nations artists, arts and cultures.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Provide opportunities for staff to build and reflect on personal relationships with First Nations peoples, including an annual organisational reflection event during National Reconciliation Week.	Communications Team RAP Working Group	Director, Communications	May 2025, 2026, 2027	- Annual event held - Reflections published on the Reconciliation Hub



Respect

Creative Australia's Stretch RAP sets out actions to centre the First Nations Protocols within our own organisational learning and workplace culture. Complementing existing anti-discrimination, equity and inclusion training and resources, these actions provide for dedicated induction, training and ongoing opportunities for learning and engagement. This will ensure our organisation builds confidence to apply the principles of First Nations Protocols and develop respectful collaborations as we work alongside our First Nations colleagues and a self-determined governance structure.



Yarning Circle - Uncle Allen Madden with Creative Australia staff

Action 4: Build our organisation's capability, culture and confidence through cultural learning.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Develop and deliver induction resources to build understanding of our First Nations commitments and First Nations Protocols, including guidance for engaging with First Nations stakeholders.	Human Resources	Director, Human Resources and Facilities	March 2026	• Induction resources and guide developed and shared • Existing staff inducted • Incorporated into new staff onboarding
Commission and deliver organisation-wide training on cultural capability and anti-racism. ²	Human Resources	Director, Human Resources and Facilities	December 2025, 2026, 2027	• Training commissioned • Delivered annually
Provide opportunities for staff to engage with First Nations arts and cultures through Warami Listen + Connect Sessions.	RAP Working Group Wellbeing Warriors	RAP Working Group – Divisional RAP representatives	Feedback and review June 2025, 2026, 2027	• Minimum 8 sessions held annually (in person and online) • Insights shared on Reconciliation Hub • Participant feedback captured and reported annually
Provide opportunities for staff to engage with First Nations artists, arts and cultures, including encouraging all staff to attend and participate in NAIDOC events in the community.	CEO RAP Working Group	RAP Working Group – Divisional RAP representatives	July 2025, 2026, 2027	• Annual message from the CEO • Insights shared on Reconciliation Hub
Update our internal Reconciliation Hub as a central place for staff to access resources and information, including with new induction resources.	RAP Working Group All Staff	RAP Working Group (Divisional RAP representatives)	March, June September, December 2025, 2026 and 2027	• Quarterly updates scheduled and produced • Annual audit and plan for Reconciliation Hub content

² 'Cultural capability' is a broad term that encompasses First Nations cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competence. See [Victorian Public Service Commission, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural capability](#). A mix of these terms were used in the RAP review process.



Opportunities

Creative Australia plays a vital role in our nation's cultural landscape, including through its investment in First Nations arts and cultural organisations and businesses, and the development of the First Nations workforce. We recognise the self-determined work of Creative Australia's First Nations Arts Board and Division in self-determined investment and strategy. Our RAP sets out actions that complement self-determined First Nations strategies, including investing in First Nations professional development. The actions are designed to ensure all teams and staff have the capability, resources and operational support to provide employment opportunities and procure services from the developing First Nations economy – and to keep track of progress and change.



Action 5: Improve engagement and retention of First Nations staff through dedicated professional development.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Provide First Nations coaching and support to First Nations staff to plan annual professional development and produce an annual update for the First Nations Board on development opportunities provided.	Human Resources	Director, Human Resources and Facilities	October 2025, 2026, 2027	Annual update provided to First Nations Board
Engage an independent First Nations-led evaluation of RAP progress, including on First Nations recruitment and retention.	Evaluation and Impact Measurement	Director, Evaluation and Impact Measurement	Commission July 2026 Evaluation report by September 2027	Independent evaluation commissioned and delivered

Action 6: Promote and reinforce increased First Nations procurement to support First Nations self-determination, approaches, stakeholder engagement and economic outcomes.

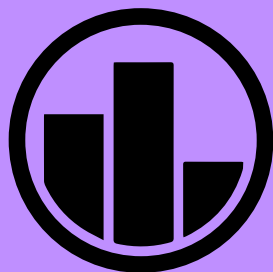
Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Review and develop procedures for implementing the Procurement Guidelines regarding First Nations and Social Procurement.	Legal and Governance Business Systems Finance	General Counsel Director, Business Systems Financial Controller	December 2025 Report March 2026, 2027, 2028	- Review undertaken and procedures developed - Annual update provided at monitoring meeting from March 2026
Develop resources for staff to encourage relationship building, and to increase procurement from First Nations businesses	Corporate Resources	Executive Director, Corporate Resources	July 2026 Report September 2026, 2027	- Resources developed and communicated - Annual updates provided from September 2026
Implement systems to support coordination, tracking and reporting of First Nations and Social Procurement.	Corporate Resources	Executive Director, Corporate Resources	July 2026 Report Sept 2026, 2027	- First Nations procurement coordination and tracking included in Systems and Processes review - Systems to support coordination, tracking and reporting of First Nations procurement implemented

Action 7: Increase opportunities for First Nations artists, cultural practitioners and creative workers.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Ensure First Nations representation on Creative Australia-led sector advisory groups.	Development and Partnerships	Executive Director, Development and Partnerships	Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027	Report annually on representation to September monitoring meeting
Scope and implement a staged review to improve cultural safety and accessibility across application, assessment and granting processes.	Evaluation and Impact Measurement Artist Services Business Systems Research and Knowledge Management	Manager, Diversity Impact Director, Project Investment	Scoping completed December 2025 Annual report on implementation and outcomes Sept 2026, 2027	- Scoping undertaken 2025 - Implementation plan 2026 - Progress reporting annually to September monitoring meeting
Develop a First Nations peer and industry advisor recruitment framework and best practice guide.	Arts Investment	Manager, Assessment	December 2026 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027	- Plan developed and reported to RAP Working Group - Annual progress report to September monitoring meeting
Advance partnerships and collaborations that enable impactful First Nations-led research and evaluation.	Research and Evaluation	Director, Research and Knowledge Management Director Evaluation and Impact Measurement	Sept 2025, 2026, 2027	- Reporting on number of partnerships and collaborations developed - Annual progress reports to First Nations Board and to September monitoring meeting
Build Creative Australia's capability to foster ethical, culturally safe and robust research and evaluation, supported through its business processes and systems.	Research and Evaluation Business Systems	Director, Research and Knowledge Management Director Evaluation and Impact Measurement Director, Business Systems	Plan by December 2025 Report on implementation December 2026	- Systems and Processes plan developed and implemented - Outcomes reported to First Nations Board and twice yearly monitoring meetings



ILBIJERRI Theatre Compnay Big Name, No Blankets Sydney Festival 2024. Photo Credit Brett Boardman



Governance

The change to a new governance model with a self-determined First Nations Board provides an opportunity for Creative Australia to build a new way of working based on genuine and equal partnership. However, there is a risk that the wider organisation is unready to meet the scale and pace of change, placing increasing demands for guidance from our First Nations colleagues. Our Stretch RAP actions commit our wider organisation to step up – through structured reflection and learning, resourcing for systems that document workflows and support tracking and monitoring, and holding ourselves to account through progress reporting and evaluation.



Reconciliation Week 2023 performance at Creative Australia (Sydney office). L-R Nathan Leslie, Matthew Doyle, Katie Leslie

Action 9: Support First Nations Arts to govern and operate with self-determination.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Establish a process to manage workflows from the wider organisation to the First Nations team, and share learnings from engagement, including with external consultants and stakeholders.	Executive Team	Executive Assistants	June 2025 Report March 2026, 2027	- Workflow management process established and communicated to all staff - Update to twice yearly monitoring meetings

Action 10: Enable and track delivery of our RAP commitments.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Integrate RAP actions and commitments into team plans and meeting agendas.	CEO and Executive Team	Executive Directors Executive Assistants	April 2025 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027 and March 2026, 2027	Agenda templates launched on RAP Hub
Maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive the RAP, including a formalised structure and Terms of Reference.	CEO	Manager Corporate Planning RAP Working Group	Monthly from March 2025 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027 and March 2026, 2027	- Terms of Reference agreed and implemented 10 meetings held annually
Ensure responsibility for RAP deliverables are included in individual performance agreements as designated.	Executive Team	Executive Directors	September 2025 Report Sept 2025, 2026, 2027 and March 2026, 2027	Annual HR reporting on performance planning includes RAP responsibilities
Implement systems and processes to support the tracking and reporting of RAP actions, commitments and performance.	Executive Team	Manager, Corporate Planning Director Business Systems	July 2025	- Tracking and reporting system implemented - Twice yearly reports completed and shared

Action 10: Support internal and public accountability across our RAP and intersecting commitments.

Deliverables	Responsibility	Lead	Timeframe	Measure
Hold twice yearly monitoring meetings of senior staff with responsibility for RAP and other equity and diversity action plan deliverables.	CEO	Executive Officer	Sept 2025, 2026, 2027 and March 2026, 2027	- Twice yearly monitoring meetings held - Outcomes reported back to all staff via SharePoint - Annual progress report published on website
Measure RAP impact and report to Reconciliation Australia and external stakeholders annually.	CEO	Manager Diversity Impact	September 2025, 2026, 2027	- Annual RAP impact reporting submitted - Quarterly meeting with Reconciliation Australia
Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	Human Resources	Director, Human Resources	March 2026	Update to Reconciliation Australia provided
Complete Reconciliation Australia RAP Impact Survey.	CEO	Manager, Corporate Planning	September 2025, 2026, 2027	Annual RAP Impact Survey completed

Appendix: Creative Australia's reconciliation journey

- 2010** The Australia Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process begins.
- RESPECT exhibition and staff immersion program launches on 27 May. In collaboration with guest curator Djon Mundine, the exhibition of funded works celebrates First Nations and non-Indigenous Australian artist collaborations.
- The Council undergoes a deep reflective process. This is to reflect on and to ensure staff understand the important contribution the Council could make to the conversation about reconciliation.
- 2012** The Council launches its first RAP (2012–14).
- The Council welcomes Mathew Doyle and Jannawi Dance Clan to lead a smoking ceremony and workshop about the importance of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.
- 2013** The Council organises its first onsite Acknowledgement to Country in the reception area on 28 May.
- The Australia Council Bill 2013 is introduced. The Council makes subsequent reforms to governance, structure, and operations; develops a new strategic plan; redesigns funding programs; and makes changes to peer assessment processes.
- Council staff celebrate the Torres Strait festival 'The Coming of the Light' on 1 July.
- The Council launches its second RAP (2013–15).
- A new Australia Council Act 2013 changes the Council's governance and decision-making, including previous structures that included the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board. The Council commences significant reforms.
- 2014** The Council launches a new Strategic Plan 2014–19, A Culturally Ambitious Nation, which for the first time includes a dedicated goal on First Nations arts and culture as a central pillar.
- 2015** The new Australian Venice Biennale pavilion is opened with a smoking ceremony, led by Mathew Doyle.
- 2016** Lee-Ann Tjunypa Buckskin becomes the first First Nations person appointed to the role of Deputy Chair of the Australia Council Board.
- The Council engages First Nations-owned company Inside Policy to assist with internal engagement in the development of a new RAP.
- 2018** The Council launches its third RAP (2018–21). The RAP recognises a self-determined forum of First Nations staff and commits to expanding senior roles for First Nations staff.
- New senior roles are created – Head of First Nations Arts and Culture (initially Director, First Nations Arts and Culture), and Manager First Nations Strategic Development.
- 2019** Jacinta Tobin, Darug singer, songwriter and language holder, begins a cultural residency at the Council, providing staff with engagement, and hosting yarning circles to connect with local Elders and community.
- The National Arts Participation Survey includes dedicated engagement with First Nations peoples in remote communities and regional towns to provide new insights.
- The Council refreshes and launches an update of the First Nations Protocols.



- 2020** The Council implements significant changes to programs and activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Roundtables with First Nations artists led by the First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy Team highlight additional impacts for First Nations artists and communities. New dedicated role is created – Assessment Officer First Nations.
- 2021** The Council publishes two research publications: Re-Imagine which includes insights from First Nations-led consultations; and Towards Equity, an outcome of a major commitment in our RAP of transparency and public reporting. Both reports demonstrate that inequities persist in the arts. The Council renews its corporate plan to better respond to a changing environment.
- 2022** The RAP (2018–21) concludes during the pandemic, and the Council begins work to refresh its RAP and wider commitments to equity and diversity.
- The Council establishes a formal dialogue with First Nations and non-Indigenous staff to guide the review of the Council's RAP.
- The RAP review involves a whole-of-organisation reflection and First Nations-led research to capture feedback on its performance on commitments to reconciliation and First Nations artists and communities.
- The RAP review highlights the need to delineate the work required of the wider organisation, and to remain committed to centring First Nations knowledge in our wider work to address inequities in the arts and culture, and within our own workplace.
- 2023** During Reconciliation Week, a Smoking Ceremony is held and a monthly dialogue (Warami: Listen and Connect) is launched to invite staff to reconnect after pandemic lockdown.
- Launch of National Cultural Policy *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, including a commitment to First Nations First. Legislation establishes Creative Australia with an expanded remit, including Creative Workplaces and Music Australia.
- Creative Australia undertakes a Theory of Change incorporating a First Nations lens to inform a new Strategy and Corporate Plan. Consultations get underway on the establishment of a First Nations body within Creative Australia.
- 2024** During Reconciliation Week, staff reflect on the role of art and creativity in reconciliation and change with Red Ochre Award Winner Uncle Badger Bates, in conversation with Wesley Enoch.
- Legislation passes to establish First Nations Arts and a First Nations Board within Creative Australia.
- 2025** Creative Australia finalises and launches a new Stretch RAP March 2025–28.

Appendix: Creative Australia's RAP Working Group

RAP Working Group 2022-24

The Creative Australia RAP Working Group operated throughout 2022–24 to lead organisation-wide reflection and consultation to review our previous RAP and develop our new Stretch RAP (2025–27). This group has been open to all staff to attend on a self-nomination basis. Members of the RAP Working Group 2022-24 are listed below.

- Manager, Diversity Impact (Lead)
- Research and Evaluation Associate, Equity and Diversity
- Executive Assistant, Partnerships and Development
- Director Human Resources and Facilities
- Manager Human Resources
- Director Business Systems
- Artist Services Officer
- Marketing and Brand Manager
- Head of Literature
- Assessment Officer
- Manager Corporate Planning
- Director Business Development and Partnerships
- Senior Records Officer
- State Manager Development and Partnerships

The RAP Working Group held dialogue with the First Nations Arts and Culture Division and provided regular updates to the First Nations Strategy Panel (subsequently the First Nations Board from 2024). The group has worked on developing Creative Australia's Stretch RAP 2025-28 drawing on the organisation-wide process of reflection and consultation.

RAP Working Group 2025-28

To support RAP implementation, the RAP Working Group has reviewed and updated its Terms of Reference. From early 2025 a new RAP Working Group will be constituted to implement the Creative Australia Stretch RAP (2025–28).

The Working Group will include members nominated by the Executive who will be responsible for leading the implementation of the RAP. These members will need to include their formal responsibilities in their Individual Performance Agreements. The balance of Creative Australia staff will continue to be encouraged to attend the Working Group meetings and contribute to the delivery of the RAP, as a shared responsibility of the organisation.

The RAP Working Group will comprise staff with a range of skills and levels of seniority, with at least two members appointed from each of the following Divisions:

- Development and Partnerships
- Arts Investment
- Corporate Resources
- Office of the CEO

The First Nations Arts Division will be represented by a designated member of that Division, responsible for liaison with the RAP Working Group and providing updates to First Nations Arts on RAP activities.

The RAP Working Group reports to the CEO.



Anita Pam from Amata SA working on a Desert Mob car during a Tjanpi skills development workshop, 2023. Credit: Geneveive Har.



Australian Government



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**For further information on Creative
Australia's Stretch RAP, please contact**

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