

Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

**July 2020 - June 2023
Close Out Report**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and the community and its importance to cultural vitality, life and identity. We pay respect to them, their cultures and contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

1.	Message from our Chief Executive	3
2.	Highlights	4
3.	Status report	6

Message from our Chief Executive



We also realised that national reconciliation cannot be achieved through various organisations working in isolation but rather it requires building a unified vision with others and finding opportunities for collaboration. In 2020, we established Pirku-Itya, our annual Reconciliation Partnerships Program which provides funding for grassroots community organisations and events that contribute to reconciliation in South Australia. So far, we have partnered with 19 organisations across the state which has allowed us to build respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities and support initiatives that promote health and wellbeing, sustainability and proactive environmental leadership.

We had many notable outcomes over the last 3 years including surpassing our goal of increasing the value of spend with Aboriginal businesses and constructing a new state-of-the-art desalination plant in the community of Yalata. The desalination plant was just one of many projects completed in remote communities of South Australia with the goal of ensuring long term reliability of safe, clean drinking water and wastewater services whilst limiting our impact on the environment.

It is with great pleasure that I present the closeout report for our fourth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and bring this chapter of our reconciliation journey to a close.

Much has been achieved during this period and I share my heartfelt appreciation to our people at SA Water and our partners for striving to achieve the commitments we set out to accomplish in 2020. This RAP period brought with it challenging circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic and we focussed our decision making on ensuring we did not compromise the health and safety of both our people and the communities we serve. I am therefore extremely proud of how much we were able to accomplish in our efforts towards reconciliation.

Reconciliation Australia identifies that a framework of relationships, respect and opportunities underpinned by sound governance and reporting allows the good intentions of an organisation to manifest into measurable action which supports the national reconciliation movement. When we developed our Stretch RAP, we designed our actions and deliverables to align to these 4 areas of focus.

Of course, the lockdowns due to Covid-19 prevented us from travelling into remote Aboriginal communities for extended lengths of time, impacting our ability to maintain relationships and deliver goals we set before the pandemic. Pleasingly, we have been able to recommence visiting these regions and a new education program for students in remote Aboriginal communities is in pilot.

In the last 3 years there have been many lessons learned from both successes and challenges. All of these provide valuable insights as we move onto developing our next RAP and continue to walk side-by-side with our Aboriginal employees, customers and communities to deliver impactful reconciliation outcomes.

Highlights

A key highlight related to each of the four focus areas for our actions and deliverables is shared below.



Relationships

Cultural connection and collaboration – Prescribed Cultural Burn in the South East

The Finger Point Wastewater Treatment Plant on Boandik country in South Australia’s Southeast is situated in a culturally sensitive location possessing a variety of ecologically valuable vegetation species and registered heritage sites. The location is vulnerable to an invasive weed species called the Lavatory Creeper Vine which due to its high seed production, dispersal ability and drought tolerance, requires effective land management to control.

SA Water partnered with the Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation, Department for Environment and Water and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board to ensure that traditional ecological knowledge, cultural understanding and spiritual connection to country was incorporated into a prescribed burn activity to control the invasive species. This event, which invited a variety of community members, allowed for the passing down of traditional Boandik fire knowledge, education about the importance of managing deep relationships with country and the effectiveness of cultural burns, and provided an employment opportunity for Aboriginal people.

The project showed positive weed management results allowing for native vegetation to recover and regenerate. It has also highlighted the benefits of collaboration with Aboriginal people and communities for sustainable land management and as such, is planned to be incorporated into future land management activities.

The project was recognised with the 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Award at SA Water’s Innovation and Excellence Awards, and an article in the Australian Water Association ‘Water Source’ publication.



Respect

Showcasing the importance of Aboriginal culture via artwork on infrastructure

As part of our 3-year plan for community art on infrastructure, we collaborated with a range of groups and artists across the state to showcase connection to water and the natural environment, history of the local area, reconciliation and the importance of Aboriginal Culture. In total, 6 projects were completed including the Pt Vincent Water Tower, Pt Augusta Pipeline, Wool Bay and Minlacowie Water Tanks and the Kadina and Pt Augusta Depots. Additionally, the artists from the Minlacowie Water Tanks were able to paint a mural at the Pt Pearce Aboriginal Community using our paint supplies.





Opportunities

Maintaining and upgrading infrastructure through remote Aboriginal communities

Throughout South Australia’s remote communities, we continually sought to undertake maintenance and construction activities to ensure safe drinking water and wastewater services. One of the key projects was the construction of a new desalination plant in South Australia’s Far West Coast which is able to produce 180,000 litres of water per day while being powered in large part by solar energy to reduce our environmental footprint. Other projects in remote communities included an upgrade of the Pukatja wastewater main which was damaged by flooding in a creek crossing, installation of smart water meters in Umoona to help monitor water usage and leaks and partnership with the Department of Health in Amata for the trial of a water canon to prevent wastewater lagoon overflow.



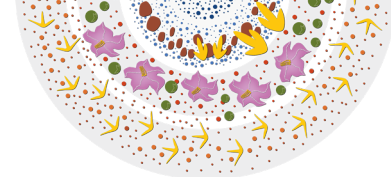




Governance




Embedding our commitments and social impact

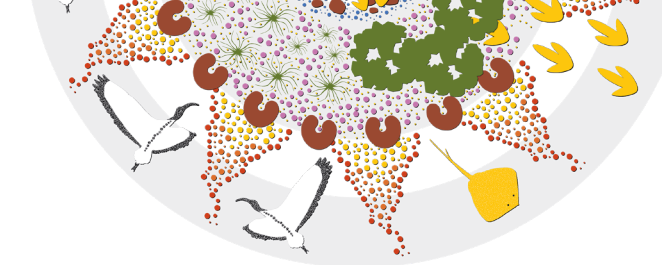
Our commitment to Reconciliation is recognised in Our Strategy 2020-25 and through the development of our Customer and Community Corporate Strategy, we have set our aspirations to be seen as a leader for reconciliation in South Australia. Throughout this RAP period, our RAP Committee met regularly to oversee our progress and our RAP commitments were embedded into our Executive Scorecards with progress tracked monthly. Building and supporting economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people via employment, either directly or indirectly through our supply chain, is a high social impact area of our RAP, and during this period we surpassed our target for 0.7 per cent of total business spend (target increasing by 0.1 per cent each year) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.



Status report

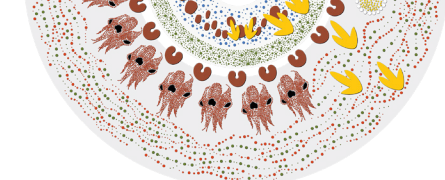


Relationships		
Action	Outcomes	Status
1.0 Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations through regular communication and engagement.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint efforts were facilitated with state-level stakeholders and agencies once a year to improve outcomes and understand key water-related issues for remote Aboriginal communities. One Aboriginal representative was appointed as a member of the Customer Advisory Group to ensure Aboriginal voices and views are included in regular business updates. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customer views were captured in the Customer Research and Insights program to inform decision making, service offerings and product design. Cultural awareness training was provided for our regional teams to improve capabilities to communicate and engage with local Aboriginal communities. In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our recently appointed Aboriginal Engagement Lead is overseeing plans for our regional teams to visit 3 communities to improve ongoing relationships. Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Chief Executive met with community leaders in 2020 and 2021. Unfortunately visits to Communities, including the APY Lands, were interrupted by Covid-19. 	
2.0 Build relationships and awareness through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two NRW events were organised each year in both Adelaide and regional South Australia. The RAP steering committee attended internal and external NRW events throughout the RAP period. Our people were encouraged to participate in one internal and one external NRW event including the Reconciliation SA hosted NRW breakfast. All events were registered on the Reconciliation Australia NRW website. Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and material was circulated to both our people and key stakeholders. 	

 Completed
  Work is continuing
  Incomplete





Relationships		
Action	Outcomes	Status
3.0 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual communication plan promoting RAP actions and outcomes was communicated to our people and external stakeholders. Aboriginal Connection branding was incorporated into our internal communications, social media messaging and websites. Community programs and initiatives were promoted through signage and education tools. We worked with our major partners to ensure they had RAPs in place and understood the importance of reconciliation outcomes. Reconciliation awareness included in employee inductions. Updated our "Reconciliation Statement of Commitment" before communicating it across SA Water. Our annual Innovation and Excellence Awards supported achievements in reconciliation with projects receiving multiple nominations and one winning an award. Engaged in cross-agency working groups to share RAP outcomes and successes as well as create opportunities for collaboration. 	
4.0 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Successes / In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our anti-discrimination policy was reviewed in 2021 and will be reviewed by the end of 2023. The next review of our policy will include the advice of our Aboriginal Employment and Retention Advisor. Whilst we did not roll out specific sessions on our fair treatment procedure, we facilitated learning about the effects of racism during mandatory cultural awareness training. 	
5.0 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning and skills sharing.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cultural e-learning module update for all new employees was led by Aboriginal employees. Survey results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural understanding within the workplace informed a review of the Cultural Awareness Program. Provided face-to-face refresher cultural awareness training for all our people who had significant interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Updated online e-learning training and employee induction. Our DIY plumbing course was delivered in Yalata and Oak Valley. Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our aspiration to achieve 100 per cent cultural awareness training was challenged with employee turnover, however, we achieved 70 per cent in July 2023. The DIY plumbing course was impacted by Covid-19; however, we are currently identifying resourcing to continue its delivery. 	










Relationships		
Action	Outcomes	Status
6.0 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of Country has become a feature of meeting agendas and presentation templates. We produced adhesive labels for laptops to build confidence and encourage regular acknowledgements. Developed a map on our intranet with First Nation's locations for all our sites, to build knowledge and confidence within our people. Cultural Leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees was introduced to allow for the fulfilment of cultural requirements as well as obligations with family and community. In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Aboriginal Engagement guidelines are under development. Further develop an interactive digital map, showing key communities in each area of the state, and information about them, including Acknowledgement statements. 	
7.0 Celebrate NAIDOC week.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported our people to participate in NAIDOC week events in local areas including knowledge sharing and storytelling. The RAP Steering committee participated in external NAIDOC week events including sharing sessions and team events. An internal and external communications plan for NAIDOC Week was developed to celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Supported 2 external NAIDOC Week events each year (except for 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic). 	
8.0 Collaborate with communities to provide signage and interpretative information about key SA Water sites that have cultural significance and heritage, leading to community social cohesion on reconciliation.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a 3 year plan for a community development approach to art-on-infrastructure and completed 6 art works. Supported 2 knowledge sharing sessions each year facilitated by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through stories and yarning circles; ensuring knowledge is respected and protected. A dedicated Aboriginal community partnerships program, Pirku-Itya, was developed to realise reconciliation outcomes. Shared "Water Wisdom", our digital first nations water stories collection, with the general public to increase awareness of Aboriginal connection and knowledge on water and water management practices. This was available on both ABC iView and SA Water's YouTube Channel. Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with representatives of the Kurna Nation, it was recognised that signage and dual naming of our key sites would not achieve the desired goal of social cohesion. 	




Relationships		
Action	Outcomes	Status
9.0 Promote the protection of cultural heritage.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced heritage incidents by increasing business awareness of the importance and legal requirements of cultural heritage and planning through the development of guidelines, project protocols and a communications plan. Implemented an engagement approach for Aboriginal heritage related matters by investigating opportunities and relationships prior to legal approvals for major projects. 	
Opportunities		
10.0 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Retention Plan was reviewed and updated in consultation with our Aboriginal people and communities. Ongoing, full-time roles offered to all 4 First Nation's employees who participated in the traineeship program. Worked with our major and strategic partners to baseline Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment data, reporting parameters and definitions to enable successful delivery of employment outcomes. Introduced an indirect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target across our major and strategic partners of 2 per cent on SA Water projects; we achieved 2.75 per cent. Ensured reporting process and capital delivery KPI model successfully measures employment outcomes. Two activities were pursued to increase applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people — a report was prepared to explore the effectiveness of selection processes to attract First Nation's candidates for our job vacancy advertisements and a system was designed to capture diversity data statistics among applicants. Continued to implement our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate and work experience programs by supporting one graduate and/or undergraduate and 2 work experience students per year. Also launched a Seasonal Reservoir Ranger Program in 2022 which provided casual employment to Aboriginal students in STEM degrees. Identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership development programs and supported 15 of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to attend. Provided development opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees; 9 employees participated in secondments. Established the role of Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Adviser to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment programs and our people. 	

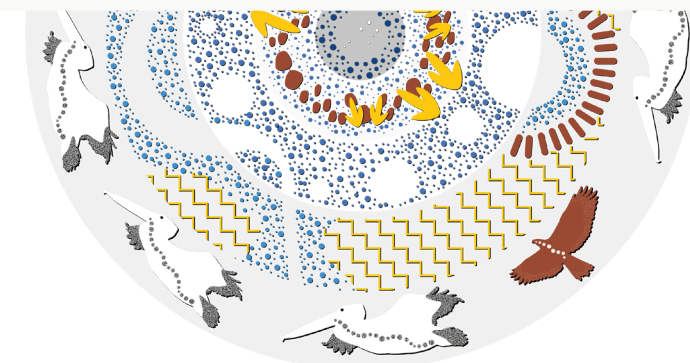
Opportunities		
Action	Outcomes	Status
10.0 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our hiring process has been updated to ensure candidates feel supported. For example, an Aboriginal Employment Retention Advisor is part of the interview panel and contacts the candidate prior to provide support. Supported the Ingkarni Wardli Technologies Program which engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students in a camp to discover how their STEM interests can be applied in society. Kauwi Miyurna provides its members and allies with wellbeing opportunities to share experiences and foster culturally appropriate support structures. Our Employee Assistance provider offers a First Nations helpline. <p>In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work towards our goal to increase the representation (recruitment and retention) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees; we achieved an average of 2.6 per cent over the RAP period. Attraction and retention in regional locations will continue through our existing partnership. 	
11.0 Support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace, ensuring a culturally safe work environment.	<p>Successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to provide access to external mentors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and supervisors. Kauwi Miyurna was launched during the RAP period, which is made up of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from different teams and geographical areas and provides opportunities to share experiences and build culturally appropriate support structures. Allies were introduced to this group in 2021 for engagement across all our people. <p>In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to evolve the role and purpose of Kauwi Miyurna. 	






Opportunities		
Action	Outcomes	Status
12.0 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<p>Successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged our contractors and partners to support delivery of our targeted spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Targeted communications delivered across the business and local companies to promote local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and their services. Training sessions held for relevant people in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the Office of the Industry Advocate. Maintained commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Developed and implemented improved reporting systems of direct and indirect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to understand supply impact and opportunities. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid-19 prevented 2 forums per year being hosted. The Office of the Industry Advocate hosts these events which SA Water participates. 	
13.0 Support liveability and a better life in Aboriginal communities.	<p>Successes / In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were able to install drinking fountains in 2 (from the plan of 3) highly populated communities: Raukkan and Port Augusta. 	
14.0 Support Aboriginal communities in hardship through proactive and culturally appropriate engagement.	<p>In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build relationships with Aboriginal Communities and provide education opportunities on water use and conservation. We have now appointed our Aboriginal Engagement Lead; we have visited communities to allow us to identify hardship issues as well as infrastructure problems which could potentially lead to further hardship. 	
15.0 Support communities with safe drinking water and wastewater services	<p>Successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided the Quench Bench, our free community water trailer, at one Aboriginal event per year with expected attendance of more than 1,000 people. Maintained and upgraded water and wastewater infrastructure in Aboriginal communities through our remote communities' program. Progressed the mainstreaming of regional Aboriginal communities' water services management to embed within the business. <p>In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with the Department of Premier and Cabinet Reconciliation Network to assess our ability to provide community access to safe and clean drinking water. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of opportunities with partners to support water infrastructure projects in Homelands proved difficult due to Covid-19. 	

Opportunities		
Action	Outcomes	Status
16.0 Support development of community-owned education programs that focus on the importance of water from an Aboriginal perspective and promote through our own education activities.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to deliver our water education program, which is linked to the National Curriculum, in partnership with the APY Lands and other Aboriginal communities with the goal of encouraging sustainable water behaviours. Began a pilot program for the training of APY Land's teachers and Anangu Education Officers, incorporating reciprocal learning, on our water education program and messaging. Worked with Aboriginal communities to establish 3 Working on Country projects to assist with land management of SA Water sites. Projects such as the Finger Point Cultural Burn resulted in great environmental outcomes as a result of recognising spiritual connection to country and traditional ecological knowledge. In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to provide training and equal opportunities for women and girls to be involved in Working on Country Programs that occur in the future. 	
17.0 Support the next generation of Aboriginal leadership through sharing the value of water and culture.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported youth succession and leadership programs through our partnerships by assisting with the organisation of employment forums and workshops. Continued to link our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students interested in STEM subjects and employment opportunities in the water industry. For example, we sponsored the Ingkarni Wardli Technologies Program at The University of Adelaide, employing 3 undergraduate STEM students and selecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in STEM degrees for our Seasonal Reservoir Ranger program. 	
18.0 Support SA Water land sites to be used for cultural purposes.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-developed a policy that supports the use of SA Water land being made accessible for cultural purposes. In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the draft Strategic Property Approach Framework which identifies SA Water land holdings that have the potential to be used by Aboriginal groups for cultural purposes. 	

Governance		
Action	Outcomes	Status
19.0 Establish and Maintain an effective RAP Committee to drive the governance of the RAP.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and applied a Terms of Reference for the RAP Steering Committee; reviewing membership, roles and accountability of the committee. Maintained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Steering Committee throughout the RAP period. Established and maintained an effective RAP Committee which met regularly to drive governance. 	
20.0 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RAP became a standing agenda item at quarterly Senior Leadership Team meetings. It was later embedded into Executive Scorecards. Maintained an internal RAP champion from senior management. Developed an annual RAP budget and long-term plan to ensure investment going forward. Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly monitoring of RAP actions took place, however, employee turnover made achieving and measuring our commitments challenging. 	
21.0 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted the annual RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. Publicly reported against our RAP commitments in our annual report which outlined achievements, challenges and lessons learned. This was also conveyed in an infographic which was also produced annually. The RAP Committee met regularly and oversaw RAP progress, our Executive monitored actions in their scorecards and papers were sent to the Board. Business wide reporting was undertaken at regular intervals. In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree on the cadence of internal communication (business-wide reporting). 	



Governance

Action	Outcomes	Status
22.0 Measure our social impact.	Successes/In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We developed a draft RAP social impact framework to measure the social impact we are helping to create for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through our reconciliation projects. This is ready to be used for engagement with key stakeholders moving forward. 	
23.0 Communicate our success internally and externally.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted RAP initiatives and outcomes through traditional media on an ongoing basis. Released our Stretch RAP 2020-23 business-wide in September 2020. 	
24.0 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	In progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have commenced work on defining our approach to develop our next RAP. 	
25.0 Embed our RAP commitments into our corporate strategy.	Successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation is identified in SA Water's Strategy 2020-2025 and our Customer and Community Corporate Strategy. 	