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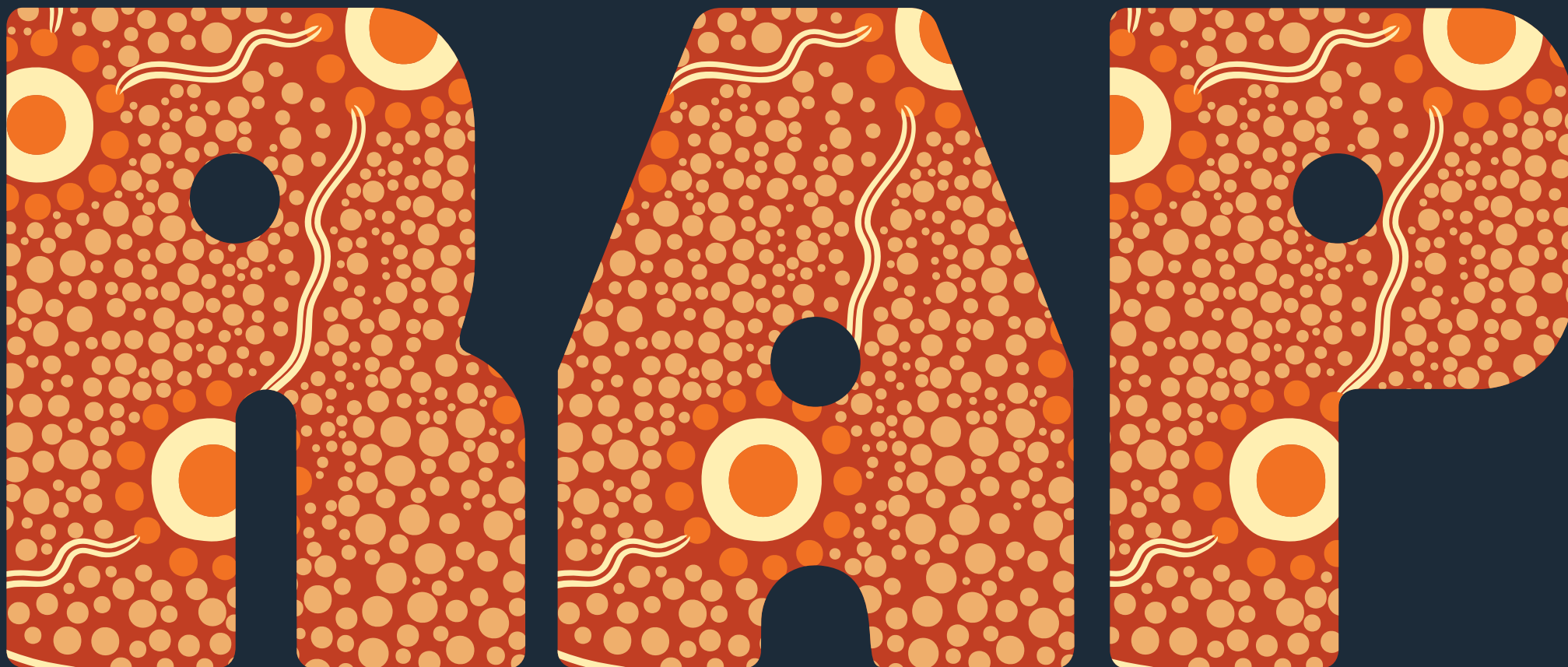


NIAA



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
STRETCH

NIAA's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2026-2029)



**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS AGENCY
STRETCH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2026-2029**

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ISBN 978-1-925365-00-9 (online)

ISBN 978-1-925365-01-6 (print)

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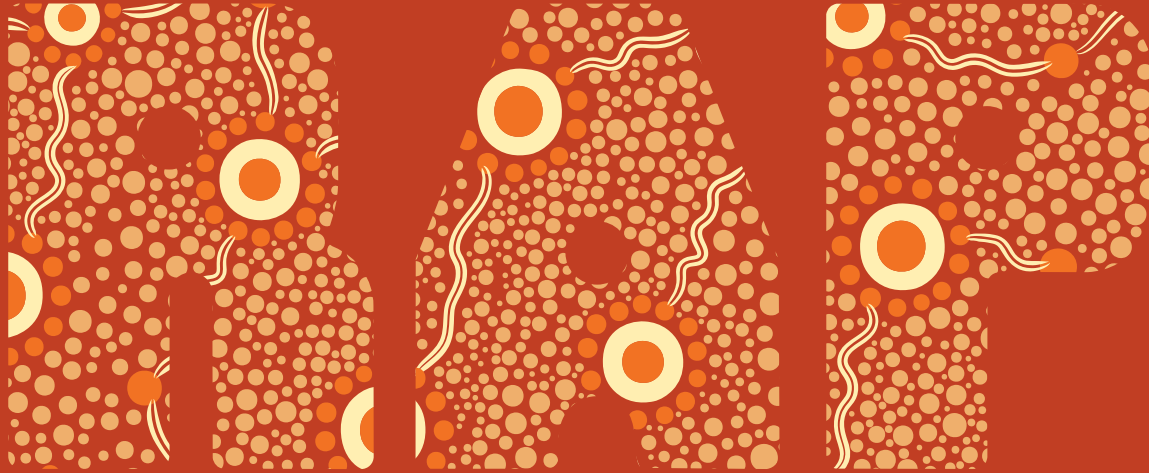
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Acknowledgement of Country

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.

The NIAA Stretch RAP Artwork

The NIAA Stretch RAP design uses elements of the NIAA commissioned art-work by Wiradjuri Artist, Ms Jordana Angus. The dots represent people and diversity. The lines are paths leading to a meeting place – a meeting of minds, spirits and actions. This design is carried throughout the whole document and is a visual reminder that the plan is a living document as the NIAA continues its reconciliation journey.



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Julie-Ann Guivarra, NIAA CEO

CEO Foreword

NIAA Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2026–2029

I am proud to present the National Indigenous Australians Agency's (NIAA) Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2026–2029.

Reconciliation is central to who we are and how we work. As the Australian Government agency responsible for leading and coordinating policy, programs and service delivery in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the NIAA has a unique responsibility to embed reconciliation into our own operations while also leading and influencing change across the Australian Public Service (APS).

This new Stretch RAP reflects the next phase of our reconciliation journey. It builds on the strong foundations established through our inaugural 2022–2025 Stretch RAP, and responds to a changing national context shaped by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and its Priority Reforms. These reforms make clear that improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires more than incremental change — it demands a transformation in how governments work.

For the NIAA, reconciliation and Closing the Gap are deeply connected, but they are not the same. Closing the Gap sets out the policy framework, targets and reforms required to address systemic disadvantage.

Reconciliation provides the cultural, relational and leadership foundations that make this reform possible and sustainable. Trust, respect, shared decision-making and cultural safety are not add-ons to reform — they are the conditions that allow reform to endure.

During this period, we are evolving our RAP to better align with the Priority Reforms, recognising that reconciliation must be embedded within the systems, governance and decision-making processes that shape government action. This approach enables the NIAA to strengthen reconciliation as part of our core business and to more deliberately influence how the APS delivers lasting, system-level change, particularly under Priority Reform 3 — Transforming Government Organisations.

This Stretch RAP commits us to deepening partnerships, strengthening cultural capability, advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and economic participation, and embedding accountability and learning into how we work. It also reinforces our role as a model employer and as a steward of reform across the Commonwealth.

“Reconciliation is not an add-on to reform — it is the foundation that makes lasting change possible.”

Importantly, reconciliation is not something the NIAA can deliver alone. It requires genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, collaboration across governments, and leadership at every level of the APS. Through initiatives such as the Indigenous Champions Network (ICN), our ongoing engagement with Reconciliation Australia, and leadership forums, we will continue to support shared understanding, accountability and collective progress.

I encourage all NIAA staff to see this RAP not as a separate plan, but as a guide to how reconciliation shows up in our everyday decisions, behaviours and relationships. By embedding reconciliation as business-as-usual, we strengthen our ability to deliver on our responsibilities and contribute to a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heard, recognised and empowered.

Julie-Ann Guivarra
Chief Executive Officer
National Indigenous Australians Agency

● Young Yuendumu resident attending the Junkyard Beats documentary film making school holiday program

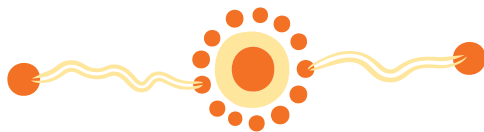




Karen Mundine, RA CEO



*“Reconciliation
is driven through
relationships,
respect and
opportunities.”*



Reconciliation Australia CEO Statement

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the National Indigenous Australian's Agency (NIAA) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as a standalone agency.

Formed around the pillars of *relationships, respect* and *opportunities*, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise.

NIAA works to ensure that the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are met by shaping government policies and providing advice to the highest government offices in Australia. This work puts NIAA at the forefront of reconciliation efforts and influence in Australia.

This Stretch RAP is built upon the considerable experience NIAA garnered in its previous RAP. With a strong focus on relationship-building, core to NIAA's business is the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and embedding a Place-based Practice Framework to support effective relationships between governments and First Nations communities.

With these learnings, NIAA has developed a strong understanding of what really drives reconciliation outcomes and how it is best positioned to build momentum. To this end, NIAA is adjusting the structure of this RAP to align with the Priority Reforms outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This will enable NIAA to more directly embed transformational change into its everyday work while remaining committed to the RAP program's pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities. Reconciliation Australia will co-lead this pilot approach across the Australian Public Service to strengthen alignment between Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and the RAP Framework.

Through this new RAP structure and its commitments to Closing the GAP, NIAA has the potential to transform how government can drive reconciliation outcomes. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend NIAA on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from the NIAA RAP Champions

Rachael Jackson & Craig Hendry



Reconciliation is strongest when it is shaped by many voices, informed by lived experience, and embedded in how an organisation works every day.

We are proud to support the NIAA's Stretch RAP 2026–2029, and to acknowledge the significant collective effort that has gone into its development. This RAP reflects the depth of commitment across the Agency — from staff in offices where the Agency is located, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and allies, and from those who gave their time, insight and leadership to help shape our next chapter.

The development of this RAP is grounded in genuine consultation and engagement. Contributions from staff through all-staff workshops, yarning sessions, surveys, priority-setting exercises and RAP Working Group deliberations have helped us move from a broad range of ideas to a focused set of commitments that are ambitious, practical and aligned to the NIAA's core business. This process

was not about generating a long list of actions, but about sharpening our intent — strengthening cultural safety, addressing institutional racism, and embedding system-level change through the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

We would like to sincerely acknowledge the members of the RAP Working Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (ATSIN), whose leadership, challenge and collaboration have been central to this work. The RAP Working Group has been a powerful reflection of the NIAA's diversity, bringing together perspectives from all Groups and regions to ensure this RAP speaks to how we work in practice, not just in principle.

As we move into implementation, governance of the RAP will transition into the NIAA's broader Priority Reform Operating Model, with oversight through established committees and the Executive Board. This change reflects the maturity of NIAA's reconciliation journey — embedding reconciliation as business-as-usual,

rather than something delivered in parallel. Importantly, consultation and engagement will continue through forums such as ATSIN, Your Say, all-staff engagement activities and regular communications, ensuring staff voices remain central to how this RAP is delivered and evolved.

This Stretch RAP invites all of us to play a role. Reconciliation is not the work of a single group or plan; it is built through everyday decisions, behaviours and relationships. We encourage all staff to see this RAP as a shared commitment — one that challenges us to lead with integrity, strengthen partnerships, and contribute to meaningful and lasting change.

Thank you to everyone who has helped shape this RAP and who continues to advance reconciliation through their work at the NIAA.

Rachael Jackson
Chief Operating Officer
RAP Champion

Craig Hendry
South Australia
Regional Manager
RAP Champion

Our vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments to work together in genuine partnership, where First Nations peoples are heard, recognised and empowered, and where their cultures, histories and rights are respected as fundamental to Australia's national story.

In this future, reconciliation is embedded in how governments design policies, deliver programs and make decisions — grounded in trust, shared responsibility and cultural safety. For the APS, reconciliation means transforming systems and behaviours so that partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are sustained, accountable and led by community priorities.

The NIAA's vision also underpins a deliberate decision, made in partnership with Reconciliation Australia, to structure this Stretch RAP around the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, recognising that reconciliation is advanced through systemic, accountable change in how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our commitment to Reconciliation

To realise our vision, reconciliation is embedded throughout all that we do—it shapes our values, systems, and the way we engage with First Nations peoples and communities. As the Commonwealth agency responsible for leading policy, program design, and service delivery in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we are committed to walking the reconciliation journey with integrity, humility, and courage.

Our Stretch RAP (2026–2029) reflects this commitment, driving systemic change through truth-telling, accountability and healing, and supporting the transformational shifts required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.



How we operate

To deliver on our Vision and Purpose, the NIAA's work is guided by a small number of core Key Activities that shape how we lead, partner and invest in support of improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key Activity 1 – Leading and coordinating Closing the Gap

We lead and coordinate the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap across the Commonwealth, working with governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies to strengthen shared accountability, embed partnership-based approaches and drive system-level change. Through this role, we help transform how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, contributing to reconciliation by building trust, transparency and respectful relationships.

Key Activity 2 – Partnerships and self-determination

We work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to support self-determination and community aspirations. By embedding shared decision-making, aligning policies and investment to community priorities, and fostering culturally informed approaches, we strengthen mutual accountability and deliver outcomes consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Key Activity 3 – Targeted investment and programs

We deliver targeted investment and programs through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and partnership agreements to support the social, economic and cultural outcomes of Closing the Gap. These investments are designed in partnership with communities and governments to be flexible, place-based and responsive, ensuring they contribute to sustainable outcomes and reinforce reconciliation in practice.

Further details about the NIAA's work can be found at www.niaa.gov.au.

Healing together

The NIAA is committed to advancing reconciliation through meaningful and accountable action. Our RAP sets out clear commitments to embed reconciliation across our policies, programs, partnerships and organisational culture, consistent with our role as the Commonwealth agency responsible for leading and coordinating action in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These commitments were shaped through genuine engagement with our staff, ensuring they reflect both our internal responsibilities and our broader stewardship role across government. Through our RAP, we support truth-telling, strengthen accountability, and contribute to the system-level transformation required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In doing so, we work to build trust, foster respectful relationships, and support conditions that enable healing and sustained change, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities.



Our RAP

Our Stretch RAP 2026–2029 marks a deliberate evolution in the NIAA's reconciliation journey. Building on the foundations established through our inaugural 2022–2025 Stretch RAP, which focused on strengthening relationships, building cultural capability and embedding reconciliation within the Agency, this RAP shifts from a broad, activity-based approach to a smaller number of strategically focused commitments designed to drive system-level change. This reflects the maturity of our reconciliation practice and our responsibility to prioritise enduring impact over standalone actions.

As part of this approach, the commitments in this RAP align directly with the actions and change levers set out in the [Priority Reforms Roadmap](#), with implementation and learning supported through the Priority Reforms Strategy as it is developed. Aligning the RAP in this way enables reconciliation to be embedded more directly into the NIAA's core business and into the systems, behaviours and decision-making processes that shape government action. This approach strengthens accountability and sustained partnership and reinforces the NIAA's role in leading and influencing reform across the Commonwealth.

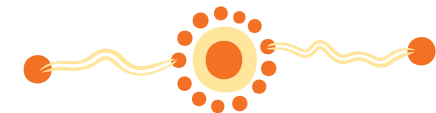
While structured around the Priority Reforms, this RAP remains grounded in Reconciliation Australia's pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. Strong, respectful relationships underpin how we listen, partner and deliver. Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledges shapes our engagement and creates culturally safe environments. Our commitment to opportunity is reflected in how we embed equity and inclusion across employment, procurement and capability development. Together, these principles guide how the NIAA advances reconciliation while contributing to the shared commitment, between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Many of the practices commonly reflected in corporate and government Reconciliation Action Plans are already reflected in NIAA's business-as-usual operations.

This includes observing and supporting cultural protocols such as Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country, celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, supporting truth-telling and healing initiatives, and investing in ongoing cultural capability

and respectful workplace practices. These foundations underpin this Stretch RAP and are reflected throughout the document, including in Appendix A, which maps Reconciliation Australia's pillars to NIAA's core operations.

Find out more about how our work embeds Reconciliation Australia's Pillars at the Appendix: [Reconciliation Australia RAP Pillars as NIAA Core Deliverables](#).



“Reconciliation must shape the systems, behaviours and decisions that drive government action.”





Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making

The NIAA is committed to building and sustaining formal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring shared decision-making is embedded in how policies and programs are designed, delivered, and evaluated. These partnerships are grounded in mutual respect, transparency, and accountability. The commitments below reflect the NIAA's contribution to Priority Reform 1, aligned with the actions and change levers set out in the Priority Reforms Roadmap.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
	Month/Years	NIAA Group		
<p>Community Data and Digital Capability Partnerships</p> <p>Long-term partnerships with up to five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to deliver community data and digital capability projects, including through short-term secondments and placements.</p>	<p>1st quarter 2027 - completion (4 years) 2030</p>	<p>Grants & Finance Group</p>	<p>Opportunities & Relationships</p>	<p>By 2029, the NIAA has established and maintained up to five long-term partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support community data and digital capability.</p> <p>These partnerships demonstrate shared decision-making through co-designed project scopes, agreed governance arrangements, and opportunities for skills transfer (including secondments or placements).</p> <p>Partner feedback indicates increased capability and stronger mutual understanding over the life of the partnerships.</p>

Deliverable	Timeline Month/Years	Responsibility NIAA Group	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
<p>Embedding First Nations Engagement Practice</p> <p>Embed First Nations engagement resources and best-practice guidance into the NIAA's staff induction and training.</p>	<p>3rd quarter 2026 - ongoing</p>	<p>Operations & Delivery Portfolio</p>	<p>Relationships</p>	<p>Success means a user-friendly suite of First Nations engagement resources for NIAA that integrates existing tools and recognised external guidance, including the APS First Nations Partnership Playbook and the Charter of Partnerships and Engagement. These resources will support place-based engagement, contribute to building sustained and respectful relationships, and be embedded in induction, training and day-to-day practice.</p>
<p>Closing the Gap Place-Based Partnerships Community of Practice</p> <p>Implement a Closing the Gap Place-Based Partnerships Community of Practice to establish a joined-up approach between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. [source: Commonwealth 2026 Implementation Plan Commitments]</p>	<p>4th quarter 2026 – ongoing</p>	<p>Operations & Delivery Portfolio</p>	<p>Relationships</p>	<p>Success means strong, ongoing engagement between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, where members openly exchange priorities, insights and opportunities, share challenges and receive constructive peer support, foster continuous learning through shared tools and collaboration, and are supported by a well maintained, accessible knowledge repository.</p>

Case Study

Empowering the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) communities by placing First Nations voices at the centre

Priority Reform 1: Shared Decision-Making through Anangu-Led Regional Governance

The Tri-State Empowered Communities (EC) region demonstrates reconciliation in practice by centring Anangu leadership in priority-setting across the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) region, which spans South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Through Empowered Communities, Anangu communities work in genuine partnership with governments to shape priorities, influence investment decisions and strengthen cultural, social and economic outcomes.

At the centre of this partnership is Kulintja Kutju, an Anangu-led regional governance group of senior and emerging leaders. Kulintja Kutju provides culturally grounded leadership and advice, ensuring Anangu voices directly inform priorities, investment and service delivery across jurisdictions. This approach recognises cultural authority, values lived experience and places First Nations decision-making at the heart of government processes.

Key achievements of the Kulintja Kutju Empowered Communities approach in the Tri-State region include the Emerging Leaders Program and the Transition Support Initiative, which support youth leadership, pathways and long-term community capability. Mrs. Smith, Chairperson NPYWC, and Tanya Luckey, Co-chair Kulintja Kutju reflected on the significance of this change for his community:

"We are creating a space for Anangu and Yarnangu to come together as one, collective voice - kulintja kutju - to speak about Anangu and Yarnangu priorities, and send a message to government to listen and act. We are changing the way community and government work together for a better future. Palyau!"

This work reflects NIAA's commitments under its Reconciliation Action Plan to build strong relationships, demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledge systems, and support

self-determination. It also strengthens internal capability by deepening cross-cultural understanding and reinforcing best-practice approaches to partnering with First Nations communities.

By strengthening how governments listen, learn and respond to Anangu leadership, the Tri-State Empowered Communities region demonstrates how reconciliation commitments can be translated into meaningful action — delivering more coordinated, culturally grounded and sustainable outcomes now and into the future.



Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector

We support the growth and sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations by investing in their capability, strengthening governance, and enabling them to lead service delivery that meets the needs of their communities. The commitments below reflect NIAA's contribution to Priority Reform 2, aligned with the actions and change levers set out in the Priority Reforms Roadmap.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
<p>Sector Investment and Capability Building - Indigenous Rangers Program</p> <p>Investment Strategy to grow Indigenous sector strengths - Expansion of Indigenous Rangers Program.</p>	<p>Month/Years</p> <p>Rangers Expansions Grant Rounds 1 and 2 were undertaken in 2024 and 2025 respectively. Funding includes capacity building funding for groups. Current Indigenous Ranger Program funding agreements conclude on 30 June 2028.</p>	<p>NIAA Group/Branch</p> <p>Country, Culture and Connection Group</p>	<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Success is demonstrated when the expanded Indigenous Rangers Program strengthens the capability and sustainability of Indigenous-led ranger organisations, supports secure and culturally meaningful employment — including increased participation of First Nations women — and enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to manage Country in accordance with Traditional Owner priorities, while building long-term career pathways in land and water management.</p>
<p>Community-Controlled Employment Pathways</p> <p>Work with community-controlled organisations to create employment pathways through the Employment and Career Pathways Working Group of the First Nations Economic Partnership, co-chaired by the Coalition of Peaks and the NIAA.</p>	<p>1st quarter 2026 – 4th quarter 2026 (subject to extension)</p>	<p>Jobs & Economic Development</p>	<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Success is demonstrated when the Employment and Career Pathways Working Group of the First Nations Economic Partnership, co-chaired by the Coalition of Peaks and the NIAA, develops and advances policy recommendations that strengthen secure employment in the community-controlled sector, and progress is made toward establishing Economic Inclusion Zones that support sustainable, community-led employment pathways.</p>

Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations

The NIAA is working to transform how government operates by embedding cultural capability, accountability, and inclusive practices across our systems, policies, and workforce. This includes creating culturally safe environments and ensuring our work reflects the voices and aspirations of First Nations peoples. The commitments below reflect the NIAA's contribution to actions under Priority Reform 3, as outlined in the Priority Reforms Roadmap.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
	Month/Years	NIAA Group		
<p>Collaboration Circle</p> <p>Establish a Collaboration Circle, based on the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Chief Operating Officers model to embed First Nations perspectives in the Agency's governance and decision-making processing.</p>	4 th quarter 2026 - ongoing	Corporate Group	Relationships	The Collaboration Circle will be successful when shared decision-making between NIAA Executive and First Nations staff results in demonstrable, system-level improvements in the design, coordination and effectiveness of Agency-wide initiatives, with clear evidence that First Nations perspectives have directly influenced decisions and actions taken by the NIAA.
<p>Cultural Capability</p> <p>Share best practices for strengthening the capability of APS employees to work effectively in cross-cultural contexts, including by continuing to promote the NIAA Footprints Framework and other available resources.</p>	2 nd quarter 2026 - ongoing	Corporate Group	Relationships & Respect	Success means the NIAA influences broader APS outcomes by strengthening employee capability to work confidently and respectfully in cross-cultural contexts. This is supported by shared best practices, broader adoption of the NIAA Footprints Framework and enhanced ability to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services in partnership with First Nations peoples.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
	Month/Years	NIAA Group		
<p>APS wide reconciliation metrics</p> <p>Work with the APSC and the APS Indigenous Champions Network (ICN) to build Reconciliation Measures into Senior Leaders Performance Agreements and the APS census.</p>	<p>4th quarter 2026 - ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Group</p>	<p>Relationships & Respect</p>	<p>Success means APS-wide reconciliation metrics are embedded into core APS accountability mechanisms — with agreed measures incorporated into Senior Leaders' performance agreements and the APS Census, increasing transparency, leadership accountability, and sustained progress against Closing the Gap and APS Reform priorities.</p>
<p>Embedding accountability and cultural safety through safe reporting pathways</p> <p>Establish and maintain safe reporting pathways that enable staff to raise concerns about agency processes, policies or initiatives that may cultivate racism, with clear governance for review and response.</p>	<p>3rd quarter 2026 - ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Group</p>	<p>Respect</p>	<p>Success looks like APS staff having a safe, trusted and accessible mechanism to report agency processes, policies or initiatives they believe cultivate racism, with reports leading to transparent review, meaningful action, and continuous improvement of APS systems and practices.</p>

Case Study

Embedding cultural capability through Footprints

Transforming Government Organisations under Priority Reform 3

As the lead national agency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultural capability is embedded as a core part of how the Agency works. Through Footprints, the NIAA's cross-cultural learning framework, staff across the Agency are supported to build and apply understanding of all cultures in their everyday work. This includes an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and perspectives.

The Footprints Framework is embedded across the NIAA's ongoing learning, performance and workforce practices, reinforcing the expectation that cultural capability is essential to effective policy, program delivery and stewardship. Building cross-cultural capability is not treated as a one-off activity, but as an ongoing everyday practice that supports reflective learning and respectful engagement.

Teams and individuals across the Agency regularly participate in Footprints activities that create space for open conversation and shared learning. These activities are led by staff at all levels, fostering inclusive engagement and non-hierarchical learning. This approach supports a culturally safe workplace and enables staff to confidently apply cultural understanding to decision-making across roles and functions.

By embedding Footprints as business-as-usual, the NIAA strengthens its role as a model employer and trusted partner. The framework supports reconciliation by addressing bias, strengthening relationships, and building the cross-cultural foundations required for the system-level change envisaged under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.



● NIAA staff at the National Indigenous Art Triennial exhibition and a First Nations weaving workshop

Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at the Regional Level

We are committed to improving access to timely, transparent, and locally relevant data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By supporting data sovereignty and regional decision-making, we aim to empower communities to drive their own priorities and measure progress effectively. The commitments below reflect the NIAA's contribution to Priority Reform 4, aligned with the actions and change levers set out in the Priority Reforms Roadmap.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
	Month/Years	NIAA Group/Branch		
<p>Governance of Indigenous Data (GID)</p> <p>Provide practical guidance for APS agencies to implement CARE principles (collective benefit, authority to control, responsibility, and ethics) for governance of Indigenous data. The NIAA will champion the use of CARE principles when working with Indigenous data and support uptake through the APS GID Community of Practice.</p>	<p>2026–2029</p> <p>Guidance will be developed in 2026 with use and refinement continuing over the RAP period.</p>	<p>Strategy Group</p>	<p>Respect</p>	<p>Success will be demonstrated by APS agencies having access to clear, practical guidance to apply CARE principles (collective benefit, authority to control, responsibility and ethics) to Indigenous data governance, and by the guidance being actively used to strengthen Indigenous data governance arrangements across the APS.</p> <p>This will be evidenced by endorsement and active utilisation of the CARE Principles guidance through APS governance forums, including the APS GID Community of Practice, the Data Profession Stream Senior Working Group, the Chief Data Officers Group and the Deputy Secretaries Data Group, and by examples of agencies applying the guidance in practice.</p>

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	RAP Pillar	Measure of Success
	Month/Years	NIAA Group/Branch		
<p>Community Data Request Protocols</p> <p>Develop internal protocols for handling community data requests.</p>	<p>1st Quarter 2027 - ongoing</p>	<p>Grants & Finance Group</p>	<p>Respect</p>	<p>Success will be demonstrated by the NIAA having clear, consistently applied internal protocols for responding to community data requests that align with Indigenous Data Sovereignty and governance principles.</p> <p>These protocols support respectful, culturally appropriate engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and data custodians and contribute to more consistent and trusted data-sharing practices across the organisation.</p>
<p>Shared Knowledge and Transparency across the APS</p> <p>Strengthen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities across the APS by sharing agreed intelligence, community/organisation profiles and investment data with other government and non-government agencies. This sharing includes transparency of funding.</p>	<p>Commenced 4th Quarter 2025 - completion 4th quarter 2027</p>	<p>Grants & Finance Group</p>	<p>Respect</p>	<p>Success will be demonstrated by improved whole-of-government understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through responsible sharing of agreed intelligence, community and organisational profiles, and investment data.</p> <p>This supports more coordinated planning, greater transparency of funding, and better-informed regional and community-level decision-making across government.</p>

Case Study

Strengthening shared access to data

Respecting Indigenous data sovereignty to support regional decision-making under Priority Reform 4



The NIAA is strengthening shared decision-making under Priority Reform 4 – Shared Access to Data and Information by embedding Indigenous data governance and respectful data-sharing practices into how government information is created, accessed and used.

Access to timely, transparent and locally relevant data is critical to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities exercising self-determination. The NIAA's approach focuses on ensuring data is not only available but also governed and applied in ways that respect Indigenous rights, priorities and perspectives.

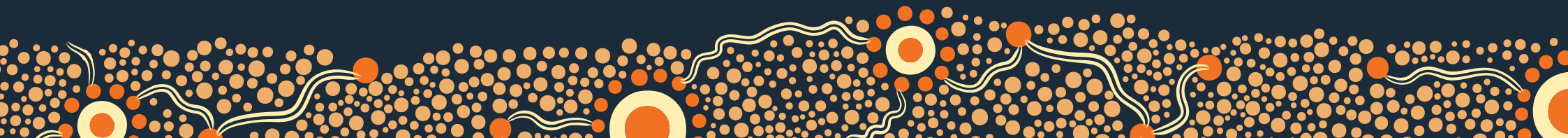
Through agency-wide systems and place-based approaches, the NIAA is improving how data supports regional decision-making. By working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and government stakeholders, the NIAA ensures data is curated, shared and interpreted in ways that reflect local context and community aspirations.

This work enables communities to be better informed, strengthens transparency of government investment, and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to engage confidently in decisions that affect them. It also builds capability within the APS to use data ethically and responsibly, consistent with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles.

By embedding shared access to data as business-as-usual, the NIAA is operationalising Priority Reform 4 across its systems and practices.

This approach demonstrates respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and authority over data, strengthens trust in government processes, and supports sustainable, community-led outcomes under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

● NIAA staff working with the Puuya Foundation in Lockhart River, Qld





Governance

Governance and operating model

At the whole-of-Commonwealth level, governance of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap between Australian governments and the Coalition of Peaks is set out at: <https://www.coalitionofpeaks.org.au/governance>

These arrangements establish shared accountability for Priority Reform delivery and provide the national framework within which jurisdictions and agencies, including the NIAA, undertake their respective roles.

Within the Commonwealth, and consistent with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Performance Framework, the NIAA delivers its RAP commitments through its established governance arrangements and internal operating model, in line with its role under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Within the NIAA, Priority Reform commitments — including Priority Reform 3— are delivered through an internal Priority Reform Operating Model. This model sets out how the Agency governs, coordinates, delivers and reports on its Priority Reform responsibilities.

It supports accountability, consistency and organisational learning, and enables Priority Reform commitments to be embedded into core business and existing governance arrangements through a combination of targeted reform initiatives and established business-as-usual activities.

These arrangements position the NIAA to demonstrate effective practice as both a steward of reform and an organisation embedding transformation through its own systems and ways of working.

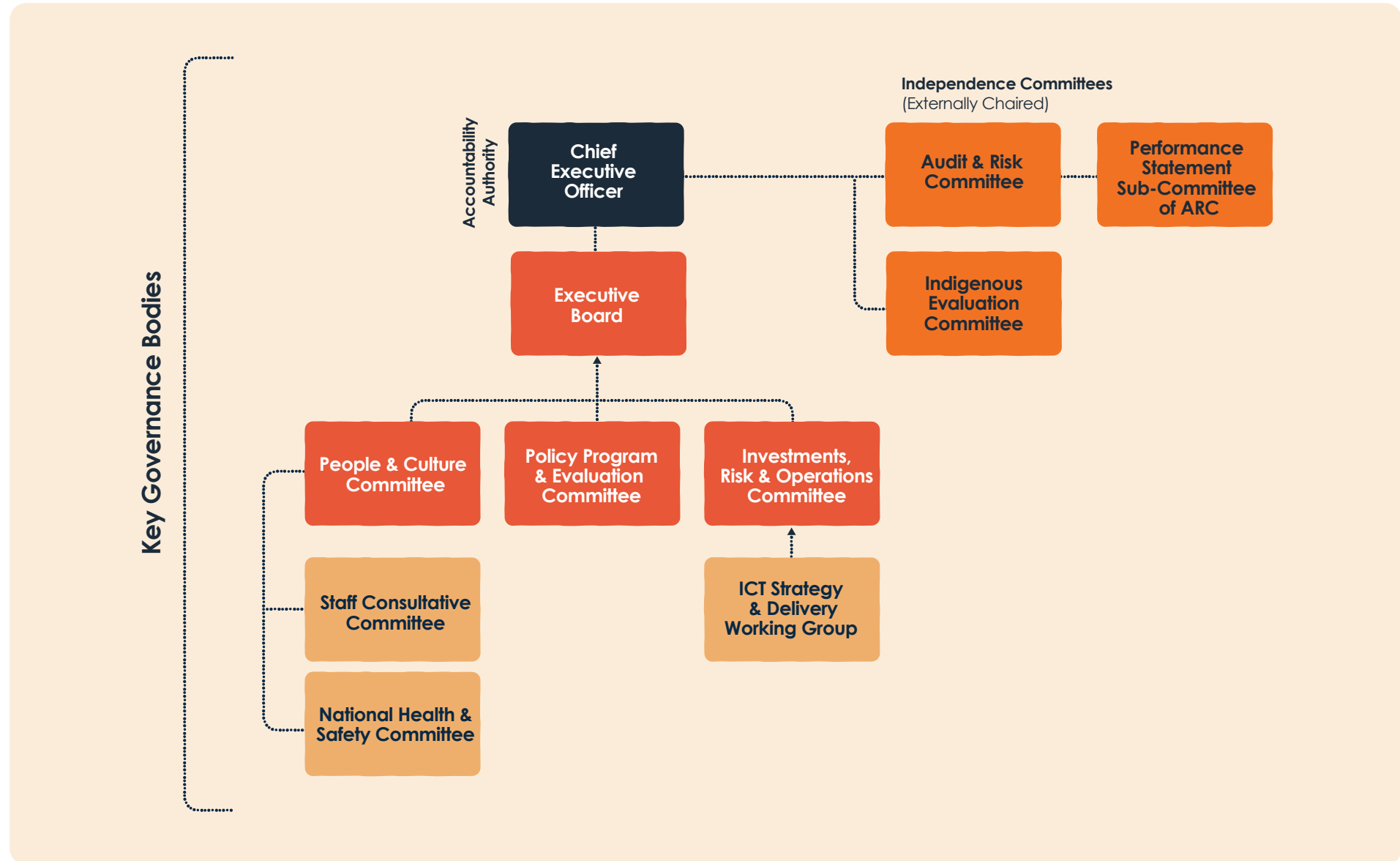
Further information on the NIAA's governance arrangements is available at: [Governance | NIAA](#)

The diagram below illustrates the NIAA's enterprise governance structure, showing how accountability, oversight and decision-making are organised across the Agency. This structure provides the foundation through which reconciliation and Priority Reform commitments are embedded into existing governance, performance and reporting processes.

At the enterprise level, accountability for implementation of the RAP sits with the **Executive Board**, which supports the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to achieve the Government's strategic priorities and meet the Agency's legal and legislative obligations.

The Executive Board is supported by the **People and Culture Committee**, a subcommittee of the Board, which has responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the delivery and ongoing development of the RAP as part of its broader remit for people, culture and capability. The Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Executive Board and supports transparency and accountability through regular review of progress, risks, challenges and learnings.

Governance Committee Structure



Embedding First Nations representation and perspectives

First Nations perspectives are embedded across the NIAA's governance and leadership arrangements through a combination of senior decision-making roles, cultural leadership and structured internal engagement mechanisms. This includes First Nations leadership at the most senior executive level, with the CEO bringing lived experience and cultural authority to executive decision-making, and a significant proportion of First Nations Senior Executive Service staff contributing to agency-wide governance forums that support the Executive Board and its committees.

First Nations representation and influence are further strengthened through the RAP Champions model, which includes First Nations leadership, and through the NIAA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network. The staff network provides a structured and ongoing mechanism to consult, test and inform the development and implementation of RAP commitments and Priority Reform initiatives, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives shape decisions before they progress through formal governance pathways.

Together, these arrangements ensure First Nations voices are embedded within leadership, governance and business-as-usual decision-making, rather than relying solely on advisory roles, and support culturally informed, accountable and sustained implementation of reconciliation commitments.

Enterprise oversight is supported by established performance, risk and assurance mechanisms, including senior executive forums and reporting processes, which ensure RAP commitments are embedded within business-as-usual governance, decision-making and performance management arrangements.

This oversight supports transparency and accountability through regular monitoring and reporting of RAP progress, achievements, challenges and learnings, including through:

A: Core program accountability

- i. Meet with Reconciliation Australia at least twice per year to share progress on RAP implementation.
- ii. Complete and submit the annual Reconciliation Australia RAP Impact Survey.
- iii. Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.

B. Organisational governance & public accountability

- iv. Quarterly reporting on RAP progress to enterprise staff and senior leaders.
- v. Annual public reporting on RAP commitments, including achievements, challenges and learnings including through the Agency's Annual Report.

C. Perception & culture measurement tools

- vi. Engage with Reconciliation Australia on the appropriate use of the biennial Workplace RAP Barometer, having regard to organisational context and existing workforce data sources.

Appendix

Reconciliation Australia RAP Pillars as our Core Deliverables

The actions outlined below reflect the NIAA's established, business-as-usual responsibilities. These activities are embedded in how the Agency operates and delivers on its purpose — working in partnership to support the self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, leading and influencing change across government, and contributing to system-level reform under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly Priority Reform 3 (Transforming Government Organisations).

The NIAA's role and mandate

The NIAA was established by Executive Order with functions that include:

- leading and coordinating Commonwealth policy development, program design and implementation, and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- providing advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians on whole-of-government priorities
- leading and coordinating the development and implementation of Australia's Closing the Gap targets in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- leading Commonwealth activities to promote reconciliation.

These responsibilities position reconciliation, partnership and accountability as core elements of the NIAA's day-to-day work, rather than discrete or supplementary activities.

Leading and coordinating Closing the Gap across government

As the central Commonwealth agency responsible for coordinating the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the NIAA provides stewardship, leadership and influence across governments. While responsibility for delivering Closing the Gap outcomes and advancing reconciliation is shared across jurisdictions and portfolio agencies, the NIAA plays a critical role in **coordinating, supporting and influencing** policy, programs and systems so they are aligned with the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through this leadership role, the Agency supports shared decision-making, transparent reporting and culturally informed approaches across the APS. The business-as-usual activities outlined below demonstrate how reconciliation is embedded into the NIAA's core functions and how the Agency contributes to lasting system reform in line with the National Agreement and the RAP pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

Reconciliation Australia Pillar

Reconciliation Australia Action

NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables

Relationships

1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations

Key Activity 1 – Leading and coordinating Closing the Gap

As part of its core business, the NIAA leads and coordinates the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap across the Commonwealth, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies, including the Coalition of Peaks, and other governments. This role strengthens reconciliation by embedding shared decision-making, accountability and partnership into how governments design, deliver and evaluate policies, programs and services.

Through this stewardship role, the NIAA supports system-level change that builds trust, improves transparency, and transforms relationships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This contributes to reconciliation outcomes by shifting government practice from transactional engagement to partnership-based ways of working that recognise rights, voices and community leadership.

Refer: NIAA Corporate Plan 2025–2029

Key Activity 2 – Partnerships and self-determination

The NIAA works in partnership to support the self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is a core business activity and reflects how the Agency operates as a steward and partner across government.

As part of its core business, the NIAA works in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and maintain relationships with communities and representative organisations. These partnerships take different forms, including:

Partnerships through formal agreements, where shared decision-making is supported through agreed governance and accountability arrangements; and

Collaborative partnership approaches, based on mutual respect and shared goals, which may not involve a formal agreement but still support meaningful engagement and influence.

This partnership approach underpins how the NIAA designs, delivers and influences government policies, programs and systems. It reflects the Agency’s ongoing role in advancing reconciliation and supporting system-level change under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Performance Measure 2.1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities are embedded in government policy, programs and investment through partnerships.

Refer: NIAA Corporate Plan 2025–2029

Case Study

Partnership through co-design

Advancing Priority Reform 1 in Social Policy

The Social Policy Group demonstrates reconciliation in practice through the co-design approach embedded in the Indigenous Youth Connection to Culture (IYCC) program. From the outset, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, Elders and cultural leaders were engaged as partners to shape community-led plans that guide program delivery.

Through this approach, communities identified priorities, stakeholders and activities that reflect local cultural contexts, traditions and youth needs. Despite challenges such as COVID19 restrictions, Sorry Business and seasonal weather, participating communities ensured youth and Elders remained central to decision-making. This commitment to co-design supports self-determination and demonstrates Priority Reform 1 through genuine, respectful and sustained partnership.



● NIAA staff connecting with community at the Gama Festival

Key Activity 3 – Delivering targeted programs

The NIAA delivers targeted programs through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and partnership agreements to support improved social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in remote Australia. This is a core business activity and a key mechanism through which the Agency supports community-led development and economic participation.

Through this work, the NIAA oversees and delivers programs designed to respond to local priorities and conditions, using place-based approaches that strengthen economic participation, build capability and contribute to sustainable, long-term community development.

The following stories illustrate how these targeted programs and partnerships are delivered in practice, highlighting locally led responses that address community priorities:

- [Youth outreach service a stepping stone | Indigenous](#)
- [Birthing in community with culturally safe maternal care | Indigenous](#)
- [A new Food Security Code and Subsidy | Indigenous](#)

A key example of this approach is the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program, which forms part of a major Australian Government reform to improve employment outcomes for people living in remote Australia and represents the first stage in replacing the Community Development Program (CDP). RJED has been developed in partnership with remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, job seekers, service providers, peak bodies and government stakeholders to better align employment approaches with local needs and aspirations.

Together, these programs and partnerships demonstrate how the NIAA supports place-based, community-led development and economic participation across remote Australia. See also the video story on [Creating Jobs in Remote Communities | Indigenous](#)

Performance Measure 3.1

Employment opportunities aligned with local needs and aspirations are increased and sustained in remote communities, supporting economic participation and long-term community development.

Refer: NIAA Corporate Plan 2025–2029

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
	<p>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	<p>Diversity and Inclusion Framework</p> <p>The NIAA's Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plan sets out our vision for an inclusive workplace culture at the NIAA, embedding this as a core element of organisational culture and leadership. This framework guides how the NIAA supports an inclusive workplace and models behaviours consistent with reconciliation and Closing the Gap objectives.</p> <p>As part of this ongoing commitment, the NIAA recognises and celebrates key days of significance each year, including National Reconciliation Week (NRW). This includes hosting at least one all-staff reconciliation event annually, encouraging staff participation in community-led activities, and actively championing Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources both internally and externally.</p> <p>These activities support cultural capability, awareness and leadership accountability across the Agency, and reflect the NIAA's stewardship role as set out in the Corporate Plan 2025–2029.</p>
		<p>Reconciliation Australia</p> <p>The NIAA provides funding to Reconciliation Australia as part of its core business to support national efforts to advance reconciliation across Australia. This funding enables Reconciliation Australia to work with organisations across sectors to build understanding, capability and commitment to reconciliation.</p> <p>Through this support, Reconciliation Australia delivers programs and resources that assist organisations to take meaningful action on reconciliation, including recognising and celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). These activities contribute to increased awareness, engagement and participation in reconciliation across the public, private and community sectors.</p> <p>The NIAA's support for Reconciliation Australia reflects the Agency's role to work towards reconciliation, strengthen partnerships, and influence system level change by supporting national leadership and coordination on reconciliation efforts.</p> <p><i>Refer: NIAA Corporate Plan 2025–29</i></p>

Reconciliation Australia Pillar**Reconciliation Australia Action****NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables**

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Indigenous Champions Network (ICN)

The APS ICN is a senior leadership advocacy forum committed to driving meaningful and sustained change across the APS for First Nations peoples, with a strong focus on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3, cultural safety and First Nations employment.

The NIAA provides Secretariat support to the ICN, enabling senior APS leaders to progress coordinated, evidence-informed action on system reform. In 2026, this includes supporting the ICN to advance strategically focused priorities that strengthen:

- the use of data, evidence and lived experience (including storytelling as a form of data) to inform decision-making
- leadership accountability, through sharing practical examples of Senior Executive Service (SES) performance measures and building a library of accountability mechanisms; and
- APS capability and culture, including influencing APS Employee Census settings and supporting approaches to evaluate and measure cultural safety.

This work supports the NIAA's role, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2025–29, to drive cultural capability and cultural safety both internally as a model employer and externally across the APS, and to lead system-level cultural reform consistent with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3.

Senior Executive Service Committees and Boards

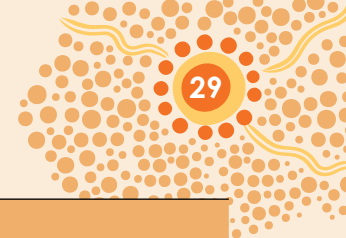
The NIAA Senior Executive Service officers participate in APS-wide committees and boards as part of the Agency's core business, using these leadership forums to lead and influence decision-making, strengthen governance, and progress initiatives that support reconciliation, cultural reform and improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This engagement reflects the NIAA's role, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2025–29, to lead and influence change across government, coordinate action across the Commonwealth, and embed Closing the Gap—including Priority Reform 3—into mainstream systems and processes.

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Workplace Respect Policy

The NIAA's Workplace Respect Policy provides clear guidance to staff on expected standards of behaviour in the workplace. The policy defines and explains bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment) and discrimination, and outlines the responsibilities of all staff to contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace. This policy supports positive race relations by setting clear expectations and addressing behaviour that undermines dignity, inclusion and cultural safety.



NIAA Values and Behaviours

The NIAA's Values and Behaviours underpin how the Agency works and how staff treat one another. The Values and Behaviours explicitly state that NIAA employees will not discriminate or show bias based on culture, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexuality, disability and/or length of time in the role. These expectations support respectful relationships, inclusive behaviours and positive race relations across the organisation.

An integrity-driven culture supports reconciliation by building trust, transparency and accountability in the NIAA's relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

APS Values, APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct

The APS Values, APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct set out the standards of behaviour expected of agency heads and APS employees. Together, they establish clear expectations around professionalism, integrity, respect and fairness, and provide a framework for addressing inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour. These standards support positive race relations and reinforce accountability across the APS.

Racism. It Stops With Me

The NIAA is a member organisation of the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign and actively promotes campaign resources to staff. Participation in the campaign supports awareness of racism and discrimination and reinforces shared responsibility for challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours, contributing to a respectful and inclusive workplace culture.

Mandatory and Induction Learning

As part of their employment with the NIAA, staff are required to complete mandatory learning that supports awareness, capability and inclusive behaviour, including:

- APS Foundations: Diversity and Inclusion – supporting staff to understand diversity and inclusion in the APS, relevant legislation and policy obligations, and the APS commitment to inclusive workplaces.
- Core Cultural Learning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia – a foundational course supporting understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures across the APS.
- Footprints Framework – a framework that supports staff to continually build and deepen cross-cultural knowledge and understanding.

These learning requirements support positive race relations by building cultural awareness, capability and respect.

Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours

The Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours sets out the behaviours expected of Secretaries and Senior Executive Service leaders across the APS. The Charter requires senior leaders to be respectful, treat people with decency and respect, embrace diversity, seek out different perspectives, and build inclusive cultures that enable people to make their best contribution. These expectations support leadership accountability and positive race relations across the APS.

SES Performance Leadership Framework

The SES Performance Leadership Framework reflects the Australian Government's commitment to ensuring the APS is a model employer that sets the standard for diversity and inclusion. Consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, SES employees are required through their performance agreements to extend their cultural learning, reflect on their own perspectives, and demonstrate how they contribute to culturally safe workplaces, programs and policies. Strong cultural competence among senior leaders supports inclusive decision-making and positive race relations across the APS.

Case Study

Aboriginal-led partnership in practice

Applying Priority Reform 1 in Central Australia

The Central Australia Region is demonstrating reconciliation through its work and partnership with the Central Australia Plan (CAP) Aboriginal Leadership Group (ALG), which provides strategic advice to the Australian Government on the delivery of the plan for A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia.

The CAP focuses on practical improvements across community safety, youth engagement, health, families, jobs and on Country learning. The role of the ALG helps ensure First Nations people from across the region have a genuine opportunity to provide advice to government on how the CAP is delivered, and that decisions reflect community priorities, are culturally grounded, and focused on long term outcomes.

The Central Australia Region supports this partnership through respectful engagement, transparency and collaboration, enabling Aboriginal leadership to meaningfully inform

government processes and decisions. This work reflects the NIAA's commitment under its RAP to work in genuine partnership, strengthen relationships built on trust, and support self-determination. Engagement with the ALG also strengthens internal capability by building staff engagement skills, improving cross-cultural understanding, and reinforcing best practice approaches to working with First Nations peoples and communities.

This partnership demonstrates reconciliation in practice by putting First Nations leadership at the centre of how government listens, learns and responds. Together, the NIAA and the ALG show how local partnerships can bring national commitments to life, contributing to more coordinated, culturally grounded and effective outcomes for Central Australia now and into the future. Through this partnership, reconciliation is embedded into everyday work by placing First Nations leadership at the centre of how government listens, learns and responds in Central Australia.



● Children participating in the Larapinta Tracks school holiday program in Alice Springs, NT

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
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Respect

1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Identified Roles

NIAA's recruitment policy includes that all roles in the agency are classified as 'identified' positions under the APS Identified Measures policy. This means that all staff need to demonstrate a certain level of cultural competency to work at the agency.

Identified roles are open to all Australian citizens. Applicants are expected to demonstrate an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, issues and respectful engagement practices. These roles often involve policy development, program delivery or direct engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and support cultural learning by ensuring cultural capability is embedded across the workforce.

You can learn more at [Recruitment and selection | NIAA](#).

Footprints Framework

To support ongoing cross-cultural learning and capability building, the NIAA Footprints Framework is implemented across the Agency and applies to all staff, with defined minimum engagement requirements. The Framework supports continual learning through the completion of activities and reflection on what was learnt. It provides structured guidance and learning opportunities that builds understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and perspectives. An activity library is maintained, with content regularly updated to ensure it remains relevant and engaging. While there are curated learning opportunities available, staff are encouraged to take ownership of their individual learning journey, aligning activities to their role and development needs. In partnership with the APSC, the NIAA has also made the Footprints Framework available to all APS employees through the APS Academy, supporting broader cultural learning across the APS.

NIAA Enterprise Agreement – Leadership Cultural Capability

The NIAA Enterprise Agreement establishes clear expectations for First Nations cultural capability as part of leadership responsibility. The Agency takes reasonable steps to ensure senior leaders complete relevant First Nations cultural training, reinforcing culturally informed decision-making and leadership accountability.

These expectations are delivered through mandatory CORE induction training for leaders and ongoing participation in Footprints. EL2 staff are expected to model engagement with cultural capability initiatives within their teams. Footprints is a minimum engagement requirement for all staff and is contextualised to reflect different roles and responsibilities.

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
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NAIDOC Week Local Grants

The NIAA supports engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories through the annual NAIDOC Local Grants program, which provides funding for community-led activities aligned to the national NAIDOC Week theme.

Through these grants, the NIAA supports culturally grounded celebration, strengthens the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and promotes broader understanding and recognition of First Nations histories, achievements and continuing contributions.

2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

First Nations Protocol Guide

The NIAA's First Nations Cultural Protocols Guide provides staff with practical guidance to support respectful, culturally appropriate engagement with First Nations peoples and communities. The Guide supports day-to-day interactions by setting clear expectations for behaviour, communication and engagement that recognise cultural difference and uphold respect by providing:

- principles to guide respectful behaviour and communication when working with First Nations peoples and communities
- information about cultural protocols that may influence how the NIAA works with First Nations peoples and communities
- guidance on consulting and meeting with First Nations peoples; and
- guidance on the appropriate use and protection of First Nations peoples' cultural and intellectual property.

By supporting culturally informed practice, the Guide strengthens respectful relationships, helps prevent cultural harm, and contributes to positive race relations in the NIAA's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reconciliation Australia Pillar**Reconciliation Australia Action****NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables**

3. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

NIAA Enterprise Agreement – NAIDOC and ceremonial Leave

The NIAA Enterprise Agreement provides for staff participation in NAIDOC Week and recognises First Nations cultural and ceremonial obligations as part of respectful workplace practice. These provisions support meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and are intended to be maintained through future enterprise arrangements.

Under these arrangements:

- staff may access paid leave to participate in NAIDOC Week activities, with flexibility to take leave in part days
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees may access paid First Nations ceremonial leave to participate in significant cultural activities or fulfil ceremonial obligations.

These provisions support cultural recognition, inclusion and respect in the workplace, and enable staff to engage meaningfully in NAIDOC Week and First Nations cultural practices.

Case Study

Strengthening trauma-informed systems and leadership

Advancing Priority Reform 3 through business-as-usual practice

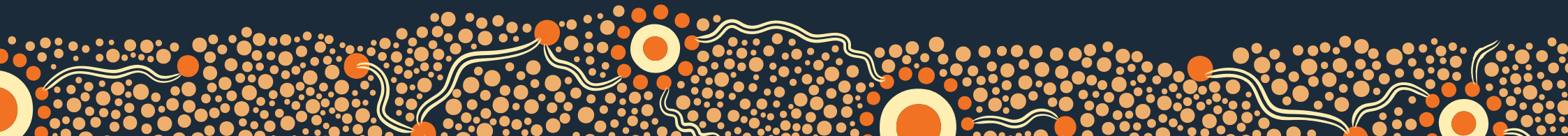
The Land and Native Title Branch and the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme (TSGRS) Branch embed trauma-informed practice into day-to-day work to strengthen culturally safe systems, leadership and decision-making in line with Priority Reform 3.

Staff have participated in facilitated vicarious trauma and healing workshops to reflect on the impacts of their work and strengthen awareness of the communities and stakeholders with which they engage. The workshops support staff wellbeing and reinforce culturally safe, trauma-informed approaches within existing systems and processes.

As part of the TSGRS, more than 130 senior executives (SES Band 1 and above, or equivalent) are delivering survivor-focused, survivor-led and trauma-informed Personal Acknowledgements to eligible Stolen Generations survivors. Through listening to survivors' stories and formally acknowledging harm, senior leaders deepen their understanding of the ongoing impacts of past government policies and apply these learnings to policy development, service delivery and leadership practice, supporting lasting systemic change.



The survivors of the Kinchela Boys Home visit NIAA



Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
Opportunities	1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<p>Boosting First Nations Employment</p> <p>The NIAA works in partnership with the First Nations Unit at the APSC to deliver initiatives that support the Australian Government's commitment to increase First Nations employment in the APS to 5 per cent by 2030. This work forms part of the NIAA's ongoing contribution to system-wide reform under Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3– Transforming Government Organisations.</p> <p>Initiatives supported by the NIAA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SES100, which supports the development, visibility and leadership capability of senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders • Bulabul and Yawarra development programs, which focus on talent development, mentoring and networking to support progression into leadership roles • the APS Integrated Unconscious Bias Training Program, which addresses the impact of unconscious bias on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees • the Allyship Toolkit, delivered through the APS Academy, which supports APS staff to strengthen cultural safety and inclusive leadership practices • Affirmative Measure Indigenous employment provisions. <p>Together, these initiatives support cultural reform, leadership accountability and improved workplace experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the APS.</p>

Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3 – Transforming Government Organisations

Priority Reform 3 is being advanced through the Priority Reforms Roadmap and the forthcoming Priority Reforms Strategy, and centres on transforming government systems, accountability and culture to better serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, recognising that lasting improvement requires systemic rather than standalone change.

The NIAA contributes to the implementation of Priority Reform 3 through its leadership, stewardship and workforce practices. This includes recruitment, capability development and performance arrangements that demonstrate progress through agency-level reporting and performance data. These arrangements embed reconciliation principles into how employment practices, leadership capability and organisational culture are shaped within the NIAA and, through stewardship and influence, across the APS.

This approach is supported by the NIAA's Diversity and Inclusion Framework, which commits the Agency to initiatives that strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development. These initiatives include:

- participation in entry-level programs that support attraction of a diverse workforce (see [Turning passion into impact as an NIAA Graduate](#));
- providing access to First Nations-specific career development programs to support career progression and retention (see [Career pathways on show for First Nations students in WA | Indigenous](#)); and
- embedding inclusive recruitment practices, including requirements for recruitment panel members to complete appropriate recruitment panel training.

Together, these workforce practices and accountability mechanisms support cultural reform, strengthen leadership responsibility, and demonstrate the NIAA's contribution to Priority Reform 3 through measurable, agency-level action—rather than standalone initiatives or reliance on whole-of-government reporting alone.

As a model employer, the NIAA applies these practices internally to create culturally safe and inclusive workplaces, while also contributing to broader APS reform by demonstrating how Priority Reform 3 can be embedded in everyday governance, workforce and leadership systems.

Indigenous Job Boards

To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, the NIAA uses a range of targeted recruitment approaches, including Indigenous-owned and Indigenous-focused job boards, informed by role suitability, reach and cost effectiveness.

These include:

- Koori Mail
- Our Mob
- National Indigenous Times; and
- Indigenous Employment Australia.

Advertising roles through Indigenous job boards supports broader visibility of opportunities, strengthens attraction strategies, and contributes to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation within the Agency.

First Nations Career Development Pathway

The NIAA offers a Career Development Pathway for First Nations staff that recognises leadership is required at all levels of the agency and the broader APS. The pathway supports employees to build capability, deepen expertise and progress in their APS careers through structured development opportunities.

The pathway includes programs such as:

- a multi-year early career program tailored to address the employment experience of First Nations staff in the APS; and
- tertiary qualifications in management through a 12-month graduate certificate program; and
- other leadership and management development opportunities aligned to the Leadership Continuum, including NIAA Essentials.

These programs support skills development, leadership capability and potential career progression, contributing to improved retention and long-term employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
	<p>2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<p>Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP)</p> <p>NIAA supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity by implementing the IPP as part of its core business and stewardship role across government. Through its own procurement activities, the NIAA applies the IPP to increase opportunities for Indigenous-owned businesses to participate in government supply chains.</p> <p>By embedding the IPP into procurement processes, the NIAA contributes to stimulating Indigenous entrepreneurship, business growth and economic development. This approach supports improved economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by enabling greater participation in the economy and strengthening Indigenous business capability.</p> <p>This work aligns with the NIAA's Corporate Plan's focus on strengthening economic outcomes and embedding reconciliation principles into government systems and practices.</p>
	<p>3. Leadership, Learning and Sector Influence</p>	<p>RAP Network</p> <p>As a lead agency in the RAP network, the NIAA participates in at least two RAP leadership gatherings convened by Reconciliation Australia each year to share learnings, contribute to sector-wide practice, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.</p>

Case Study

Strengthening Indigenous economic participation

Building opportunities through Indigenous procurement under Priority Reform 2

The NIAA is strengthening economic opportunity under Priority Reform 2 – Building the Community-Controlled Sector by embedding Indigenous business participation into Commonwealth systems and decision-making.

Economic participation is central to self-determination and long-term community strength. The NIAA supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity by implementing the IPP as part of its core business and stewardship role across government. Through its own procurement activity, and by supporting application of the IPP across Commonwealth portfolios, the NIAA is enabling Indigenous-owned businesses to access government supply chains and grow sustainable enterprises.

By embedding the IPP into procurement processes, the NIAA contributes to strengthening Indigenous entrepreneurship, business capability and economic independence. This approach supports community-controlled and Indigenous-owned

businesses to build workforce capability, create jobs, and reinvest in local priorities, contributing to broader social and economic outcomes.

The NIAA's role focuses on enabling systems that support opportunity at scale — providing guidance, oversight and coordination so that procurement settings are transparent, consistent and aligned with the intent of the policy. This strengthens accountability and ensures procurement outcomes contribute meaningfully to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation.

Through this work, the NIAA is embedding Priority Reform 2 into mainstream government practice. By using procurement as a lever for economic opportunity, the NIAA supports the growth and sustainability of Indigenous businesses, strengthens the community-controlled sector, and advances reconciliation through equitable access to economic participation and self-determination.



● The Supply Nation's Connect Forum in Sydney, NSW

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
Governance	1. Governance of the RAP	<p>Executive Board</p> <p>The Executive Board supports the CEO of the NIAA to achieve the Government's strategic priorities and meet legal and legislative obligations including accountability for the implementation of the NIAA RAP.</p> <p>People and Culture Committee</p> <p>The People and Culture Committee is a sub-committee of the Executive Board and has responsibility for the NIAA's people objectives through related policies, frameworks, strategies and practices within the scope of its role. The Committee will provide recommendations and advice to the Executive Board in accordance with the Committee's authority. A key role of the Committee is to oversee, monitor and support delivery and continuous development of the NIAA RAP.</p>
	2. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<p>Closing the Gap Annual Report and Implementation Plan (AR-IP)</p> <p>Each year, the NIAA coordinates the Commonwealth's Closing the Gap Annual Report and Implementation Plan as part of its stewardship role under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. While these reports support transparent, whole-of-Commonwealth reporting on progress, priorities and outcomes, they are also underpinned by agency-level evidence and performance processes.</p> <p>In undertaking ARIP-related processes, and consistent with Executive Board and committee oversight, the NIAA monitors its own performance against commitments, drawing on internal data, evaluation and evidence. This information is used to inform senior-level discussion, prioritisation and escalation through established internal governance forums, including the People and Performance Executive Committee, Priority Reform Leads Forum, and the Audit and Risk Committee, consistent with the NIAA's performance framework and Corporate Plan performance measures.</p> <p>Through this approach, ARIP reporting functions not only as a public transparency mechanism, but also as a tool to support internal accountability, performance oversight and continuous improvement.</p>

NIAA Annual Reports

The NIAA's Annual Reports provide a complementary accountability mechanism by describing the Agency's activities, outcomes and performance over the reporting period. The reports outline key achievements, performance results and financial statements, including progress against commitments under the Agency's Executive Order and Corporate Plan.

Together, these internal and external reporting mechanisms support transparent communication, evidence-based decision-making, and accountability for the NIAA's role in advancing reconciliation and Closing the Gap outcomes.

Evidence, evaluation and learning

The NIAA uses evidence, data and evaluation to inform decision-making, accountability and continuous improvement. Evidence-based approaches support reconciliation by ensuring policies and programs are culturally informed, responsive to community priorities, and strengthened over time through learning and reflection.

Reconciliation Australia Pillar	Reconciliation Australia Action	NIAA day-to-day operations, activities and deliverables
	<p>3. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments</p>	<p>Appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments</p> <p>The NIAA supports the effective implementation of its RAP through established governance, performance and investment frameworks that are embedded in the Agency's core business. These mechanisms ensure RAP commitments are appropriately resourced, monitored and integrated into decision-making, risk management and performance oversight, consistent with the NIAA Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Engagement Framework and Performance Management</p> <p>Engage is NIAA's performance framework and provides the primary mechanism for embedding RAP commitments into business-as-usual activity. Business-as-usual RAP actions are captured within relevant planning and performance documents and assigned to responsible staff as part of normal work allocation. Stretch RAP actions are monitored and evaluated through the Agency's governance processes, with responsibility for delivery and progress sitting with Branch Managers.</p> <p>This approach ensures RAP actions are not treated as standalone initiatives, but are integrated into everyday work, performance expectations and accountability arrangements.</p> <p>Risk and Operations Committee</p> <p>The Risk and Operations Committee is a sub-committee of the Executive Board with responsibility for oversight of resource allocation and investment, with reference to the Agency's priorities and financial position. Through this committee, risks, resourcing and operational considerations that may affect delivery of RAP commitments can be identified, monitored and addressed within broader corporate risk and resource management processes.</p> <p>This supports a considered and sustainable approach to RAP implementation that aligns with agency priorities and capacity.</p> <p>Investments and Projects Committee</p> <p>The Investments, Risk and Operations Committee (IROC) provides integrated oversight across the Agency's risk, financial, operational and investment activities to support informed decision-making by the Executive Board and CEO. It monitors and advises on risk management (including legal, integrity and emerging risks), financial performance, corporate planning, and the delivery and prioritisation of major projects, investments and key deliverables. Through this committee, risks, resourcing and operational considerations that may affect delivery, including of RAP commitments, may be identified, monitored and addressed within broader corporate risk and resource management processes.</p>



*“Reconciliation is embedded in
how we lead, partner and create
lasting change together.”*



