

Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2021 - September 2022





Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the lands on which we work and live across Australia. We pay our respects to Elders of the past, present and emerging. We are committed to collaboration that furthers self-determination and creates a better future for all.

We acknowledge the world is changing and that all of the challenges facing our society will be more deeply felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Embedding a cultural lens across all of The Australian Centre for Social Innovation's (TACSI) work must be a priority in any strategy that is created and implemented.

We acknowledge that this process and submission template is set up to help non-Aboriginal and non-Torres Strait Islander organisational structures and management approaches to act on and be accountable to Reconciliation Action Plans.

We have experienced however that taking this approach has felt culturally unsafe for some. We have sat with and discussed this tension to find a way through.

Accordingly, it is our hope in the future to co-create ways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to share and engage around this content in a way that feels safer and more inclusive of cultural practices, likely in a tailored, more visual, document.



Artist - Elizabeth Close

Elizabeth is a Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara woman from the APY Lands in Central Australia.

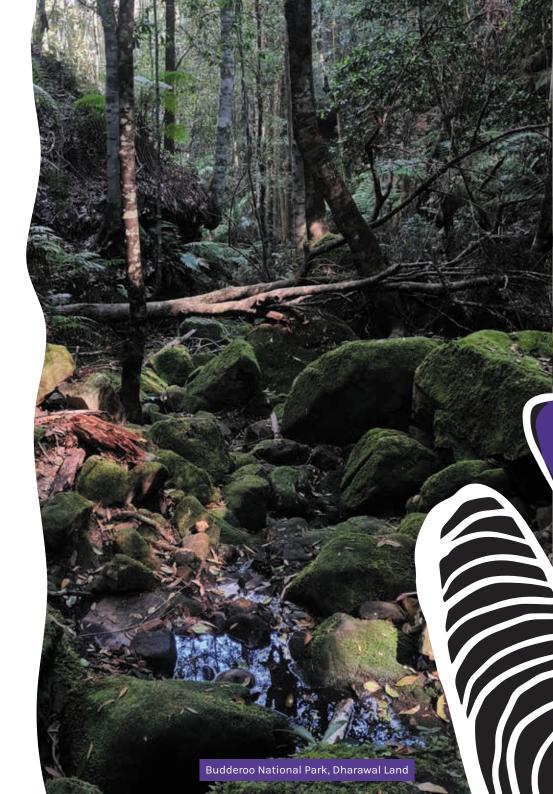
Now based in Adelaide, Elizabeth's arts practice has evolved from canvas beginnings to now also include large scale public art and digital design. Elizabeth's work is a unique and distinct fusion of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal Art, using vivid warmth to convey the landscape of the APY while also drawing upon sociopolitical themes of identity, forced removal policies, loss of culture and intergenerational trauma.

The Artwork is based around Yarning with a Purpose, and with TACSI's broader aims to change support systems that perpetuate continuing impacts of colonisation. As such, the artwork is profoundly informed by self determination and empowerment of First Australians. The creek represented by the meandering bold line through the middle, and the detail of the stones adjacent to the creek speak to concepts such as growth, agency, building capacity, trust and relationship building. The colour palette and textures speak directly to the landscape and by extension, our connection to it as First Australians. Our relationships with Country underpin our very existence.



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Our Business

Core business

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) partners with communities and organisations to put people at the heart of shaping their lives and society.

Together we tackle big social challenges and build the conditions for social innovation.

In 2021 TACSI celebrated its 11th year as an organisation dedicated to People Powered Innovation. Our work across Systems Initiatives, Social Innovation Consulting and Scaling what works is now emerging into five new action areas with First Nations First woven throughout everything we do.

These new focus areas include Mental Health, The Future of Home, Regenerative Communities, People Powered Responses and more recently a Social Research and Development action area. Our goal is to build a network of solutions and capabilities to envisage a fairer future for all.

Together with Government, NGO's and Philanthropy we work to surface new possibilities for fairer and better lives and to design solutions that improve our systems and policies.

So all people can have the opportunity to live better lives.

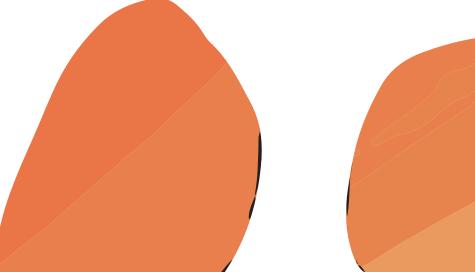
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

TACSI currently employs one Aboriginal staff member, Aunty Vickey Charles, and partners with several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations.

As TACSI's Aboriginal Lead and Aunty-in-residence, Aunty Vickey has significantly contributed to TACSI's journey to become more culturally competent and safe, and is an integral part of our team focussed on Families and Cultural Connection.

Aunty Vickey is an Alawa/Mara woman from the Northern Territory who grew up in Adelaide from the age of 18 months and has worked throughout her life to tell the stories of Aboriginal people and to raise awareness of Aboriginal Australia. Previously she worked in Government and not for profit sectors, most recently as a Cultural Competency Facilitator in South Australia.

Aunty Vickey also presents at national and international conferences on the relationship between Social Innovation and furthering self-determination and the importance of having a cultural lens embedded across all the work that we do.





Staff, workplaces and reach

As of 2021, TACSI employs 32 permanent staff across our two offices in Adelaide and Sydney, and 4 associate staff across South Australia, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria.

As a national organisation we work across Australia with occasional international development and conference work.

Structure and organisation

We're now five years into our own journey of developing TACSI as a networked organisation, centred around learning and impact. This means we don't have a traditional hierarchy based on power and decisions; instead, we have multiple hierarchies built on wisdom, experience and expertise.

The RAP Working group is a dynamically formed team around reconciliation projects and initiatives according to individual strengths and expertise.

We regularly come together to connect around learning – from our own work, from our partners and from international thought leaders. Everyone in the organisation is involved and accountable for RAP actions.

Leadership Statement

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) is committed to furthering self determination through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led innovation.

We believe it is unacceptable that systems designed to support people maintain the ongoing impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma. We have a responsibility to be part of this change.

Standing in our commitment, we respect that we, TACSI, as individuals and as a whole have a lot to learn about how to further self-determination. Each step must begin with acknowledging the true history of harm done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In our choices, we seek to learn the many ways to let go of power. And as we go, building deep, authentic and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities is a critical part of this journey as well.

Walking together, with compassion, we seek to learn from and build on over 70,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience and wisdom.

Without having all the answers, we are moving forward. We have the conviction that disrupting disadvantage, reaching the heart of intergenerational trauma and furthering self-determination is achieved by inspiring, influencing and unlocking the potential people hold. We will achieve this by building our connection and responsibility to one another.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of these lands; we acknowledge and respect their connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respect to cultures, customs and to Elders past, present and emerging.





Our RAP

RAP intention

TACSI has developed the Reflect RAP as a key action to deepen and progress our collective and individual journey toward reconciliation, and play our part in working toward reconciliation in Australia. Additionally our new strategy embedding 'First Nations First' throughout our entire practice and all action areas will be supported by the RAP. This focus area works toward social innovation that is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Implementation approach

TACSI has established the current RAP Working Group to lead the implementation of the Reflect RAP and bring the broader organisation and our cultural advisors along the journey.

The working group has two circles:

- Core team of people who will project manage TACSI's Reflect RAP actions
- Key cultural, financial and leadership advisors who will be brought in at key times to increase cultural safety, guidance on decisions and approve plans.

The RAP Working Group will agree what activities staff will commit to and will act as a support should RAP guidance be needed. The aim is for all TACSI staff to be engaged in delivering RAP activities, including some who will lead the RAP implementation work, and for all non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to go on a journey of increasing their own cultural awareness and safety practices through participation.

The working group will also act as an accountability measure:

- · Ensuring activities and information are accessible and more culturally safe
- Ensuring activities are delegated
- Monitoring progress of activities
- Reporting to Reconciliation Australia

The broader organisation and external cultural advisors will be informed and consulted for guidance and feedback on key decision making and activities as our RAP journey progresses.





Reconciliation journey to date

TACSI had established a RAP Working Group in the past, with some success but with lack of focus and support in reaching intended goals. As a result, the group did not submit a Reflect RAP. This is TACSI's second attempt to develop a RAP, this time with greater support from organisational leaders and increased staff time commitment.

Throughout this Reflect RAP process, the working group has been living the organisational motto of 'good intentions are not enough,' and have had thorough discussions about how our organisation can best work toward reconciliation.

It has been both challenging and slow progress as the non-Aboriginal and non-Torres Strait Islander members of the working group (the majority) were simultaneously learning more about the complexity and deep impact of cultural safety and reconciliation. Simultaneously Aunty Vickey has had the burden of providing a lot of support on this journey, and the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the RAP Working Group initially leaned on her too much. They learned to create separate space for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning and to follow Aunty Vickey Charles' lead to collaborate while minimising emotional and cultural fatigue. The RAP Working Group who developed the Reflect RAP submission has re-formed around the Reflect RAP implementation and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Reflect RAP and continuing to improve its way of working.

TACSI has also been working on improving the cultural safety of its practices and spaces to support better collaboration and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities we partner with, described in more detail in the following section.



Our partnerships/current activities

Many of our current partnerships and activities are detailed below, some of which are represented in our Reflect RAP as an ongoing commitment.

Community partnerships

TACSI's social innovation approach is to work in partnership with communities to respond to a particular challenge or opportunity. We take a co-design approach, which means wherever possible to do with, not for, and this leads to working in partnership. The process involves building relationships, working together and/or facilitating the contributions and decision making of communities, and producing and sometimes delivering activities in response to a particular challenge. Where appropriate we maintain these relationships after the project comes to an end, and hope to work together again in the future.

Through our projects, we have worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, service staff and families in many areas. This includes communities in many states and territories, for instance:

- SA Adelaide (Kaurna land), Coober Pedy (Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people), Murray Bridge (Ngarrindjeri land)
- NSW Mount Druitt (a 'modern day mission home' to many people now), Sydney area (Gadigal land of the Eora nation), Bourke (traditionally the home of the Ngemba people but turned into a mission), Dubbo (Wiradjuri land), Lake Cargelligo and Murrin Bridge (as a mission became known as a Koori place, with many people from Ngiyampaa and Barkindji lands)
- QLD Greater Brisbane area and Logan (Yuggera land)
- VIC Greater Dandenong (the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation), Hume (Wurundjeri of the Kulin Nation)

Specific project examples include, but are not limited to:

- Working with the Koori Caucus and Koori Justice Unit to identify opportunities to impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' over representation in the criminal justice system in Victoria.
- Working with the Victoria Police to develop the first Youth Cautioning program in Victoria - this project built on the 'First contact is the last contact' initiative that resulted from the work with Koori Caucus and Koori Justice Unit
- Working with the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (AMYAC) and Perpetual to determine how to create cycles of opportunity for AMYAC members in Coober Pedy
- Developing an Aboriginal adaptation of Family by Family program
- · Working with the Deadly Nannas in Murray Bridge
- We also have a professional peer relationship between our marketing team and First Nations Media, where we promote their work and receive some cultural guidance for our communications.
- Building a relationship with Canadian; First Nations social innovation lab Turtle Island Institute.
- Prototyped an Aunty's Network in South Australia.
- Worked with the Massive Murray Paddle program, aiming to build relationships between young Aboriginal people and police.





Our partnerships/current activities

Internal activities and initiatives

Our internal activities and initiatives aim to educate our non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff about the true history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, shift mindsets and help them develop culturally safe practice so that our partners, clients and people we engage with are safe and able to bring their full value to the table. Aunty Vickey Charles has an important role that specifically includes cultural and community connection and guidance. She continues to put her 'reconciliation face' on every day and speak truth to power at TACSI and with our partners.

TACSI are continuing to work on the many ways we can build Acknowledgement of Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into our work spaces, through activities and behaviours.

This includes;

- Acknowledgement of Country and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our work and spaces.
- The AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia in prominent positions in our offices
- · Acknowledgement of Country at our office entrances.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags around our offices, and at any events when we travel.
- All of our staff deliver Acknowledgement of Country at the start of organisational and formal meetings, presentations and events, including when we are meeting online from many different Countries/ Lands across Australia.
- Our team Acknowledge Country as guided by the Reconciliation Australia document 'Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country'.

We have developed a theory of change about how TACSI's social innovation activities can contribute to the 'First Nations First' focus area. Aunty Vickey Charles and the self-determination team have led the development of insights and materials that build on what we've learned from various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and how to work best together. We acknowledge that the wisdom behind these materials are owned by the communities that we have worked with.

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lens on our social innovation process, called the 'Stones'
- Cultural induction for new TACSI staff members, and refreshers for longer serving staff.
- Cultural Canvas document to guide reflection at the start of projects, and throughout, around cultural considerations, cultural safety and reconciliation activities within projects.
- Aunty Vickey Charles sharing these and other insights at learning events/conferences in Australia and Canada.
- Internal sharing and promotion of our RAP Leadership Statement

Our leadership actively promotes cultural awareness and safety through all-organisation externally delivered training and dedicated segments of our organisational camps. They have also committed significant staff time to the development of the Reflect RAP and future RAPs.

From November 2018 to end of 2021, we undertook to develop our Reflect RAP. As part of this process, the RWG has shared the progress with the broader TACSI team, including requesting and incorporating feedback from the team. We have prioritised our Reflect RAP actions and have identified the budget and resources needed to support them.









Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Accountability to support others at TACSI
1: Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	A. Nurture and grow current relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations and understand how they would like us to work with them.	Ongoing Review September 2022	Led by RWG with input from Stewards team
	B. Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Ongoing Review September 2022	Led by RWG with input from Principals & Directors
	C. Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	From September 2021 Review March 2022	Led by RWG with input from staff
	D. Develop a standard practice to ensure projects involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, build in time and resources to invest in relationships and a plan for closure and transition of the project.	By April 2022 Review September 2022	Initiated by RWG and developed by TACSI Project Teams and Leads. Accountable to Stewards team
2: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	A. Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27th May - 3rd June 2022 (and annually ongoing)	Led by RWG, supported by TACSI Stewards and with input from Principals in each office
	B. Internally, we will encourage and support staff and senior leaders to understand, be aware of, organise engagement with, and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) events. All staff and leaders will participate in at least one event.	27th May - 3rd June 2022 (and annually ongoing)	Led by RWG, supported by TACSI Stewards and with input from Principals in each office
	C. RAP Working Group attends a community NRW event to learn and grow our cultural understanding and connections.	27th May – 3rd June 2022 (and annually ongoing)	Led by RWG, supported and encouraged by Stewards
	D. Dedicate time in our weekly organisational conversations to reflect on our roles in reconciliation and what we've learned at the events.	27th May – 3rd June 2022 (and annually ongoing).	Led by RWG with support, reflections and actions from all TACSI staff
	E. Celebrate the work of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and those leading innovation on our social media accounts.	27th May - 3rd June 2022 (and annually ongoing).	Led by TACSI Communications and supported by everyone at TACSI

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Accountability to support others at TACSI
3: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	A. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and externally with our leadership statement.	Ongoing from September 2021. Review March 2022.	Led by RWG with input from Communications team
	B. Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Ongoing. Review September 2022.	Led by RWG
	C. Identify other innovative organisations on the reconciliation journey, or those with progressive RAPs and look to learn from each other, collaborate, provide 'critical friend' support and share insights about the journey publicly.	From September 2021– ongoing. Review June 2022.	Led by RWG
	D. When working with clients and partners, discover if their organisation has a RAP and offer ally-ship on that journey.	Ongoing. Review September 2022.	TACSI Project Teams and Leads
4: Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti- discrimination.	From September 2021– ongoing. Review March 2022.	TACSI Stewards
	B. Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions, and future needs.	From September 2021– ongoing. Review March 2022.	TACSI Platform (HR, Mar-Comms & Finance)







Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Accountability to support others at TACSI
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	A. Continue to identify cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Review quarterly in, March 2022, June 2022, September 2022	Led by RWG with support and encouragement from all TACSI staff
	B. Update and deliver our program for cultural learning for all staff with a focus on the true history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and rights.	Review quarterly in March 2022, June 2022, September 2022	Led by RWG with support and encouragement from all TACSI staff
	C. Review, re-focus and improve cultural awareness experiences and training as a critical part of induction of new staff. Including at least half a day dedicated to cultural induction within the first week of new staff joining.	Ongoing Review September 2022	TACSI Platform with support and encouragement from RWG and all TACSI staff
	D. Build in cultural training, learning and reflection opportunities through 'All-in' whole organisation training days across the year. Include at least one 'All-in' per annum that is primarily about cultural learning. This is to be a full day of internal cultural sharing and learning experience, in person if possible.	All-ins typically held 3x yearly. Our next All-ins are February 2022, June 2022	TACSI Stewards with support from RWG
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	A. Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners/Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area, starting with building a database of information from past projects.	Ongoing, database due May 2022. Review September 2022.	Led by RWG with support from Project Officer and all TACSI staff
	B. Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, and putting these into practice appropriately.	Ongoing. Review September 2022.	Led by RWG with modelling from all TACSI staff to each other
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by recognising & celebrating NAIDOC Week.	A. Raise awareness and share information amongst staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	3rd - 10th July 2022.	Led by RWG
	B. Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	3rd - 10th July 2022.	Led by RWG & Communications team
	C. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	3rd - 10th July 2022.	Led by RWG and joined by all other TACSI staff where possible
8. Create a culturally safe workplaces and workspaces - and conduct project work in culturally safe ways.	A. Create policies and standard practice guide to creating culturally safe workplaces and workspaces, and working on projects in culturally safe ways. Ensure these are also embedded through our hiring and recruitment practices. We work with clients, stakeholders and people with lived experience of issues - any of whom could be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	September 2022. Review March 2023.	TACSI Cultural Advisor and Organisational Development Lead supported by RWG







"To me this RAP artwork tells a story of TACSI's journey. There are parts of our journey that are still unknown; they are black and white, like in Elizabeth's artwork. Other parts of our Journey are coming into colour, as we learn and journey along the river together."

Aunty Vickey Charles, Aunty in Residence TACSI



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Accountability to support others at TACSI
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	A. Develop a plan for growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. Including a review of past recruitment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific roles and what we can apply across all roles. This will inform an update to our recruitment policy and process.	From September 2021- ongoing. Review February 2022.	RWG with TACSI Platform
	B. Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	From September 2021– ongoing. Review February 2022.	TACSI Stewards, with support from RWG and TACSI Platform
	C. When recruitment recommences, we will be undertaking hiring approaches that are intentionally accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.	Ongoing at each hiring round. Review May 2022	TACSI Stewards, with support from RWG and TACSI Platform
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	A. Develop a plan for intentional procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. Including internal suppliers, subcontractors and innovation partners.	Develop plan from September 2021 for implementation January 2022 and review in April 2022.	TACSI Platform supported by TACSI Project Teams and Leads
	B. Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2021.	TACSI Platform with support from RWG
11. Develop TACSI brand materials that reflect our commitment to furthering self-determination.	A. Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and designers to work with us on a short term or long-term basis.	Ongoing from September 2021. Review March 2022.	TACSI Communications Team with support from RWG
	B. If budget is available after considering the financial impacts of COVID-19 and priorities within other RAP related expenses, TACSI will commission culturally appropriate brand elements to use in order to create greater cultural connection in communications, engagement and reporting.	Review budget in February 2022.	TACSI Communications Team with support from RWG
	C. Increase use of visual communication of our findings in reporting to increase accessibility to all content for all. This will include creating a visual representation of our Reflect RAP to support accessible sharing internally and externally.	Ongoing from September 2021. Review March 2022.	Project Team and Leads with support from TACSI Communications Team



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Accountability to support others at TACSI
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	A. Maintain the RWG formed in February 2021 to govern RAP implementation.	Review February 2022.	Director: Strategic Initiatives
	B. Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Review in January 2022 and again in May 2022.	Director: Strategic Initiatives Directors
	C. Establish safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. Start by learning from other organisations that support self-determination and facilitate Aboriginal governance, such as Native Title groups.	Ongoing. Review January 2022.	Director: Strategic Initiatives Directors
	D. Create and share RAP Leadership statement both internally and externally	Review September 2022.	CEO RWG
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	A. Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	A new RAP budget will be developed in February 2022. Review June 2022.	RWG and TACSI Stewards Team
	B. Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Ongoing. Review January 2022.	RWG CEO
	C. Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments, including our practice, and the experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have in engaging with us.	Ongoing from September 2021. Review March 2022.	RWG and TACSI Stewards team
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	A. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2021, 2022.	RWG
	B. Share TACSI's Reflect RAP experience publicly so others can learn. This could be through blog posts or other online platforms to reflect on and capture our actions and journey regarding our RAP and our First Nations First focus areas.	Ongoing. Review March 2022.	RWG
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	A. Review our Reflect RAP progress and determine readiness for Innovate RAP.	From September 2022.	RWG
	B. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	From April 2022.	RWG
	C. Develop Innovate RAP.	From May 2022.	RWG





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