









#### About the Artist

Lewis Burns is a Tubba–Gah Wiradjuri man born and living in Dubbo, NSW. He has been learning about his Aboriginal culture for as long as he can remember. He continues to practice and respect these life skills each day and still learns and grows from this ancient knowledge.

He is very dedicated to sharing what he knows with others to help keep these customs alive. Lewis paints in traditional Wiradjuri Aboriginal as well as contemporary styles. He has exhibited globally and performed globally with his handcrafted didgeridoos. Each piece of Lewis' artwork tells a story.....a story that will live on forever through the generations, as the artwork is handed down from one family to another.

#### About the Artwork

Thank you, to the employees of Housing Plus who helped on the artwork in the workshop in November 2022 at Rhino Lodge, Camp Road Dubbo.

This artwork tells the story of the Housing Plus Board of Directors and the staff.

You can see in the centre of the painting six (6) symbols shown around a shape with red dots around it. The 6 symbols represent the six members of the Board of Directors.

The U-shaped symbols represent the people seated around what could be a campfire or table. The men are represented by the symbols with a boomerang or spear next to them.

The women are represented by the symbols with a Coolamon sitting beside them as well as a digging stick "Gunnay".

The Directors are facing inwards and this represents them making the decisions.

The decisions made by the directors are then actioned by the employees, and the employees are shown delivering the service outwards to the far corners of the region.

The footprints on the background represent the journeys that the staff need to make to get the service delivered.

# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land, whose cultures are the oldest living continuous cultures in human history. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this document, particularly the Housing Plus's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Advisory Group, Nguluway, and the members of the RAP Working Group.

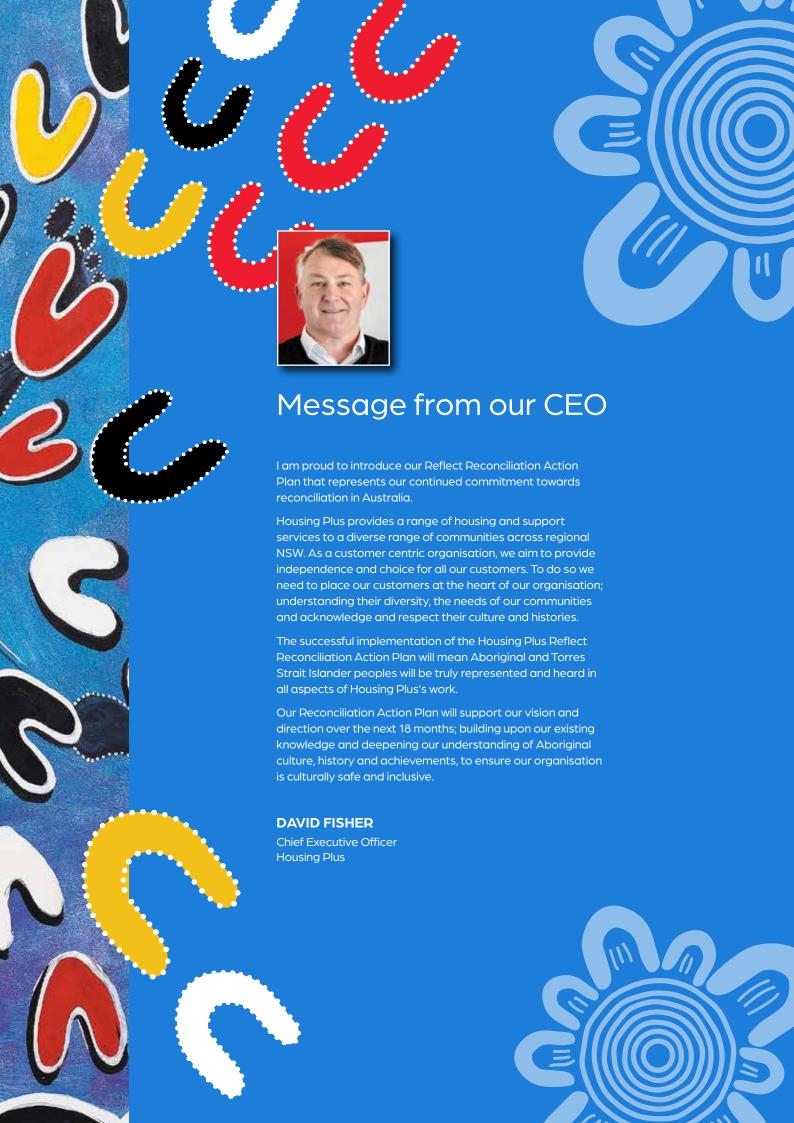
We would also like to thank Lewis Burns who worked with Housing Plus employees to design and create the artwork that forms the basis of the design of this document.

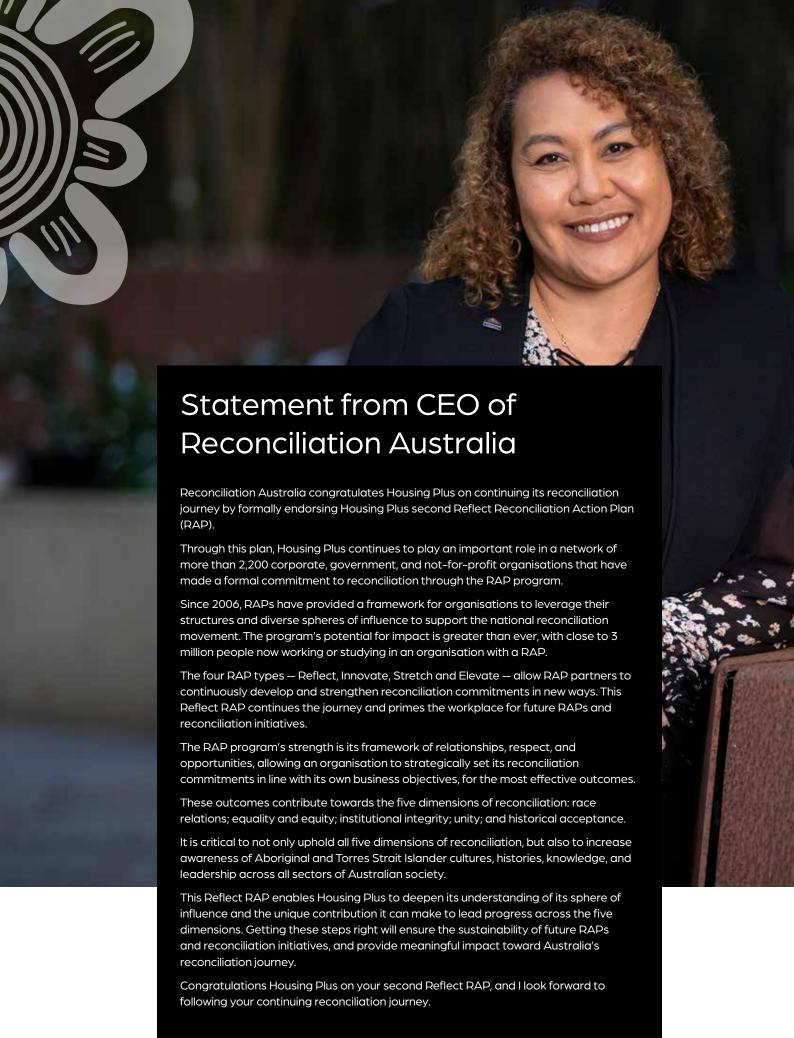


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**KAREN MUNDINE** 

Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation Australia

# **Our Vision for** Reconciliation

Housing Plus acknowledges that we live and work on the land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to their ancestors and Elders. We have a shared history, and we will continue to learn together, with shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, and continuing contributions to our communities.

Housing Plus's vision is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be treated as equals, have their voice heard and that we can support them in their journey by walking together, and ensuring that their culture and histories are valued, appreciated, and admired with dignity and respect. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples formed the first sovereign Nations of the continent with their own lore's, customs and spiritual beliefs that have been in place for over 70,000 years and that this sovereignty has never been ceded. We believe in celebrating the rich heritage of one of the oldest continuing cultures and recognising the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

We acknowledge the injustices and dispossession during European settlement, and we honour the special relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have as Custodians of the land on which we choose to live, meet, and work. As we learn, grow, and walk together in reconciliation, we are committed to creating a strong and connected future for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Australians.

Housing Plus would like to be a leading organisation where inclusivity and collaboration will be culturally embedded in all aspects of our work, allowing all our people and communities to be strengthened and enriched through active engagement with one another. We will deliver a structured and consistent cultural training program for all staff. We are

creating a community where everyone belongs, for generations to come. Our Reconciliation Action Plan is for the benefit of employees, customers, clients, and communities.

The Housing Plus Reconciliation Plan is our way of working to remove the gap in living standards between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Aboriginal peoples. We are continuing our journey to empower and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access housing, supports, and employment and supporting career pathways with integrated professional development.

Housing Plus's Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed by our RAP Working group which is made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees with the goal to embed Reconciliation within our organisation, our culture and our goals moving

The successful implementation of the plan will mean Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be truly represented and heard in all aspects of Housing Plus's work. With this basis, the organisation's staff will be well represented across all cultures, at all management levels and all services. It is expected that all Housing Plus employees will appreciate, understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and protocols and use appropriately.







Housing Plus is unique within the NSW Community Housing Sector as we offer an integrated service model of Community Housing and Community Services across regional NSW.

We provide a range of accommodation services and community programs that support both our tenants and individuals within the communities in which we operate.

We believe that safe, secure housing is the foundation for improving the quality of an individual's life and creating vibrant communities, with better outcomes for our tenants and clients alike

#### What we do?

#### Affordable Housing and Services

We provide a range of housing options to meet the needs of individuals and their families that include Crisis, Transitional and Affordable Housing. We have locally based tenancy, maintenance and support coordination teams that provide a range of services to support individuals and their families to sustain their tenancies.

#### **Homelessness Services**

We provide support and accommodation for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness to find and sustain suitable housing and gain independence: Orange Homelessness and Housing Support Service for Adults and Families, Together Home rough sleeper program and Operation Courage.

#### **Employment Pathways**

We support social housing tenants and their household members to access practical and financial assistance, training, and work opportunities to help them prepare for employment, find a job, work more hours, or improve their employment options: Opportunity Pathways.

#### **Domestic and Family Violence Services**

We provide support and accommodation assistance for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence: Central West, Central North and Western Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS), including Local Coordination Point and Safety Action Meeting; and Staying Home Leaving Violence.

#### **Post Release Support**

We provide support to people exiting prison to help reduce the risk of reoffending by coordinating and providing support services: Initial Transitional support.

#### Men's Behaviour Change

We provide support to men who use control or abuse toward a current or former partner but who are starting to think about change and want to work towards a relationship that is based on safety and respect: Commit and Change.

#### **Development Services**

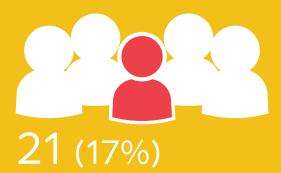
We provide property development services to deliver a variety of quality new affordable homes for people on low to moderate incomes.





# **Our team**

Housing Plus has 126 paid employees and 15 volunteers.



of our staff identify as **Aboriginal** and/or **Torres** Strait Islander people.



## Housing Plus has offices in –

Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo, Parkes, and Mudgee and co-locate with other community services in Moree, Broken Hill, Muswellbrook, Maitland, Griffith, Albury, and Tamworth.

We deliver eight community services from nine locations across regional NSW offer outreach services to an additional 27 towns and manage



# **Our Reconciliation** Journey so far

The Housing Plus Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is the result of extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities, colleagues, and other stakeholders. On commitment to the development of the RAP, Housing Plus called for nominations from employees to form our Reconciliation Working Group.

Since then, we have developed our Reflect RAP under the guidance of Reconciliation Australia's RAP program and in wide consultation with Housing Plus's staff and the Aboriginal communities in which we work. Our RAP follows the recognised guidelines which commit to implement actions relevant to Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. These themes align well with our own organisational Staff Charter of Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. (PRIDE)

Housing Plus is fortunate to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who wish to share their knowledge and skills. We have a desire to engage community and wish for all community to have access to the supports and services they need.

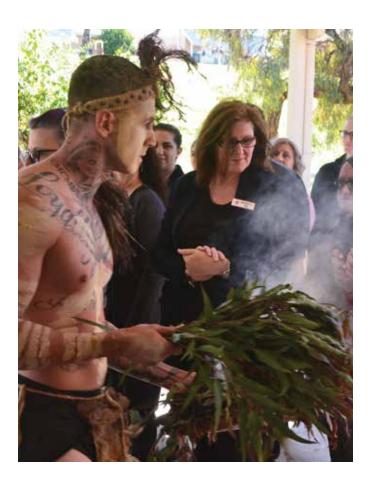
#### **Nguluway**

Housing Plus is committed to consulting and involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees on issues that impact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in which we live and work has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff advisory group, Nguluway, to facilitate this aim.

The groups focus is to unite the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with Housing Plus. It icomprises skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from Housing Plus who meet fortnightly to discuss issues impacting our

customers, clients, and community, and yarning about how we can make it better or easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access the right services when they need them.

Nguluway also supports employees at Housing Plus to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and clients in a way that they feel supported and heard. Our hope is that our customers share their experience in community.





# Community **Partnerships**



### Case Study - Orange Elder's Group

Housing Plus's Aboriginal employees regularly attend the Orange Elders Group meetings. These meetings are organised by Alice Williams an Aboriginal Elder who lives in Orange. This has been a beneficial relationship for Housing Plus to ensure that The Orchard, crisis accommodation for women and children escaping domestic and family violence, is culturally safe for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who seek refuge with us. The Elders had a voice in the design of The Orchard and the Healing Room. Housing Plus also sponsor the Elders Award at the Annual Orange NAIDOC Awards and are the main benefactor of the Elders Lunch that is held during NAIDOC week in Orange. Housing Plus's Aboriginal Employees ask for volunteers throughout the organisation to help with the preparation and provision of this special lunch for our Elders. We are thankful that we have this relationship with them.



## Case Study - Winhanganha **Aboriginal Learning Centre**

Winhanganha is a place of learning. Housing Plus employees attended the opening smoking ceremony and continue to attend training days, events, and Aboriginal specific meetings in this facility. Winhanganha is a multipurpose conference and learning centre and is designed as a meeting point for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. It is co-located on the TAFE Western - Orange Campus and has been home to multiple events that involve local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.





### Case Study - Birribee Housing

Birribee Housing is an Aboriginal not-for-profit company and a registered Tier 2 Community Housing Provider. Birribee are focused on providing safe and affordable housing for Aboriginal people in NSW and operates in Western Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, & Orange. Birribee invited Housing Plus to provide support for a range of customer services including responsive and planned maintenance to 160 properties at Bathurst & Orange. We are pleased to partner with Birribee for timely, efficient, and effective maintenance services.

Housing Plus have formal and informal partnerships with many organisations which we hope to strengthen in the years to come, including:

- Orange Local Aboriginal Lands Council - OLALC
- Orange NAIDOC Committee
- Orange Aboriginal Medical Service OAMS
- Bowen Tech Centre Orange
- Marang Gunya Orange
- Winhanganah Aboriginal Learning Centre – Orange
- Orange City Council
- Mental Health Line Orange
- Walu-Win Centre Orange
- Wambinya Buwanha Orange
- 13YARN Nationwide Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander crisis supporters**
- Orange local Police Station
- Birrang Enterprise Development Orange
- Train365 Orange
- Lifeline Orange & Bathurst
- Verto Orange, Bathurst & Dubbo
- Weigelli Centre Cowra
- Bathurst Local Aboriginal Lands Council – The Barracks Refuge
- Dubbo Koori Interagency Network
- Services Our Way
- Indidg Connect Dubbo
- Dubbo NAIDOC Committee
- Orana Support Service Dubbo
- Dubbo Regional Aboriginal Medical Centre
- Bila Muuji Aboriginal Corporation Health Service - Dubbo



# Reconciliation **Activities**



#### The Orchard Garden, Orange

In 2021 a team of 30 Cadia employees volunteered to overhaul a section of The Orchard's grounds, creating a tranquil garden space featuring an Indigenous yarning circle and raised vegetable garden for the residents to enjoy. Cadia engaged with the Orange Local Aboriginal Lands Council to design the Indigenous Garden and yarning circle. The yarning circle is incorporated into the body of a platypus, with three paths representing the three rivers that form Wiradjuri Country, the land on which the garden is built.

#### • Women's Health Week Dubbo

In September 2022 Housing Plus partnered with Dubbo Koori Interagency Network to hold a health and wellbeing event that took place over three days for local Aboriginal women and Aboriginal service providers to improve mental health and increase community resilience.

#### Cultural Competency Training.

Housing Plus runs Cultural Competency Training for all employees through a variety of channels. Most recently Housing Plus has introduced training through the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia, as part of our commitment to diversity, employee development and to ensure we are providing culturally appropriate services to our communities. This training was developed in extensive consultation with an Indigenous Advisory Panel, the Indigenous Directorate at TAFE, and the Indigenous Directorate at the Department of Education and Training.

#### Specialist Workers

Housing Plus has introduced new identified Aboriginal Specialist Case Worker positions across our services and continues to seek further opportunities for specialist services where possible.

#### Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Plan

Housing Plus has developed an Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Plan in conjunction with Paul Callaghan of Callaghan Cultural Consultancy to direct the organisation's policies and practices relating to recruiting, retaining, and developing Aboriginal employees.

#### Aboriginal Open Day

In 2019 Housing Plus hosted an Aboriginal Open day at our office in Orange, providing multiple Aboriginal cultural activities and training.

#### NAIDOC Week

Housing Plus employees are informed of the NAIDOC week celebrations in their local area and encouraged to attend local events. We participate in the opening ceremonies, marches and organise to have an information stall with activities if the opportunity presents itself. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are supported to join their local NAIDOC Week committees.

#### National Reconciliation Week

Housing Plus employees are informed of the Reconciliation Week activities in their local area and are encouraged to attend local events.

#### Healing Room at The Orchard

We engaged with local Elders and employees to furnish the Healing Room to provide a safe and welcoming space for our Aboriginal clients.

#### Aboriginal Garden in Dubbo

Housing Plus Aboriginal employees along with the Dubbo Koori Interagency Network designed and built an Indigenous Garden that includes a memorial seat for domestic violence victims. The garden was officially opened during NAIDOC week 2019.

#### Procurement Strategy

Housing Plus employees are encouraged to collaborate with suppliers, Aboriginal owned businesses, and Aboriginal representative bodies early in the planning stages of procurement activities to identify effective ways of increasing Aboriginal participation in Housing Plus contracts.

#### • Futures 2030

Housing Plus has embarked on a strategic transformation project, led by our Board, to review the direction and services that the organisation provides to increase the positive social impact that we can achieve in the communities that we serve in regional NSW.

This project started by commissioning the University of South Australia to research and advise on the levels and types of disadvantages within our communities. The research identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as one of the most disadvantaged groups. This research will be used to inform our future direction and future services.

# Implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan

Housing Plus has formed a RAP Working Group to develop our Reflect RAP. This Working Group will continue to meet regularly throughout the next 18 months to ensure that our Actions and Deliverables are achieved.

Our RAP working group was formed in June 2022 and has 16 members, seven members of our working group identify as First Nations people.

Housing Plus has developed a "Reconciliation Hub" SharePoint page to provide information about our Reconciliation Action Plan, important local events, training, and other relevant information. This will form a central interactive platform to support employee engagement with the RAP.

Our RAP Actions and Deliverables will be reported to the Board of Directors. This will be achieved through a quarterly report, which is being developed by the RAP Working Group.

The RAP will form part of all employees inductions, which will include the RAP Champion and HR Manager briefing all new starters on the RAP and Cultural Competency training. Additional training and development opportunities will continue to be

The RAP principles will be incorporated into relevant policies, procedures, and the development of service delivery models within Housing Plus.

The RAP working group with the support of our CEO and Executive team and our RAP Champion, Rochelle Monaghan, will be responsible for holding Housing Plus accountable for delivering the Actions outlined within the RAP within the specified timeframes.

## **Our Reconciliation Action Plan**

### Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Nguluway Chair
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2023	Insights and Strategy Coordinator
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our employees.	May 2024	Engagement Coordinator

## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2024	Engagement Coordinator
	Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May– 3 June, 2024	Engagement Coordinator
Promote     reconciliation     through our sphere     of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all employees.	July 2023	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2023	Nguluway Chair
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2023	Nguluway Chair
	Continue to support and meet with Nguluway to inform the cultural safety of our services	December 2023	Engagement Coordinator
<ul> <li>Promote positive race relations through anti- discrimination strategies.</li> </ul>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti- discrimination.	December 2023	Insights and Strategy Coordinator
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2023	HR Manager

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase     understanding, value     and recognition of     Aboriginal and Torres     Strait Islander cultures,     histories, knowledge,     and rights through     cultural learning.	Develop a formal cultural learning strategy for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, ongoing impact of colonisation knowledge and rights within our organisation.	December 2023	HR Manager
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2023	HR Manager
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	September 2023	Nguluway Chair
	Increase employees understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2023	Nguluway Chair
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our employees about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Nguluway Chair
	Introduce our employees to NAIDOC Week and other events throughout the year by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Nguluway Chair
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023, 2024	Engagement Coordinator

## **Opportunities**

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Review and consult on the effectiveness of our Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Plan	September 2023	HR Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	September 2023	HR Manager
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop database of Aboriginal organisations that we could potentially use as suppliers, prequalifying them as future suppliers.	December 2023	Asset Manager
	Investigate Supply     Nation membership.	December 2023	Asset Manager
Build equitable housing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Research and consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'needs and requirements during the development of new homes and renovations and upgrades of existing homes.	June 2024	Director of Development
	Develop a consultation plan outlining areas for potential input from representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for use in future developments	June 2024	Director of Development

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul> <li>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</li> </ul>	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator

## Governance

A	ction	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
		Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2023	Engagement Coordinator
an thi R/ ch led	uild accountability and transparency rough reporting AP achievements, allenges, and arnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation     Australia to verify     that our primary and     secondary contact     details are up to date,     to ensure we do not     miss important RAP     correspondence.	June annually	Engagement Coordinator
		Contact Reconciliation     Australia to request     our unique link, to     access the online RAP     Impact Measurement     Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Engagement Coordinator
		Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Engagement Coordinator
re	ontinue our conciliation journey by eveloping our next RAP.	Register via     Reconciliation Australia's     website to begin     developing our next RAP.	June 2024	Engagement Coordinator



Name: Rochelle Monaghan

**Position:** Engagement Coordinator and RAP Champion

**Phone:** 02 6360 3300

**Email:** rochelle@housingplus.com.au

