



Property and Development NSW

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Reconciliation Action Plan

Progress Report – February 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

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Title

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Progress Report

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Artwork by Sonny Green

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Artwork and design

Story

The figure in the centre is a pathway between two meeting grounds, within this context, it signifies two-way communication with the community. This idea of information travelling back and forth has been amplified by the footsteps between each section.

The houses and buildings represent property, while the aerial view represents the land and its people.

The florals represent care of the land and land management.

The hands represent a community focussed partnership and the process of building strong relationships with Aboriginal people and communities.

The colour scheme was inspired by the sun setting over country and the calmness of nature.

Artist

Sonny Green is a proud Gamilaroi man from North Western NSW, a town called Moree – where he was raised. His family originates from Moree and Brewarrina. He has over six years of experience working in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector, most notably in Aboriginal Health Research Ethics. Sonny's goal is to create art that is visually stunning and also weaves in strong storytelling components.



CEO foreword



I'm pleased to share a report on our progress towards our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan for Property and Development NSW (PDNSW), launched in February 2023.

At PDNSW, we're committed to working with Aboriginal communities as we partner with our agency partners to deliver purpose-led property solutions for government that reimagine property, rejuvenate environments and revitalise communities for the people of NSW.

In our first RAP, we committed to driving positive change in partnership with Aboriginal communities, and enhancing the cultural capability of our organisation by growing stronger minds and attitudes that respect and embed Aboriginal ways of working.

I'm proud of what we've achieved as a team over the last year and thank everyone in PDNSW for their commitment, dedication, and contributions that have led to meaningful actions and initiatives with Aboriginal employees, stakeholders and community members.

The Reflect RAP has provided us with foundational frameworks and opportunities to develop strategies and actions that progress us toward Reconciliation. It's my pleasure to share a snapshot of our highlights and achievements across our RAP focus areas—Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance—in this report.

I look forward to continuing our journey and taking our efforts even further through the development of our Innovate RAP in the coming months.

Leon Walker

Deputy Secretary Property, Development and Valuation
Chief Executive Officer, Property & Development
NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Our RAP

The purpose of our RAP is to make a public commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities through meaningful engagement and the development of effective partnerships with Aboriginal communities. This RAP also articulates PDNSW's commitment to identifying and creating employment opportunities across the workplace, including senior executive roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

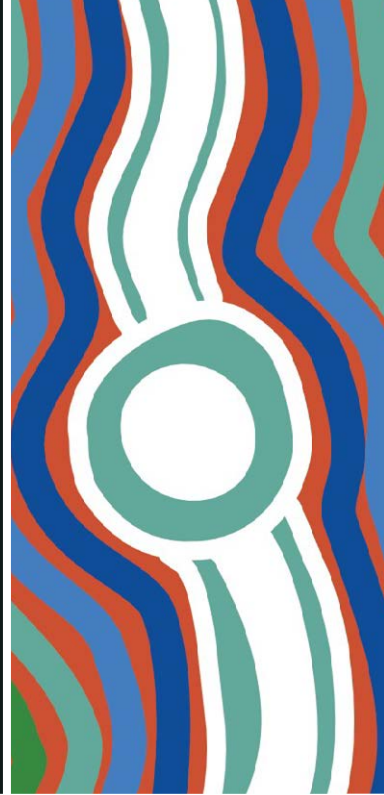
Our motivation for creating our Reflect RAP was to formalise our commitment in a way that can be transparent, open and celebrated. When our organisation talks about growing a stronger and more liveable NSW, we know that can only be done in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

A significant amount of our work is focused on property and the built environment, including sustainability and remediation activities that contribute to healing and enhancement of the land. All of the land on which our activities are conducted and outcomes are achieved is Aboriginal land. We aim to ensure that our work considers the environmental, cultural and spiritual health of Country, and aligns with aspirations that Aboriginal communities may have for their families, regions, businesses and our state.

We approached the implementation of our RAP in a way that encourages collaborative decision making across our organisation, with the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many of our actions involved listening and learning, holding yarning circles, embedding two-way communication channels for meaningful dialogue, and reporting back regularly and openly to increase accountability to critical stakeholders.

We also see opportunity to work across our own sector in delivering better Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes and genuinely embedding NSW Government frameworks such as Connecting with Country in a way that strengthens the NSW Government's objective of better use of government land and property. Our RAP sets a tangible platform to begin that engagement, cross-sector collaboration and community partnership.

[Read our full Reflect RAP here.](#)





Our progress



Relationships

During 2023, PDNSW built on our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by celebrating significant events, including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC¹ Week, and through their active involvement in community events.

By participating in cultural events, we believe that we can better serve our Aboriginal communities, support our colleagues and become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people.

Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies

Throughout the year, we continued to incorporate Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies at our events and projects, where appropriate.

Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies were performed by Elders and dancers who welcomed guests at our 24-hour arts and cultural MOPOKE Sydney 2023 at Macquarie Street East, activation for community Heritage Day 2023 at Parramatta North, in alignment with the National Trust Heritage Festival, and the site handover to Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge centre in Deniliquin.



1. National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee



NAIDOC Week celebrations at the Western Sydney Startup Hub

We arranged a PDNSW-led event at one of our sites, the Western Sydney Startup Hub in North Parramatta, Dharug Country, as part of NAIDOC Week Celebrations for learning session facilitated by Caspa Tyson, owner of Two Cockatoos Cultural Consultancy.

Caspa is a proud Yiman women, currently living on Dharug Country with a passion for the advancement of Aboriginal People, as well as a deep connection to Country and ancestors. Two Cockatoos is about dedicating her career to serving her Aboriginal community.



Celebrating NAIDOC week at the Western Sydney Startup Hub.



Embracing Aboriginal culture at Taronga Zoo.

Close the Gap Day panel discussion

The department's Close the Gap Day panel discussion, facilitated by Joshua Gilbert, Indigenous Consultant, Agriculturalist, Innovator, and Aboriginal Housing Office Board Member, provided insight into how we are collectively working across the department to Close the Gap.

Leon Walker, PDNSW's Chief Executive Officer joined the panel alongside Famey Williams, Chief Executive, Aboriginal Housing Office, Mark DeWeerd, Executive Director, Aboriginal Strategy & Outcomes, Crown Lands and Office of Local Government and Elle Davidson, Zion Engagement and Planning.

National Reconciliation Week at Taronga Zoo

PDNSW team members joined Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure National Reconciliation Week event at Taronga Zoo, which provided a unique opportunity for people to come together to experience, learn and embrace Aboriginal culture first-hand.

It was a great opportunity to engage people in reconciliation, broaden our collective understanding of our shared histories and embrace Aboriginal culture.



The department's Close the Gap Day panel discussion.



PDNSW honours our First Nations peoples by acknowledging and respecting connection to the land, and by establishing mutual respect and meaningful partnerships with our Aboriginal staff and communities. We have continued to build foundations of respect and trust with both internal and external stakeholders by focusing on building the capability of our staff to create positive and meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples.

Learning and development

Our Aboriginal Cultural Learning Framework reflects our commitment to cultural awareness, incorporating education about the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal peoples and debunking myths and stereotypes.

PDNSW offers a raft of learning online and face to face experiential learning programs. In 2023, with more than 85% of PDNSW employees started and / or completed the Winangali Aboriginal Learning Framework. This program is designed to increase staff knowledge and help build capability to support meaningful relationships and outcomes with Aboriginal communities and colleagues.

We also developed and delivered a pilot training program on the importance of Acknowledging Country, including when to deliver it and how to make it meaningful for each meeting. This commenced in 2023 and will continue to be rolled-out in 2024.

Senior Leaders Aboriginal Mentoring (SLAM)

PDNSW staff were chosen to participate in the SLAM mentoring program. This is an upward (reverse) mentoring program where senior leaders are mentored by Aboriginal employees. The program aims to improve Aboriginal cultural capability amongst senior leaders and provides Aboriginal employees the opportunity to share their culture and lived experiences in a safe and supportive environment. It introduces a safe space for staff to come together face-to-face in a Yarning Circle, learning about Aboriginal culture and sharing knowledge about experiences in the community and workplace.

Peat Island returned to the Darkinjung people

The NSW Government officially approved the transfer of ownership of Peat Island and a portion of the mainland foreshore at Mooney Mooney to the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC), recognising the cultural connection of the land to the local Aboriginal community. We are continuing to work with the DLALC to help realise its vision for Peat Island to create economic and cultural opportunities for the local Aboriginal community and to educate all Australians on the history and culture of this Country.



Peat Island



Members of Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council at the Peat Island handover event.

First Nations Cultural Advisor briefing at Macquarie Street East Precinct

Our Precinct Development team hosted a briefing with First Nations advisors to continue informing the planning process for Macquarie Street East Precinct.

The session covered the immense urban design opportunities in the precinct, with collaboration emerging as the theme of the day. There were many insights and lessons learned, shared within the group.

Eden Wharf site returned to Aboriginal community

The NSW Government granted an Aboriginal land claim that will see the return of a 3,600 square metre parcel of land in Eden on the state's South Coast to the local Aboriginal community.

The return of this land, formerly the Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre site, to the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council will ensure the future of this important site can be put to productive use for the benefit of the local Aboriginal community and the wider Eden community.

This is a great example of how community outcomes can be delivered through the realisation of Aboriginal land rights.

Part of the Grafton Gaol returned to Aboriginal Community

The former Grafton Correctional Centre is set for a bright new future following a landmark agreement with the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council (GNLALC).

PDNSW reached agreement to transfer part of the old gaol, including the old market garden and industrial buildings, to GNLALC to achieve positive outcomes for the local Aboriginal community.

This is a great example of how PDNSW is engaging with communities to repurpose old and unused government buildings in a way that both protects important heritage while continuing to serve local and regional communities.



The cultural briefing for Macquarie Street East Precinct.



Part of the Former Grafton Correctional Centre being transferred to GLALC.



Responding to the Connecting with Country Framework

The PDNSW team learnt about the NSW Government Architect's Connecting with Country Framework with an all staff presentation by Daniele Hromek from Djinjama.

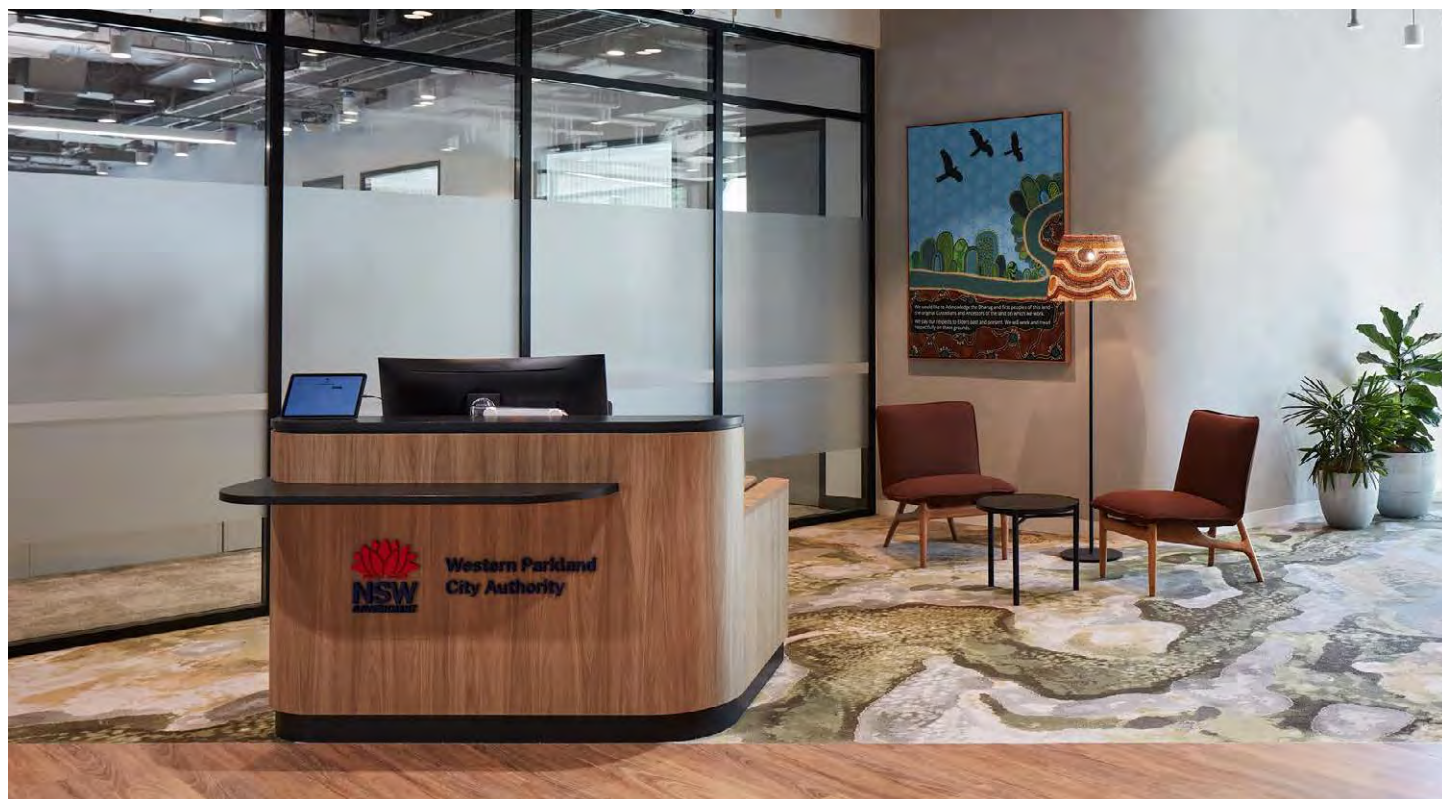
The framework is crucial for shaping state government precinct infrastructure projects and is grounded in a Designing with Country approach which recognises and respects the cultural ties Aboriginal communities have with the land and the creation of culturally sustainable design and delivery. Integrating a first nations perspectives enables planners to draw on traditional knowledge, resulting in infrastructure that respects the environment and aligns with local cultural values. This approach contributes to preserving Australia's diverse cultural heritage and fosters a strong sense of identity and connection among community.

Djinjama is working with PDNSW's Precinct Development team on key projects.

Celebrating Aboriginal culture through art and design in our workplaces

We continued to incorporate Aboriginal culture into the design and delivery of government workplaces across metropolitan and regional NSW, acknowledging Country and First Nations Culture.

We delivered a fantastic fit-out for the Western Parkland City Authority at 50 Belmore Street, Penrith, overlooking the Blue Mountains. With Aboriginal artwork and design featured throughout this modern, sustainable workplace, the fit out aims to pay respect to the area's traditional owners, the Dharug people.



50 Belmore Street Penrith. Photo credit to Luc Remond.

Opportunities

PDNSW is striving to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, providing a culturally safe workplace, where all staff can be provided opportunities to reach their full potential.

We're also committed to building sustainable respectful relationships by engaging and empowering Aboriginal communities to contribute on the design and development of significant sites.

New home for Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre

PDNSW helped pave the way for a permanent home for the Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre in Deniliquin, by facilitating the sale of an unused government-owned property to deliver benefits for the entire community. This permanent base will be used to educate the community and protect the culture and practices of the Wamba Wamba and Perrepa Perrepa people, ensuring their strong cultural links and stories are passed down to future generations.

PDNSW CEO Leon Walker and Executive Director, Strategic Advisory Services, Neisha D'Souza visited Deniliquin to handover the keys to the Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre.



Smoking ceremony and handover event at the new Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre in Deniliquin.

Connecting with Country

PDNSW is committed to be a leading agency in the application of the NSW Government Connecting with Country framework.

We are co-creating exceptional places for people to live, work and play, in collaboration with the First Nations and Aboriginal people, government partners, community and stakeholders.

To prioritise the health of Country, we're thinking differently about project and master planning, ensuring Aboriginal perspectives shape each place and its potential for the future.

Across our major projects, such as Coffs Harbour Workplace Hub, Macquarie Street East, Parramatta North, and Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore, we've continued to work with Aboriginal people to understand the special characteristics of these places, to guide respectful future uses of these lands, that in turn contribute to the health of Country and community.



Macquarie Street East Precinct.

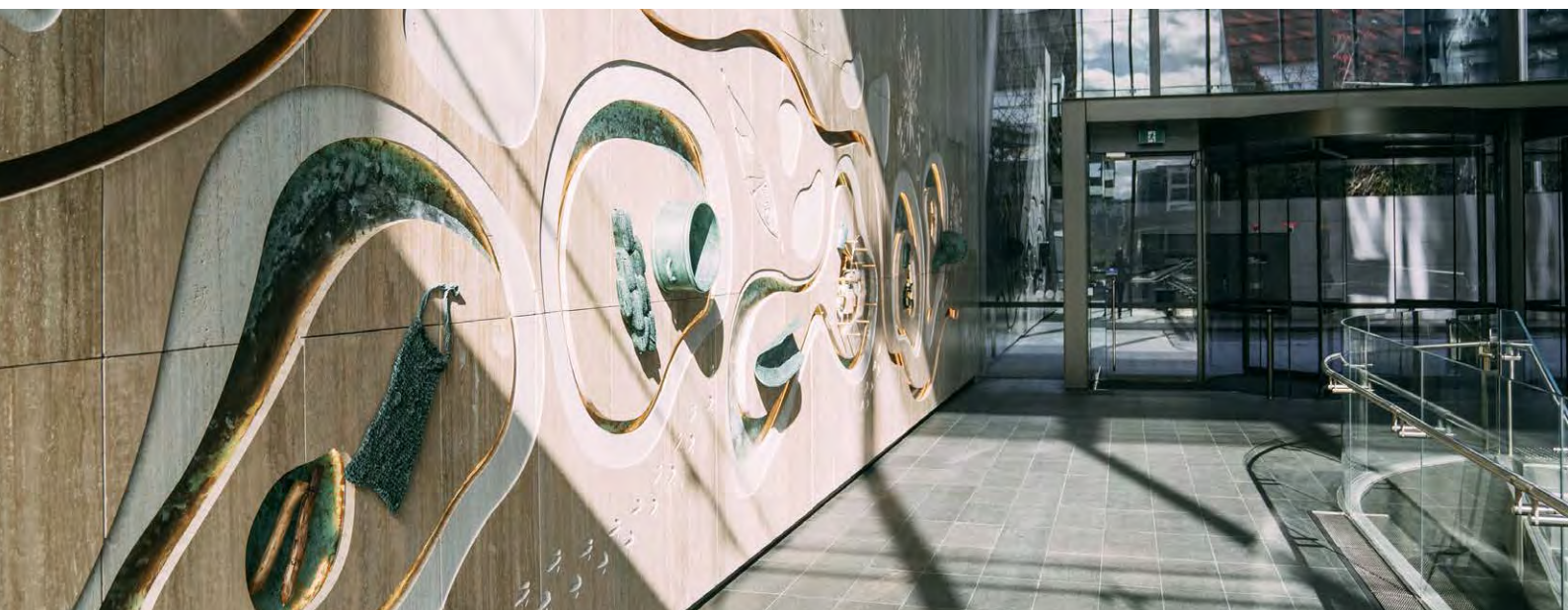
Actions – Progress

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Status
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Week resources and other reconciliation materials to all PDNSW staff.	Achieved
	PDNSW staff encouraged to participate in external NRW events in alignment with the Aboriginal Events and Engagement Strategy.	Achieved
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Achieved
	Develop a RAP communications strategy and disseminate to all PDNSW staff.	
	Identify other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Ongoing
	Explore at least one formal partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).	
	Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders with our RAP, to inform of our commitment to reconciliation.	Achieved
	Commit to biannual community reporting through our website to update the community on our RAP achievements.	
	Embed Connecting with Country Framework within workplace development and delivery.	Achieved
	Provide PDNSW staff with education and ongoing support in respect to the Connecting with Country framework.	Achieved



Action	Deliverable	Status
Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations across NSW.	Build strong relationships developed with numerous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders across NSW, including projects relevant to Aboriginal Land Councils.	Achieved
	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Achieved
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Achieved / Ongoing
	Hold yarning circles with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to develop two-way understanding of specific developments and projects.	Achieved / Ongoing
	Build in Yarning Circles as an optional protocol for State significant projects and programs.	
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Achieved / Ongoing
	Align this research with existing Department policies.	
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Achieved / Ongoing
	Ensure findings of this review align with existing Department policies.	





Respect

Action	Deliverable	Status
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Provide training and a program to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	Achieved
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation building on the cultural learning needs review undertaken in 2021, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilise data from People Matter survey develop tailored survey for PDNSW staff. 	Achieved
	Moving from the pilot, deliver two experiential training sessions on Acknowledgement of Country and Indigenous engagement in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this context, this would include either a workshop led by Traditional Custodians or a yarning circle involving Aboriginal community members. Align activities with the Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework. 	Achieved
	Identify opportunities to embed Aboriginal knowledge across property development related workstreams, strategies and plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Aboriginal design from initial concept and then throughout a project's phases, ensuring appropriate Aboriginal input throughout project lifecycle. 	Achieved
	Provide training on the NSW Government Connecting with Country Framework for relevant employees.	Achieved



Action	Deliverable	Status
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop guidance to identify and connect with the local Traditional Owner groups of the lands and waters across PDNSW operational area.	Achieved
	Increase our understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socialise and implement Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols • align any activity with the Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework and Learning Hub. 	Achieved / Ongoing
	Investigate an Acknowledgement of Country for all PDNSW buildings, offices, and project sites that meet select criteria.	Achieved
	Develop standardised Acknowledgement of Country wording across all of PDNSW.	
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week.	Raise awareness and share information among our staff about the meaning and history of NAIDOC Week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • align activity with the Aboriginal Events and Engagement Strategy. 	Achieved
	Encourage all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in at least one event during NAIDOC Week • align activity with the Aboriginal Events and Engagement Strategy. 	Achieved
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Achieved



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Status
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and promote opportunities at all levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment across PDNSW ensure PDNSW job advertisements and Role Descriptions are inclusive and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applications include opportunities to engage with high school and tertiary aged students to foster genuine employment opportunities meet with the NSW Public Service Commission to finalise the business plan ensure that the RAP is promoted as a core commitment of PDNSW when we are advertising open roles explore how this links in with the overall group people plan. 	Achieved
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Achieved
	Promote successful employment outcomes to communities to raise awareness of PDNSW, with the aspiration to becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Ongoing
	Investigate cadetship and internship for First Nations peoples through developing relationships with tertiary institutions with courses relevant to PDNSW's services.	Ongoing
	Encourage participation in NSW public sector First Nations employee network from current First Nations employees and relevant internal First Nations staff networks.	Ongoing



Action	Deliverable	Status
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Align with department protocols on procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses. This may include attendance of PDNSW at two Aboriginal business trade shows (one regional, one metropolitan).	Achieved
	Create partnerships with local First Nations groups and commit to appropriate KPIs when undertaking projects in regional NSW, that will generate employment opportunities for local communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where possible consider commercial and economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities. 	Achieved
	Identify outsource service provider partnership opportunities to leverage Aboriginal supply chain opportunities and social procurement provisions.	Achieved
	Support and promote the department's Supply Nation membership.	Achieved
Lead on built environment projects.	Utilise the Community of Use policy to continue to offer sites that meet the criteria to Land Councils.	Achieved
	Embed Connecting with Country Framework within master plans.	Achieved



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Status
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Achieved
	• Draft a Terms of reference for the RWG.	Achieved
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Achieved
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Achieved
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Achieved
	• Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Achieved
	• Define with RWG appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Achieved
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings 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 out on important RAP correspondence.	Achieved
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	Achieved
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Achieved
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Achieved

