

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2014-2015



Australian
Unions
Join. For a
better life.

ACTU
australian council of trade unions


Reconciliation
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE RAP

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision for reconciliation is of a society and workplaces that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We envision a nation that respects, protects and promotes the rights of all, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians live and work together with mutual respect and understanding. Working together in the spirit of reconciliation, we will create a fairer society by raising living standards, working conditions, and quality of life for all Australians.

"If you've come here to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Australian Aboriginal Elder

Lilla Watson





“A Better Life”

The outer meeting circle is representative of the ACTU and its affiliates, our trade union warriors, our hunters and gathers both men and women.

The smaller meeting circles within the larger circle are representative of union members, their families and the communities in which they live. The inner circles within those meeting circles represent the diverse cultures of those people and the different industries they work in, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

There are digging sticks and spears in the ACTU circle. The digging sticks represent how trade unions provide for their union members, their families and their communities. The standing spears represent how trade unions protect their union members, their families and their communities, and the in-turned spears represent how trade unions will fight for their union members, their families and their communities.

“I am only one person, but one of many. I have great warriors who provide, protect and fight for me, while I provide, protect and fight for others. Together we unite and fight as one for a better life. You don’t need to fight alone, come join me for a better life.”

Lara Watson



Message from the ACTU President Ged Kearney

Unions are strongly committed to promoting equality in the workplace and within broader society for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Unions promote the active participation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters in trade unions, so that workers can strive together for fair representation in workplaces and in society.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and our affiliates want to contribute to shaping our communities and our society, so that we all value the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Australian unions have supported the long struggle of Indigenous peoples for recognition of their civil rights and treatment as equals.

It is a struggle that connects strongly with the values of unionism: equality, fairness and collective action.

By developing and implementing this Reconciliation Action Plan, the ACTU is showing its solidarity with our First Australians. We are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters and say: your struggle is our struggle. Your liberation is our liberation. Let us join together, for a better life.

Ged Kearney
ACTU PRESIDENT



OUR HISTORY

The way of life we enjoy today, in modern Australia, has been built on a social compact where everyone has basic rights, where we provide social protections to look after those who would otherwise be left behind.

Sadly, for many decades, these rights were not inclusive of First Australians.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were treated as second class citizens: dispossessed of their land, robbed of their culture and heritage, stolen from their families and communities, and denied the basic rights and services that other Australians took for granted.

Australian unions must bear some of the shame for allowing this to happen, and for standing by far too long without taking up the cudgels on behalf of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters.

But we can also take pride, that it was unions who were key participants in the movement for change, a movement based on the inclusion of civil, social and industrial fairness for all Australians.

Since our establishment in 1927, the Australian Council of Trade Unions has had a tradition of opposing discrimination, oppression and exploitation, and supporting human rights.

We have fought many battles with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers. From the cattle stations of outback Australia to the factories, wharves, classrooms, hospitals, the Australian trade union movement has stood shoulder to shoulder with, and for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workers.

Some battles are unfinished, and there are new and different struggles today, but what remains unchanged is our focus on representing and organising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

We are committed to making Australia a fairer society and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers have a voice within the union movement and in the community.



WHO WE ARE



ACTU NAIDOC Ceremony 2013

The ACTU is the peak union body representing 46 affiliated unions and the interests of almost two million workers and their families across Australia.

We are a national organisation of almost 100 staff members, with our Head Office based in Melbourne and staff situated in all states across the country.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are represented in every decision making forum of the ACTU.

The ACTU employs an Indigenous Officer and an Indigenous Cadet.

In addition, the ACTU has an Indigenous Committee comprised of staff and grassroots workplace delegates from our trade union affiliates.

The ACTU Indigenous Committee is the major consultative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers within the Australian union movement. Members of the Committee represent workers from every industry and union affiliate across Australia.

The work of the Committee includes providing advice and leadership in policy development, programs, industrial relations and how unions can work towards ensuring the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are represented in union structures.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Through the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan, we want to demonstrate our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by 'walking the talk'.

As the peak body for the union movement, we have a responsibility and a desire to take action around reconciliation. By working in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the labour movement, we hope to create opportunities for mutual understanding and deeper participation.

Our plan has been developed by a working group comprised of representatives from the ACTU Indigenous Committee, staff, delegates and volunteers.

Our RAP Champion is Gerardine (Ged) Kearney, *ACTU President*.

The other working group members are:

- Michael Borowick, *ACTU Assistant Secretary*
- Kara Keys, *ACTU Indigenous Officer*
- Corey Ah Chee, *ASU Organiser (SA Unions Representative, ACTU Indigenous Committee)*
- Lara Watson, *Organiser, Not4Sale Campaign (ETU Representative, ACTU Indigenous Committee)*
- Cassandra Devine, *ACTU Policy and Research Officer (RAP Project Officer)*

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.



“For me the values of reconciliation are similar to the values of unionism. There’s a special place for the union movement in the reconciliation story, because the values are similar and there’s something familiar about it.”

Leanne Enoch

Quandamook Nation

ASU Together Member

“Our values as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples are the same as union values. We operate as a collective, and so do unions. It just goes hand in hand.”

Jo Kerr

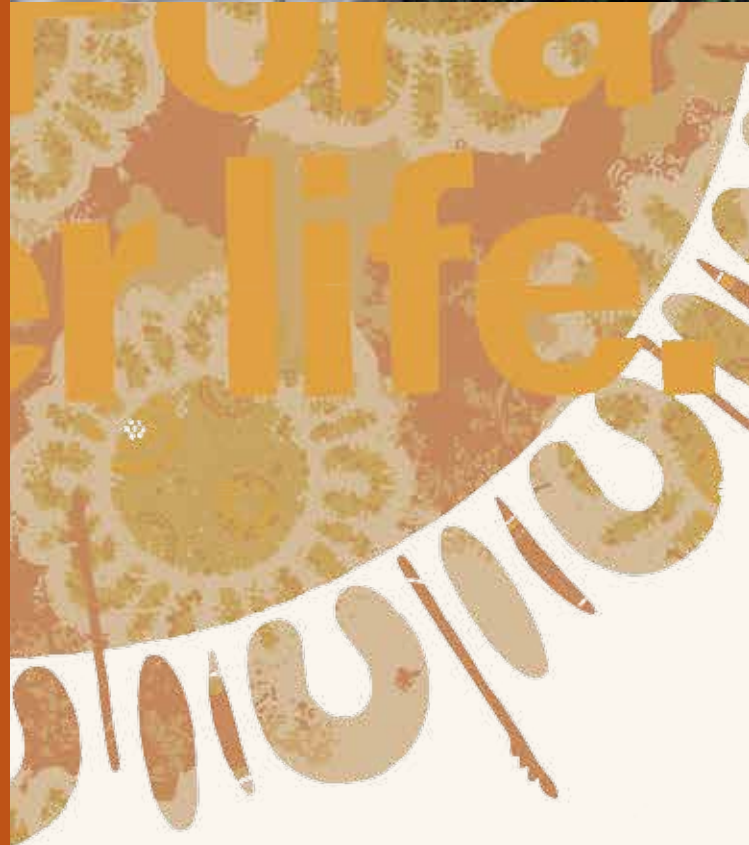
Murrawarri Peoples

CPSU Governing Councillor

ACTU Executive Representative –

Indigenous

Chair, ACTU Indigenous Committee



RELATIONSHIPS

Our aspiration for society is that all Australians have dignity in work and where diversity is respected. We aspire to an equal society with access to decent work and other opportunities to create a meaningful life. It is vital that we engage in a true partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve this aspiration. Without meaningful and respectful relationships, there can be no reconciliation and no true understanding. These relationships must be developed at all levels of the ACTU and unions – from our Executive Officers and directors, to our staff, and including all of our affiliates, volunteers and supporters.



Smoking Ceremony, ACTU Indigenous Conference, May 2014

Relationships: Our Focus

In 2014-2015, our plan is to continue to foster and deepen respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all levels of the organisation.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
Provide opportunities for relationship building through participation in key events	Indigenous Officer, Indigenous Committee	July 2014	Celebrate NAIDOC Week.
	Social Media Officer, Indigenous Officer, Manager, Media and Communications	August 2014	Publicise the International Day of World Indigenous People via social media.
	RAP Project Officer	May 2015	Organise a group of staff to go on the Long Walk Fun Walk around the Tan in celebration of National Reconciliation Week.
	Indigenous Officer	May- June, 2015	Engage in activities around National Reconciliation Week.
	Indigenous Officer	June 2015	Celebrate Mabo Day.
	Social Media Officer, Indigenous Officer, Manager, Media and Communications	August 2014, January 2015, May 2015, June 2015	Engage in a social media campaign, write press releases, and send letters of solidarity to community groups in recognition of key dates.
Continue to develop external relationships and build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, local Elders and councils	RAP Champion, Indigenous Officer	November 2014, 2015	Run a Civil Society Community Forum and extend invitations to peak organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
Establish mechanisms to publicise union reconciliation activities and campaigns that engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Manager, Media and Communications	August 2014	Develop a media strategy to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers within the union movement.
	New Media Editor	October 2014	Develop and publish news stories for Working Life, highlighting unions working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and communities.
	RAP Champion, Indigenous Committee	March 2015	Showcase unions through the ACTU National Union Awards.
The RAP Working Group (RWG) continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	RAP Working Group	November 2014, May 2015	Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.

"Reconciliation means that people can finally look past colour and where you're from, and accept each other for who people are."

Corey Ah-Chee

Pitjantjatjara Peoples

ASU Organiser



RESPECT

Our organisation is built on an inherent respect for all Australians, with a particular emphasis around the dignity inherent in decent work as a way of participating meaningfully in society. We acknowledge and respect the First Peoples on whose land we live and work.

As a membership-based organisation, we demonstrate our respect for our members by providing everyone with an opportunity to participate in our work, vision and values. We are a movement, not just a business, and as such we value the democratic participation of members in our internal processes. This extends to ensuring we have broad consultation to, and input from, all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and stakeholders.

Respect: Our Focus

Our focus is on engaging employees, members and affiliates at all levels to develop their understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture. We will do this by providing opportunities to deepen awareness of ancient histories, cultures and languages.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
Engage employees in understanding the protocols around acknowledgement of country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.	Director of Communications and Operations, ICT Manager	August 2014	Include an email signature at the bottom of all internal and external staff emails.
	Indigenous Officer	September 2014	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, ensuring that a Welcome to Country from a Traditional Owner will be included at all major conferences and events.
Engage employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	Indigenous Committee, Indigenous Officer	August 2014 (pilot) November 2014 (train-the-trainer course) March 2015 (all staff)	Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy. In particular, provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP Champions, HR managers and other key leadership to participate in a training session.
	Indigenous Officer, HR and Executive Support Officer	September 2014	Include cultural awareness information in all induction materials for new staff.
Provide opportunities for our employees to engage with Indigenous culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.	Events Manager, Indigenous Officer	July 2014	Host a RAP launch.
	HR Manager	April 2015	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC and other activities.
	RAP Champion, Indigenous Officer	July 2015	Official representation at the National NAIDOC Awards Ceremony through two tables at the NAIDOC ball.
	RAP Project Officer	July 2015	Raise awareness among staff through all-staff emails and other notices relating to participation in NAIDOC week activities.
Provide opportunities for selected staff to undertake more significant cultural immersion	Indigenous Officer, Indigenous Committee	March 2015	Explore and report on opportunities for selected staff to do a short placement or volunteering through JAWUN.
	ACTU Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Officer	April 2015	Explore and report on opportunities for the ACTU to visit a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community or more significant immersion through visits to the Utopia region, where we have community links. Use this visit to highlight the issue of asbestos in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing.
Raise awareness of our commitment to reconciliation through visible means	Director of Communications and Operations	September 2014	Report on pricing for a language plaque and artwork to be displayed in our offices.
	Director of Communications and Operations	October 2014	Report on pricing for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag to be displayed in our offices
	Director of Communications and Operations	November 2014	Explore and report on merchandising opportunities, such as T-shirts, lanyards, stickers and pins, for distribution to staff and affiliates at major events.
	Indigenous Committee, ACTU Leadership Group	July 2015	Consult with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners on renaming the meeting rooms on level 5, 6 and 7 of the Melbourne office. Conduct an official naming ceremony once names have been decided.



OPPORTUNITIES

We want to have a positive impact on reconciliation both internally, through our organisational policies and processes; and externally, by acting as a leader and role model for our affiliates and others in the union movement. As the peak body for the union movement, we have a responsibility and a desire to take action around reconciliation. By working in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the labour movement, we hope to create opportunities for mutual understanding and deeper participation.

“Our elders taught us to join a union and fight for our rights, and now it’s our responsibility to pass that on to the next generation. Reconciliation is accepting and understanding the past, then moving forward together.”

Lara Watson

Birri Gubba Nation

ETU Community Campaigns Organiser

“The biggest influence on me was my grandmother’s brother, Vincent Lingiari, who started the Wave Hill walk out. That’s the reason why I got involved in the union, because where I come from, if we didn’t have the union we’d have nothing. I joined the union to fight for a better wage, better working conditions, and a better life.”

Vincent Carter

Guniandi / Guja man

ASU WA Member



Opportunities: Our Focus

Our focus is on ensuring that the ACTU invests in opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with a particular focus on creating meaningful employment opportunities

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
Investigate opportunities within the ACTU to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment opportunities.	Director of Policy and Industrial Team, Indigenous Officer, RAP Project Officer	August 2014	Provide mentoring opportunities for the successful PM&C Indigenous Cadet.
	RAP Project Officer, Indigenous Officer	September 2014	Review HR procedures and policies to remove barriers to participation and ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and affiliates are consulted on recruitment, retention and promotion strategies.
	Indigenous Officer, HR and Executive Support Officer	December 2014	Evaluate success of the PM&C Indigenous Cadetship Program.
	Director of Communications and Operations, HR and Executive Support Officer	April 2015	Ensure a policy is in place to advertise all vacancies in Indigenous media.
	Director of Communications and Operations	July 2015	Review procurement policies barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are able to be addressed.
Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within the ACTU.	Director of Communications and Operations	August 2014	Investigate becoming a member of Supply Nation or partnering with the local Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.
	Director of Communications and Operations, Indigenous Officer	September 2014	Educate staff about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
	Director of Communications and Operations	April 2015	Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.
Establish mentoring and work experience opportunities for Indigenous young people	RAP Project Officer, Indigenous Officer	June 2015	Investigate and report on opportunities for senior staff, directors and/or officers to become mentors through the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) and/or the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) or similar organisation.

“Reconciliation, or conciliation, is important because we’re trying to bridge the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians. The relationship has come a long way since colonisation, but there’s still a long way to go. We are two groups of people working together as one to decide the country’s future. This healing process will do wonders for our country.”

Ben Gertz

Gugubadhun Nation

CPSU Member



TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
The RAP Working Group (RWG) continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	RAP Working Group	July 2014	Sign off and launch of the RAP.
Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.	RAP Project Officer	November 2014	Re-convene the RAP Working Group to evaluate the RAP's progress to date and make revisions where required.
Report back to internal stakeholders on our progress and seek feedback on additional opportunities or challenges	RAP Working Group	November 2014, March 2015, July 2015	Report back to Executive, ACTU Staff and the ACTU Indigenous Committee at least three times per year
Review and refresh the RAP	RAP Project Officer	July 2015	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.



FIND OUT MORE

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D No: 90/2014