



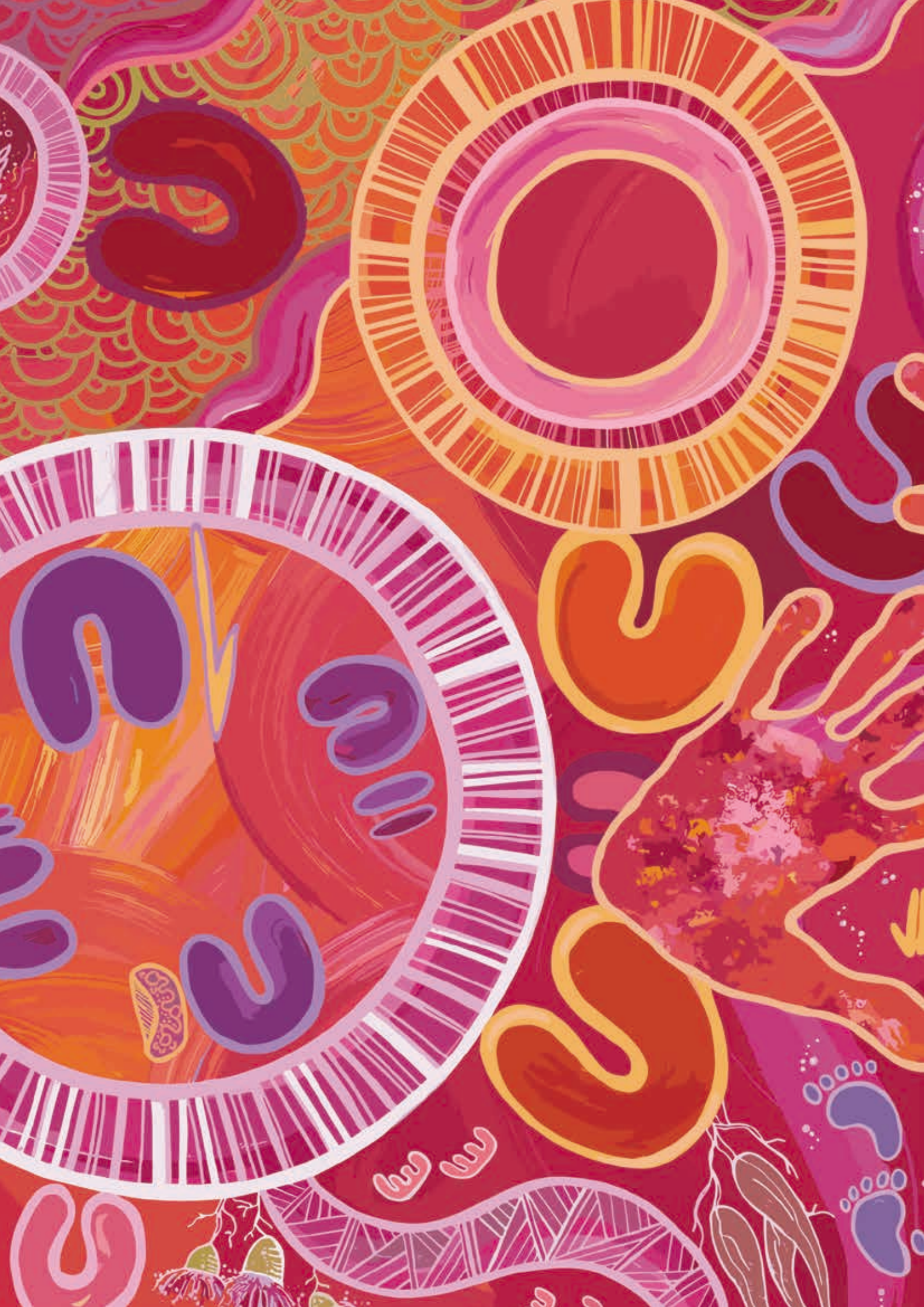
Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



# DFAT STRETCH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

AUGUST 2024–AUGUST 2027





## **PUBLICATION INFORMATION**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) acknowledges Australia's First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise the ongoing custodianship of land, sea and sky and the perpetual spiritual connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold with Country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to First Nations people throughout Australia.

## Advice to Readers

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document contains images of people who have died.



Brooke Rigney-Lively

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Brooke Rigney, or Rigney-Lively, is a proud Ngarrindjeri and Kurna woman.

She is a mother – ninkawi – a musician, an artist, and passionate advocate for young people and community.

'Growing up I was lucky enough to be surrounded by musicians, my language, art and culture through my father and various artists and musicians in our family. They were such strong examples of expressing culture and healing through those art forms. My art uses elements of Ngarrindjeri art techniques and is influenced by my Uncles, who shared their art with family, as well as my sisters in community who have taken the time to sit with and guide me.

I paint my own stories, experiences and perspectives as a Ngarrindjeri and Kurna woman living on Kurna Yerta. Many of my pieces depict or represent my personal journey, family and connection to our country and waters.' (Brooke Rigney-Lively)



## A JOURNEY OF COMMITMENT

© Brooke Rigney-Lively (2024)

This artwork commissioned for DFAT's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan illuminates the importance of meeting, listening and working together.

The meeting places represent communities of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, listening and learning.

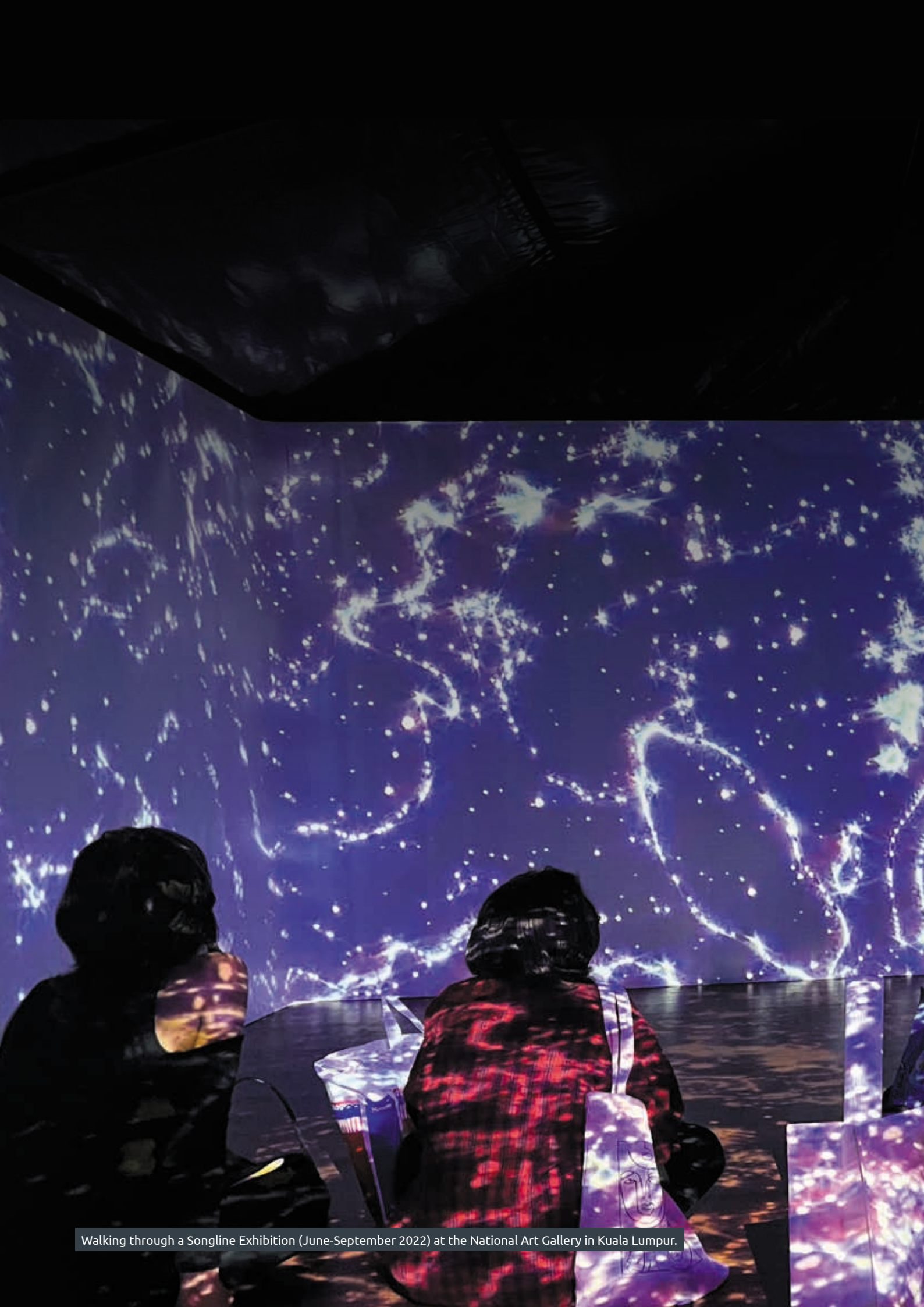
The two smoking ceremonies symbolise the acknowledgment that we are on unceded Aboriginal traditional lands and represent the invitation to come and sit together to discuss the way forward. To put Aboriginal voices in the centre and listen and learn.

The hands in the centre represent DFAT's commitment to its Reconciliation Action Plan and our commitment to shared responsibility and accountability.

The footsteps that cut through the middle are the journey we take when we make this commitment to creating a better future together.

We walk along this journey together as Australians.

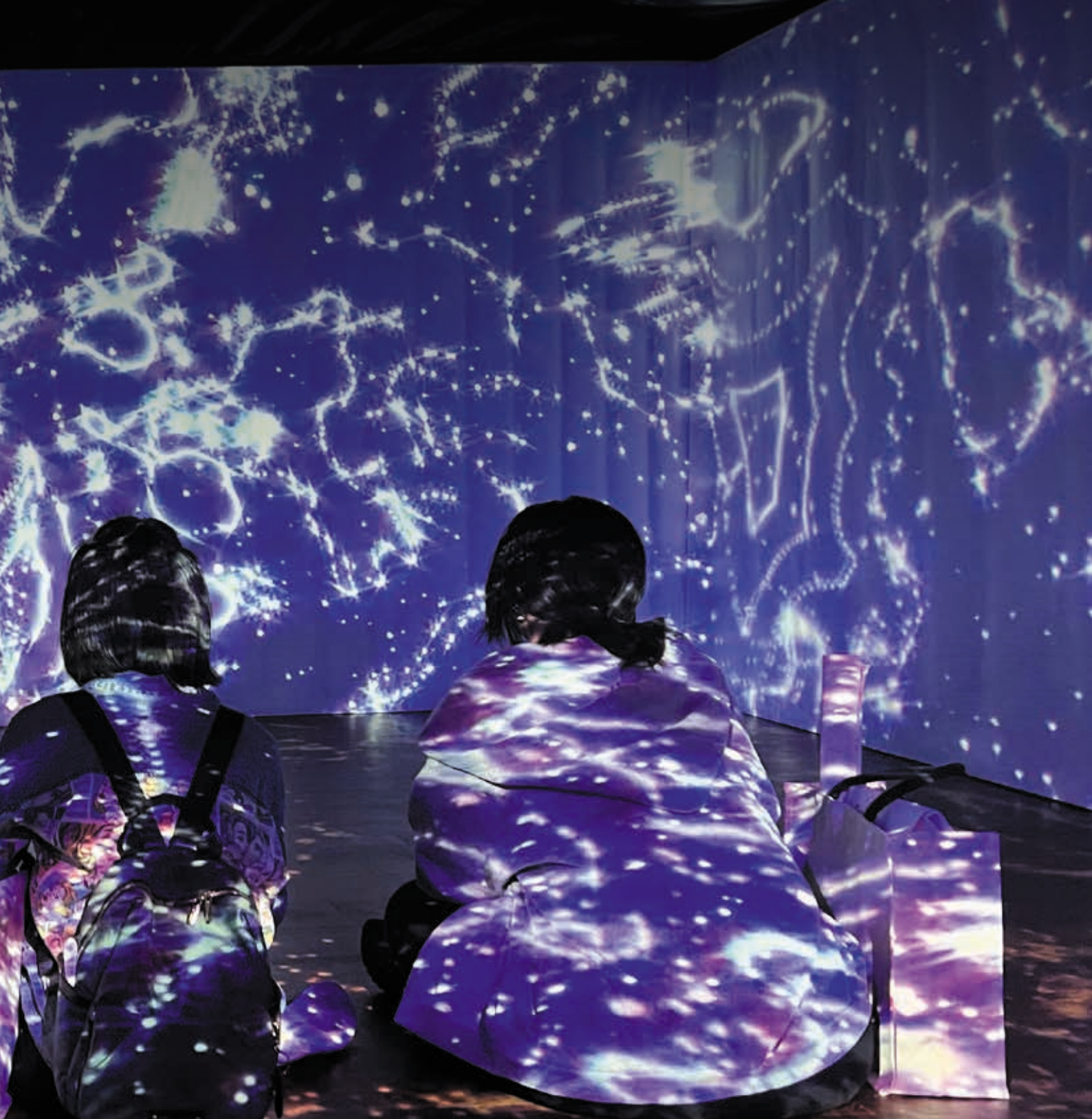




Walking through a Songline Exhibition (June-September 2022) at the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



I am pleased to introduce DFAT's new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which reflects DFAT's commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Nations peoples of Australia.

We acknowledge the histories and cultures of First Nations peoples and seek to promote understanding and respect for their rights and aspirations.

This new RAP aims to 'stretch' each of us to take ambitious action to progress reconciliation. Stretching means we extend ourselves in implementing all dimensions of reconciliation. Reconciliation Australia identifies these dimensions as positive race relations based on respect; equality and equity to close the gap in life outcomes; institutional integrity to actively support reconciliation; unity through a shared national identity; and historical acceptance through truth, justice and healing.

Our previous RAP saw many reconciliation actions embedded within DFAT. Over one thousand five hundred staff, including our outgoing Heads of Mission and Heads of Post, participated in training to understand Australia's history and the experiences of First Nations peoples. We became more confident

in cultural protocols and in engaging First Nations communities. Teams began to foster the talent of First Nations staff and create tangible career opportunities. Several areas made reconciliation part of business as usual, such as DFAT's H.V. Evatt Library through its annual National Reconciliation Week book swap. Jawun alumni brought their knowledge back from communities to improve cultural awareness. We invested in First Nations businesses.

Led by our Ambassador for First Nations People and Office of First Nations International Engagement, we continued expanding engagement with First Nations communities across Australia and connecting globally to advance human rights, development, trade and people-to-people connections. These efforts trace back over four decades to the initiatives of First Nations staff who advocated for a greater role for First Nations diplomats.

We have a strong foundation to build on, but more to do. We are seeing a growing appreciation that reconciliation can't be embedded by the efforts of one team or just by those staff who come forward to join our reconciliation working group. It begins with each of us making a commitment and requires contributions from all areas across our organisation.

DFAT is uniquely placed to elevate First Nations voices, achievements and cultures through our international engagement and the global network of over 120 posts we lead and manage on behalf of the government and all Australians. Through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, DFAT is developing a First Nations' approach to foreign policy and progressing efforts to be culturally safe and responsive to the needs of First Nations peoples. Our RAP is a crucial part of this.

I thank everyone involved in developing this RAP, including the previous and current Working Groups and the Inclusion and Diversity Policy Section. I thank the artist Brooke Rigney-Lively, the designers at Ochre Dawn, and Karen Mundine, CEO and Joelle Lowe, Program Manager, at Reconciliation Australia, for your support and partnership.

I especially thank First Nations staff and the Indigenous Employees Network for their input.

I ask all staff to put the spirit of this Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan into action in our workplaces.

**Jan Adams AO PSM**  
Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST NATIONS CHAMPION



As DFAT's First Nations Champion, I am proud to be a part of the launch of DFAT's Stretch RAP 2024-2027 and to support the department's ongoing commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples.



Every one of us has a role to play to put these words and commitments about reconciliation into actions and tangible improvements in our workplace. Reconciliation benefits everyone because it aims to achieve an equality between Australia's First Nations people and those who came after. It is a journey that requires the participation and leadership of every individual, team, and part of the organisation. It involves acknowledging and respecting the histories, cultures, contributions and rights of First Nations peoples and working towards greater understanding, equity and justice.

My commitment to DFAT is to model behaviours consistent with reconciliation and the three pillars upon which our RAP is based:

- building and maintaining strong relationships
- strengthening our respect and cultural integrity
- creating opportunities for First Nations peoples.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we have a responsibility to create a workplace where First Nations staff feel valued, respected, and empowered, and where their cultural identity and heritage is recognised and celebrated.

All of us could consider one thing we could do to advance DFAT's reconciliation agenda. We could read a book by a First Nations author or undertake a training, such as the AIATSIS Core Cultural eLearning and Understanding Indigenous Australia courses on Lumi. We could speak to a First Nations colleague to understand their perspective on opportunities and challenges facing First Nations communities. We could propose ways for policies and programs administered by our work unit to advance the social and economic interests of First Nations Australians.

Let's all choose to do one thing this year that takes a step forward on the journey of reconciliation. Together we will build a more inclusive, respectful and equitable Australia.

**George Mina**  
First Nations Champion and Deputy Secretary Trade and Investment Group

# MESSAGE FROM THE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES NETWORK



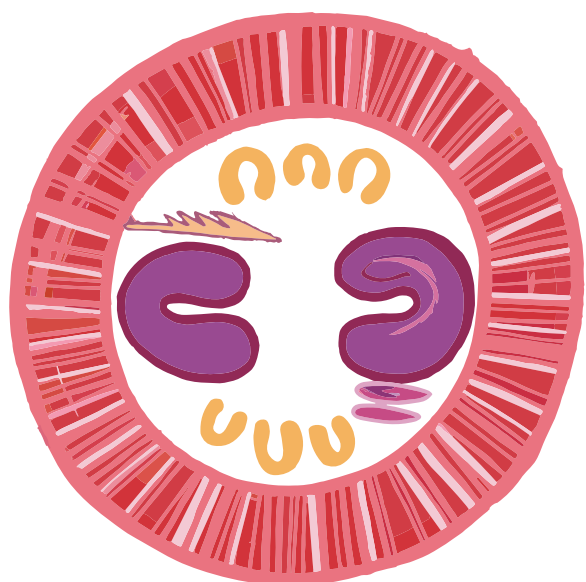
We are the Indigenous Employee Network (IEN). We represent the department's First Nations staff and their interests. We were one of the first staff-led networks established in DFAT. We lead with a culture-first approach to drive reconciliation, cultural capability, professional development and enhanced outcomes for DFAT.

We are a diverse group. We represent the many vibrant First Nations cultures and language groups from across Australia. Each of us has a unique story and connection to land, sea and sky. Our perspectives enrich DFAT's culture and ways of doing business. We are a driving force for change towards diversity and inclusion.

We proudly promote our cultures, skills, and knowledge. We foster our upcoming talent. And we hold space for difficult conversations that counter unconscious bias and deficit-based views of First Nations peoples.

We are a standing member of the DFAT RAP Working Group. We welcome DFAT's fifth RAP (third Stretch RAP). We extend our appreciation to all colleagues who participated in the process to deliver this document, and to all colleagues who hold space for First Nations peoples and First Nations perspectives on a daily basis.

We call on the department to take bold steps to implement this Stretch RAP in full, and for all areas to participate meaningfully in building opportunities for First Nations staff and communities. We look forward to continuing to walk this path of reconciliation with DFAT over the coming years.



# MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate DFAT on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its fifth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its third Stretch RAP.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, a RAP program provides organisations with a framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement. The reach and impact of the RAP network continues to grow with more than five million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

DFAT has a mandate to advance Australia's interests and standing on the international stage. As a consequence, the department occupies a unique position in its ability to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories as the heart of Australia's national identity, as well in facilitating beneficial connections and relationships with the world's Indigenous peoples.

DFAT's previous RAPs reveal its grasp of the special position it holds. Initiatives such as its Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda, as well as the Pacific Indigenous Engagement Plan, demonstrate DFAT's belief and confidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives garner innovative results and connections overseas. After all, First Nations peoples have been cultivating thriving and productive cross-cultural relationships for over 60,000 years – we have a lot to share.

Likewise, DFAT's appointment of the inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People, Justin Mohamed, to lead the new Office of First Nations International Engagement, highlights the department's considered integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership into its ranks.

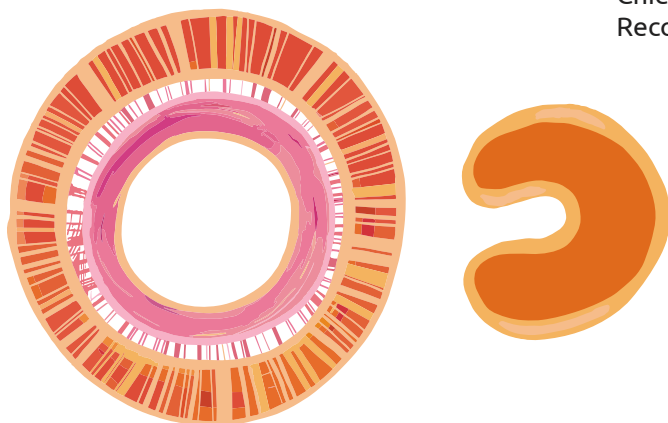
With its third Stretch RAP, DFAT is at the stage where it has tested and trialled many different approaches to reconciliation; and has formed strong foundations from which to continue to challenge itself and its commitments.

New initiatives show the department building on its focus of bringing First Nations knowledges and perspectives to the front of its diplomacy. DFAT will develop a First Nations foreign policy approach, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interests are deeply embedded in Australia's foreign trade and development policies and programs.

Produced in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this policy approach will continue DFAT's trajectory of making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are helping to shape Australia's international engagements.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend DFAT on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

DFAT's vision is for a future where First Nations peoples – representing the diversity of nations, cultures, languages and peoples across Australia – are recognised, respected and included across our workplaces and through our Australian and international engagements. We will strive for First Nations cultures and histories to be celebrated as a vital part of Australia's national identity on the world stage.

Achieving reconciliation is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic priority for Australia's foreign policy. As the oldest continuous culture on the planet and Australia's first diplomats and traders, First Nations peoples have played and continue to play a vital role in shaping Australia. The unique perspectives, knowledge and insights of First Nations people support Australia's engagement with the world.

We strive for a future where respectful relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations Australians are strengthened, with mutual understanding and trust built on genuine engagement, consultation and partnership. We recognise that such relationships are essential to promote Australia's values and interests, and for enhancing our standing as a responsible and respected member of the international community.

We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations peoples, communities, and organisations to achieve these goals. This begins with listening closely to and acting on the advice and guidance of First Nations colleagues and communities. Achieving reconciliation is a long-term journey and requires commitment, leadership, and collaboration.



The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Honolulu, Hawaii in June, 2024.



NAIDOC Week Smoking Ceremony at the RG Casey Building, Canberra in 2022.

# OUR BUSINESS

DFAT takes the lead on the Government's external affairs and for ensuring a coherent, consistent and collaborative whole-of-government approach to the conduct of Australia's international relations.

Our purpose is to make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous, to provide timely and responsive consular and passport services, and to ensure a secure Australian Government presence overseas. We do this in a challenging and complex international environment, requiring creative and deliberate statecraft to achieve our objectives. We lead Australia's diplomatic efforts in our region to foster peace, stability and prosperity.

The department will continue to lead efforts across government, in partnership with business and the wider community, to pursue Australia's international objectives. We will achieve this through excellence in public policy, program and service delivery, and constructive relationships with international partners. This requires effective and timely leadership of the Australian Government presence overseas, working across portfolios to promote an effective, secure and coordinated approach to Australia's overseas representation.

The department's priorities for 2024-25 include:

- advancing Australia's diplomatic efforts to support favourable foreign, trade and investment policy outcomes for Australia, and supporting the Government to prosecute their foreign and trade policy priorities
- enhancing Australia's standing across the Indo-Pacific through targeted public diplomacy
- delivering an international development program that is effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of our partners
- advocating with multilateral development institutions and international organisations to reflect Australian interests and values when addressing global challenges
- meeting Australia's treaty obligations under Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency
- continuing to support the delivery of efficient consular and passport services to Australians and leading the Australian Government Crisis Framework
- providing appropriate protection to Australian Government staff, information and assets
- delivering an overseas property estate that is effectively managed, safe and secure strengthening the number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability.

## Relevance of reconciliation

As an organisation with a significant Australian footprint and global reach, DFAT recognises the importance of reconciliation with First Nations peoples and the need to build respectful relationships and partnerships with First Nations communities.

We recognise the valuable perspectives and contributions that First Nations staff bring to our organisation, and we are committed to creating a culturally safe and inclusive workplace for all staff.

As of 30 March 2024, DFAT had 4801 ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees, including 981 on long-term overseas postings. 119 employees (2.5 percent) identify as First Nations people, with 41 percent of employees having responded to this question in our HR database. DFAT is committed to increasing employment opportunities for First Nations people, principally through our [Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy – Embracing Diversity for Global Influence](#).



Artist Mi-kaisha performed a series of songs at the Secretary's Reception Event for NAIDOC Week 2024.

# OUR RAP

DFAT's fifth RAP builds upon the department's previous Stretch RAP and outlines our goals, strategies, and actions to support reconciliation and create opportunities for First Nations people. This RAP was developed through an extensive consultation phase and focused on identifying embedded actions and how to create stronger accountability and more streamlined and consistent reporting. DFAT will work to ensure strong ownership of RAP deliverables across all areas of the department.

## Key objectives include:

### Relationships:

- Improve relationships and draw on the knowledge of First Nations peoples so their voices, perspectives and knowledge shape Australia's foreign policy, trade and development efforts.

### Respect:

- Increase understanding and recognition of First Nations cultures through cultural awareness training and through policy and program design.

### Opportunities:

- Increase First Nations uptake of trade and investment opportunities.

Our RAP is a living document. The RAP Working Group will regularly review the RAP and its governance structures to ensure we are making progress towards our reconciliation goals.

## First Nations policies in DFAT

The department has a range of policies and approaches that complement our RAP relating to how we work with First Nations people and communities.

### First Nations employment

The department implements relevant actions and initiatives from the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2020-2024 to increase First Nations employment, through the DFAT Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy – Embracing Diversity for Global Influence. The Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy will also adopt any future employment targets and actions agreed for the Australian Public Service beyond 2024.

### First Nations foreign policy

The Office of First Nations International Engagement (OFNE), led by the Ambassador for First Nations People, will develop a First Nations foreign policy approach. OFNE works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to embed First Nations perspectives, experiences and interests into Australia's foreign, trade and development policies and programs.

## First Nations public diplomacy

DFAT's First Nations public diplomacy program promotes the excellence and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, expertise, and innovation with international audiences, through our overseas network. Our public diplomacy program aims to deliver tangible socio-economic benefits for First Nations Australians under Closing the Gap, while empowering First Nations Australians to participate in, and benefit from Australia's engagement with the world.

## Pacific Indigenous Engagement Plan

This Plan continues to guide Australia's efforts to support deeper and more direct engagement between First Nations Australians and Pacific Islander peoples, by embedding First Nations perspectives in the strategic and diplomatic work of the Office of the Pacific and DFAT's network of Pacific posts.

## Indigenous Procurement Policy

The primary purpose of the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) is to stimulate First Nations entrepreneurship, business and economic development, providing First Nations Australians with more opportunities to participate in the economy. DFAT is committed to playing our part in strengthening the First Nations business sector and has continually exceeded all targets since the IPP was introduced.

## Closing the Gap

### Priority Reform 3 Transforming Government Organisations

DFAT plays a formal role in the 2023 National Implementation Plan on Closing the Gap through embedding First Nations perspectives, experiences and interests into Australia's foreign policy. The Ambassador for First Nations People represents DFAT on the Joint Council on Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group. The Ambassador is leading engagement with First Nations communities to inform development of a First Nations approach to foreign policy.

To support achievement of the Closing the Gap outcomes and priority reforms, DFAT will develop a Closing the Gap Action Plan. The Plan will reflect DFAT's overarching contribution to Closing the Gap, complementing this RAP.





Indigenous Employee Network member Sarah Doyle at the NAIDOC Week 2024 Flag Raising and Smoking Ceremony, at the RG Casey Building, Canberra.

# RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

## 1982:

- Ross 'Jirra' Moore and Stephen Hagan First Nations diplomats, meet with Minister for Foreign Affairs Tony Street and Senator Neville Bonner.

## 1990:

- DFAT's IEN is established (approximate).

## 1997:

- Indigenous Taskforce formed.

## 2000:

- Indigenous Taskforce reinvigorated.

## 2004:

- Suzanne Wilson-Uilelea becomes the first Indigenous Australian to be appointed as Head of the Torres Strait Treaty Liaison Office on Thursday Island.

## 2011:

- DFAT's first RAP Working Group established.
- DFAT's first RAP (2011-12) launched.

## 2012:

- DFAT's first Jawun secondees are appointed; Elizabeth Day, Matthew Clark and Helen Horsington. The program has grown to 12 secondees per year and Executive Visits, typically by the incumbent Indigenous Champion.
- DFAT's second RAP (2011-2015) launched.

## 2013:

- Damien Miller becomes the first Indigenous Australian to head an Australian diplomatic mission as Ambassador to Denmark, Iceland and Norway.

## 2015:

- DFAT introduces the Indigenous Procurement Policy.
- Julie-Ann Guivarra becomes DFAT's first Indigenous Australian SES officer.
- Launch of DFAT's Indigenous People Strategy.

## 2016:

- DFAT's third RAP (2016-19) launched as a Stretch RAP.

## 2017

- Reconciliation Space launched in the RG Casey Building to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, the 25th anniversary of the historic Mabo decision, and the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## 2018:

- DFAT begins to promote Indigenous business participation in the aid program.
- Julie-Ann Guivarra becomes the first Indigenous Australian woman to serve as an Australian ambassador, serving as Ambassador to Spain.
- Inaugural Secretary's Award for Reconciliation.
- The Diplomatic Academy introduces Understanding Indigenous Australia (UIA) in-person course.

## 2019:

- DFAT's fourth RAP (2019-2022) launched as a Stretch RAP (DFAT's second Stretch RAP)
- DFAT undertakes a wide-ranging program to celebrate the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages.

## 2020:

- DFAT's Public Diplomacy Branch delivers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement plan.
- DFAT strengthens the ambitions and implementation of its Indigenous Procurement Policy.

## 2021:

- DFAT releases the Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda, to elevate indigenous issues in the work of the foreign affairs and trade portfolio.
- Office of the Pacific releases the Pacific Indigenous Engagement Plan (2021-2023) to support deeper and more direct engagement between Indigenous Australians and Pacific Islander people, and to embed Indigenous perspectives in the strategic and diplomatic work of the Office of the Pacific.
- The Ngannawal Language and Culture Workshop was established.

## 2022:

- Indigenous Leadership@DFAT launched to implement the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024.
- DFAT's first Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner scholar, Kombumerri woman Emily Pugin, graduated with a Master of Public Policy.
- First Nations Taskforce established in Multilateral Policy Division.

## 2023:

- DFAT committed under the 2023 National Implementation Plan on Closing the Gap to embed First Nations perspectives, experiences and interests into Australia's foreign policy and formally joined the whole-of-government Closing the Gap Working Group.
- DFAT's Trade and Investment Group establishes a First Nations Trade Unit to coordinate and support trade and investment opportunities for the First Nations business sector.
- Justin Mohamed appointed Australia's inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People to lead a new Office of First Nations International Engagement.

## 2024

- DFAT develops its inaugural Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy, including to strengthen First Nations employment and career progression.
- First meeting of the First Nations Deliberative Forum.
- Newly commissioned artwork by Brooke Rigney-Lively installed in Reconciliation Space.



Stephen Hagan (Colombo) and Ross 'Jirra' Moore (Geneva) meeting Foreign Minister Tony Street and Senator Neville Bonner at Parliament House, Canberra, October 1982 on being announced as Australia's first Aboriginal diplomats [Stephen Hagan, Hagan Consultancy].

# OUR RAP WORKING GROUP

The RAP Working Group (RWG) comprises employees from across the department, First Nations and non-First Nations people, including those who expressed interest and those with responsibility for implementation. The RWG aims to include representatives from all DFAT groups and has sustained this during the RAP development phase.

First Nations people are represented on the RWG, with members of the Indigenous Employee Network (IEN) represented in each sub-group. The IEN was included in the consultation phase. First Nations staff and non-First Nations staff worked in partnership during the development phase of this RAP.

The RWG was led by Senior Executive Service (SES) Co-Chairs Megan Jones and Anthony Aspden over 2022-2023, and Sarah Roberts and Mark Tattersall in 2024. Members during the consultation phase have included:

## Relationships Pillar

Anita Dwyer  
Claire Birks  
Emi Tagi  
Emma Phillips  
Nicholas Mezo  
Suzanne Wilson-Uilelea  
Richard Neumann

## Respect Pillar

Troy Fletcher  
Katina Clarke  
Jill Collins  
Geraldine Tyson  
Daniella Foley  
James Turner  
Michael Coffey

## Opportunities Pillar

Tim Stapleton  
Angus Acton-Cavanough  
Ingrid Baader-Irwin  
Lucy Buddle  
Sara Moriarty  
Talitha Roberts  
William Russell  
Alicia McAllister

### Positions included by default:

- First Nations Champion
- IEN Coordinator

The RAP was initiated and is coordinated by DFAT's Inclusion and Diversity Policy Section.



NAIDOC Week Reception held in the RG Casey Building, Canberra on 5 July 2023, Musician Mitch Tambo.

# STAFF PROFILES

## Genna Lehman, Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner PhD Scholar

I am honoured to be the department's first Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner PhD scholar. I am excited to research geoeconomics, an emerging field of study that assesses the implications of the increasing intersection of foreign, security and economic policy. The program has provided me with the opportunity to work with world-class academics, practitioners and commentators on geoeconomic challenges that are critically shaping the international environment in which Australia operates. As a Pat Turner scholar, I have forged new friendships and a strong network across the APS and academia that will serve me throughout my career.

As I submitted my PhD application to the ANU, I reflected on the opportunities that have paved the way for me to make it to this point. For one, I was fortunate to attend university. However, many young Indigenous people do not have the opportunity to access a university education. I am pleased that the APS will continue to offer multiple entry pathways and opportunities to upskill within the workplace. The Pat Turner scholarship program is one of the core ways through which the department supports Indigenous staff to enhance their leadership skills and develops crucial capabilities necessary for Australia's future diplomacy.

The RAP is an important way through which the department and its Indigenous employees work together to achieve a strong, diverse workplace that respects and supports First Nations peoples. I look forward to working with the department to achieve its RAP targets.

## Suzanne Wilson-Uilelea, Director, Northern Territory Office



I am a proud Wiradjuri woman from the Riverina region of NSW, with cultural and kinship links back to the Yorta Yorta people of Northern Victoria. I grew up on country and it is the diversity of that place, my place, that gives me strength.

I was the first person in my extended family to finish high school and attend university. I joined DFAT in 1996 after graduating from the University of New England with a Science Degree, postgraduate education qualifications, and a BA with Honours in French. I also undertook postgraduate studies at Monash University and am an alumnus of the National Security College at ANU. Life with DFAT has given me many opportunities – both overseas and at home. I was the first Indigenous Australian posted as Head of the Torres Strait Treaty Liaison Office, one of the first to serve as Deputy Head of Mission. I have served on the WRC, helped found the Indigenous Task Force, and walked as best I could in both of my worlds – one chosen, one gifted.

It is hard to balance those worlds. No more so than now.

I have spent two thirds of my life away from country – sometimes in places that I could not even see a shadow of my heritage. Canberra is close – it is, almost always, close enough. But, there is no saltbush, no red sand plains in Apia, Suva, Nauru, Thursday Island or Dili; no river redgums, no lazy brown rivers, no cousins or sisters or ancestors; no muliyen (wedge tailed eagle) to guide and protect me. Those are the things I must carry with me on my journey. The things that keep me grounded and the things that are mine alone to share.

I have been a part of every reconciliation journey that DFAT has taken since 1996. I have walked alongside every policy we have put in place to support First Nations recruitment, retention, and representation. I have served on every RAP working group, shaped policy, tried to balance what should be and what can be. Our RAP is a contract with all First Nations Australians, and I hope that all of us, whatever our heritage, whatever our origin, whatever our connection to country, can continue to walk together to honour both the spirit and the letter of it.

Yindyamarra (Respect).



## Justin Mohamed – Ambassador for First Nations People

I am a Gooreng Gooreng man from Bundaberg in Queensland and Australia's inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People.

I have a strong connection to community having worked for decades in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, with a focus on reconciliation and social justice.

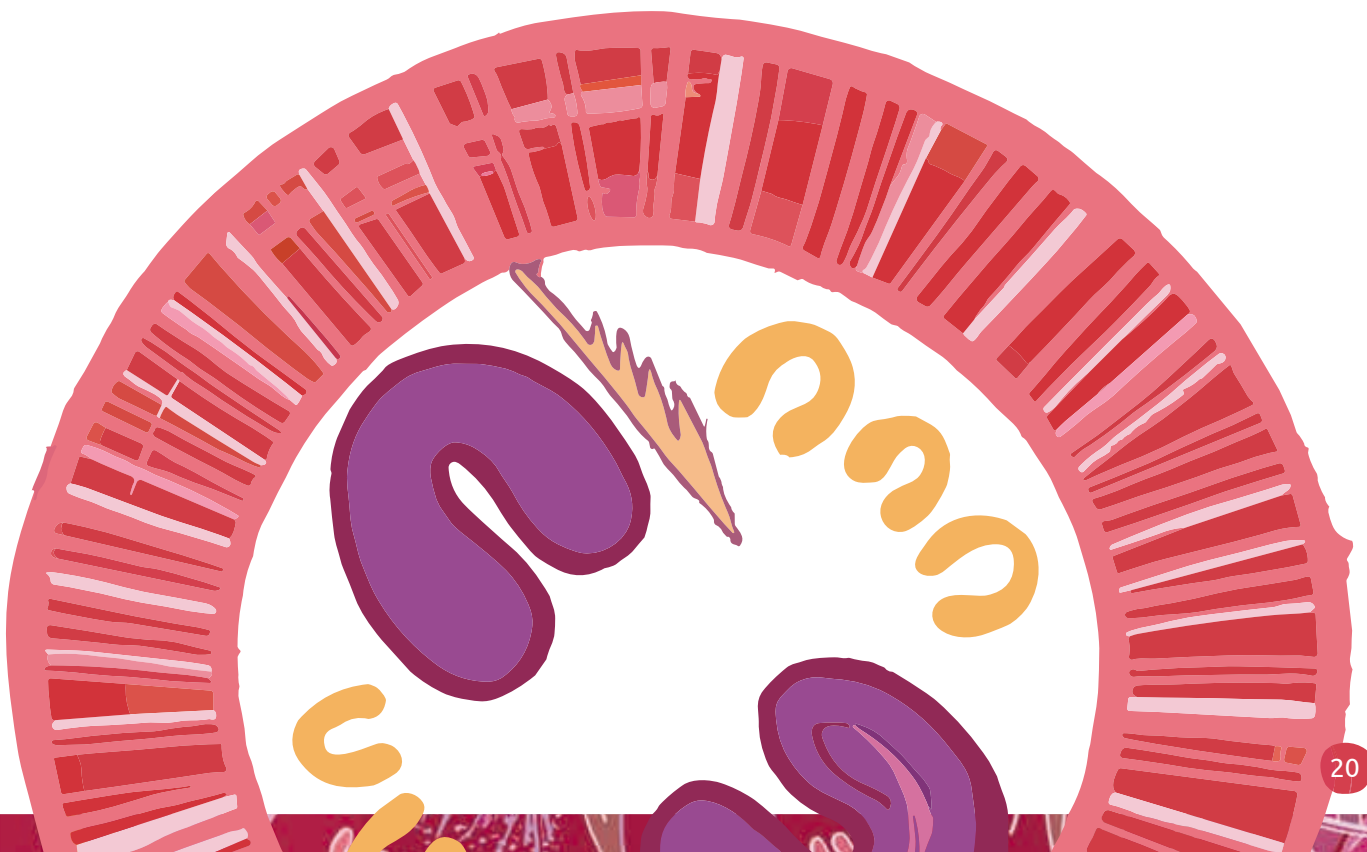
From 2014 to 2017, I was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Reconciliation Australia where I advocated strongly for reconciliation to become everybody's responsibility.

At the time I was CEO, RAP's were predominantly driven by corporate Australia, with very few governments adopting this important practice.

Governments have an important role to play in reconciling the past and present injustices faced by First Nations Australians.

Following advocacy while I was CEO at Reconciliation Australia, RAPs now form an integral part of the Australian Public Service's work to improve policy making and drive inclusive reconciliation.

The role of Ambassador for First Nations People is only one part of this endeavour. As a department, we must all walk together to embed the principles of reconciliation in all of the work that we do.





# RELATIONSHIPS

## **Our commitment**

Elevating First Nations perspectives will support DFAT's mission to make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous, including by strengthening Australia's connections across the world and in our region. Through our diplomatic network and state and territory offices, DFAT will deepen our relationships with Australia's First Nations peoples, drawing on their knowledge and incorporating their perspectives into Australia's foreign trade and development policies and programs.



\* Denotes deliverables that continue embedded practices.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Build relationships by celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	First Nations Champion, SES and directors (including RWG pillar co-leads) drive messaging to raise awareness and understanding among staff about NRW by circulation of guidance and materials prior to and during NRW.	27 May – 3 June, annually	All SES, PPD and RWG
	Circulate information about available events within and outside of DFAT and encourage all employees (including all SES and directors) to commit to joining at least one NRW event and RWG members to participate in at least two external events.*	27 May – 3 June, annually	PPD and RWG
	Provide opportunities for business areas and staff networks to deliver NRW events.	27 May – 3 June, annually	PPD and RWG
Promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Implement strategies to support First Nations employees to drive reconciliation outcomes. This includes collaboration and efforts through the IEN and listening sessions annually between 6 SES and 6 employees ('6+6').*	Report June annually	PPD
	Develop internal tools to communicate RAP initiatives and outcomes, and practical tools for personal and business area reconciliation actions.*	June 2024	RWG and PPD
	Implement a communications plan to promote uptake of RAP initiatives and actions.*	June 2024	RWG and PPD
	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations, including peer APS agencies, to implement ways to jointly advance reconciliation.*	June 2024	RWG and PPD
	Encourage divisions, posts and state and territory offices to develop and launch their own RAP Implementation Plan to deliver RAP responsibilities and publish this in a prominent location within their work space.	Report June annually	All Divisions, Posts and STOs
	DFAT to attend at least 2 quarterly RAP Leadership gatherings per year.	Report June annually	PPD
	Promote the value of Australia's First Nations approach to foreign policy and advocate First Nations excellence in external communication.	Report June annually	OFNE, SGD and FSD
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Maintain strong anti-discrimination policies including mandatory eLearning, and reviewing Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy in work areas following APS Census results.*	Report June annually	PPD and all SES
	Track and report internally on cases of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and identify actions to address issues.	Report June annually	PPD and all SES
	Promote opportunities for staff to undertake broader inclusion and diversity training.*	Report June annually	PPD and DAC
	Join and promote anti-discrimination initiatives to help eliminate racism and other discriminatory behaviours.	Report June annually	PPD
	Identify and implement follow-up actions to harassment and bullying reported through the APS Census through the annual Census action plan.	Report June annually	PPD and all SES
	Engage in conversations with First Nations Leaders about key issues pertaining to racism, demonstrating to the rest of the department that our leadership prioritise this work.	Report June annually	All SES and Directors
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations Australians.	Strengthen partnerships with First Nations Australian stakeholders, including through the development and implementation of a First Nations approach to foreign policy.	Report June annually	OFNE, All Divisions, Posts and STOs
	Elevate the perspectives of First Nations Australians in multilateral forums with likeminded partners, and advance Indigenous rights globally.	Report June annually	MPD

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations Australians.	Through the Australian Volunteers Program's Indigenous Pathways, connect First Nations people and organisations with Pacific organisations to collaborate on mutually beneficial and shared priorities and to strengthen relationships.	Report June annually	HPD
	Facilitate exchange on traditional knowledge in relation to climate change adaptation and advocacy between First Nations Australians and Pacific stakeholders, through the Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific, Phase 3.	Report June annually	PDD
	Work closely with the Torres Strait Regional Authority and engage on a continuing basis with Torres Strait people on matters of relevance to the Torres Strait Treaty.*	Report June annually	TSTLO
Elevate First Nations perspectives across the work we do.	Embed First Nations perspectives in Australia's international climate diplomacy including through ongoing collaboration between the Ambassadors for Climate Change and First Nations and participation in relevant UNFCCC Indigenous Peoples' processes.	Report June annually	CSD
	Conduct authentic First Nations diplomacy in the Pacific that involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, cultural exchange, and inclusion of First Nations' perspectives in policy discussions.	Report June annually	PDD
Support partners and suppliers on their reconciliation journey.	Build relationships between First Nations businesses and DFAT aid contracting partners through relevant DFAT divisions and posts.	August 2024, 2025, 2026	PRD
	Continue to encourage implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans at Supplier Relationship Meetings.	Report June annually	PRD
	Hold a dialogue with DFAT's NGO partners on their work with First Nations communities to promote awareness of community reconciliation efforts.	By June 2024, 2025, 2026	DPD



Reconciliation Week 2022 - Secretary's Awards ceremony in the atrium, RG Casey Building.



# RESPECT

## **Our commitment**

DFAT respects Australia's First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights. We will expand our understanding and knowledge of First Nations' cultures, customs and traditions and build cultural proficiency. We will consult with First Nations peoples when promoting engagement with their cultures, knowledge, expertise and traditions and support and respect their rights in our work. We will build respectful relationships with First Nations staff, stakeholders and communities.

\* Denotes deliverables that continue embedded practices.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Australia's First Nations' cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Drive enrolment in high-quality cultural capability learning opportunities with a target in the reporting period of 10% of DFAT's APS employees including through formal courses and online learning, secondments, language and culture classes and executive visits.*	Report June annually	CTF (DAC) and STOs
	Maintain First Nations advisory roles in People Division and Strategic Communications Division.*	Report June annually	PPD and SGD
	Publish an annual Secretary's Reading Pack on issues relating to First Nations Australians and relationships with First Nations peoples globally.*	Report June annually	SGD (PLB)
	Promote local opportunities for STO employees to participate in local First Nations language and cultural classes.	Report June annually	STOs
	Include First Nations cultural capability learning and development in all performance agreements.	March 2024, 2025, 2026	PPD
	Include a discussion, briefing or cultural element related to First Nations people in future SES timeout and Global Heads of Mission meetings.	Report June annually	First Nations Champion
	Include First Nations Australians' perspectives, experiences and interests in multilateral policy and program design where appropriate.	Annual, report in June	MPD
	Ensure one Special Visits Program includes a First Nations discussion, briefing or cultural element to embed First Nations perspectives (foreign, trade and development) in policy dialogue.	Report June annually	EXD
Demonstrate respect to Australia's First Nations peoples and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way our organisation functions.	Ensure that HOM/HOP guidelines include a First Nations discussion, briefing, training or cultural element to embed First Nations perspectives (foreign, trade and development) and lift capability.	Report June annually	HOM and HOPs
	Raise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at overseas posts on external flagpoles continually where possible and displaying flags permanently in all DFAT offices in Australia and overseas posts.*	Report June annually	HOM, HOPs and DSD
	Promote understanding, appreciation and adoption of cultural protocols including Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.*	Report June annually	EXD, PPD and CTF (DAC)
	Share guidance, including external resources and procurement guidelines, on how to organise a Welcome to Country, make an Acknowledgement of Country, including for virtual meetings across jurisdictions.*	June 2024	SGD
	Include prompts on cultural protocol, such as Acknowledgement of Country, in departmental meeting agenda, speech templates as appropriate.*	Report June annually	EXD
Celebrate and promote Australia's First Nations' cultures internationally.	Update DFAT's Acknowledgement of Country on the DFAT intranet, email signature blocks, website and official social media accounts, as needed, with guidance on preferred language for publications.*	Report June annually	GSD and SGD
	Tour and promote First Nations cultures internationally including exhibitions, performances, businesses and artists across the global network.*	Report June annually	SGD (CDB)
Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design and art at posts overseas and in Australia.	Develop an overseas First Nations public diplomacy toolkit for internal use to ensure First Nations interests are always considered during diplomatic conversations and actions.	June 2024	SGD
	Provide advice on compliance with the Indigenous Art Code to work areas looking to purchase First Nations cultural products* (See <a href="#">Supporters - The Indigenous Art Code   Indigenous Art Code</a> )	Report June annually	SGD
	Display at least one First Nations artwork with relevant information in the public areas of all posts, HOM/HOP residences and STOs.	July 2024 and 2026	HOM/HOP/Post and STOs

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design and art at posts overseas and in Australia.	Where feasible, incorporate elements of First Nations artwork and/or manufacturing in new major projects (overseas and domestically).	July 2024 and 2026	ED OPO
	Provide information across DFAT on how to license or procure First Nations art and design in new or refurbished chancery builds, including furniture from First Nations suppliers.	Report June annually	FND (FPS)
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Celebrate NAIDOC week, including by supporting participation by all staff in events.*	Report June annually	SGD
	In addition to NAIDOC Week activities referenced above, support an annual external NAIDOC Week community event through sponsorship.	Annual, report in August	RAPWG (to identify department lead)
Provide year-round opportunities to learn and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	Host regular Big Picture Forums in consultation with the First Nations Ambassador focused on policy issues relating to Australia's First Nations Peoples.	Report June annually	SGD (PLB) with OFNE
	Provide up-to-date online Issues Briefs for employees to support them when marking First Nations peoples' days/weeks of significance.*	Report June annually	CTF (DAC – DFAT Library)
Promote First Nations cultures to the foreign diplomatic and consular corps in Australia.	Promote local First Nations cultural opportunities with the Diplomatic Corps. This includes having a First Nations element in Diplomatic Corps programs and in programs for international delegations visiting Australia.	Report June annually	Chief of Protocol, STO Directors and host divisions
	Include a cultural First Nations component in protocols for customary Australian gifting to dignitaries/heads of state during international visits.	Report June annually	EXD
	Invite Diplomatic Corps to attend First Nations focused departmental events, where external guests are appropriate.*	Report June annually	All divisions in consultation with PRB
	Facilitate a formal Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony as part of credentials ceremonies.	Report Quarterly in February, May, August, November	Chief of Protocol (subject to Elder availability)



Flag bearers Sophia Bissell, Jasmine Clark and Sarah Doyle at the NAIDOC Week 2024 Flag Raising and Smoking Ceremony, at the RG Casey Building, Canberra.



# OPPORTUNITIES

## **Our commitment**

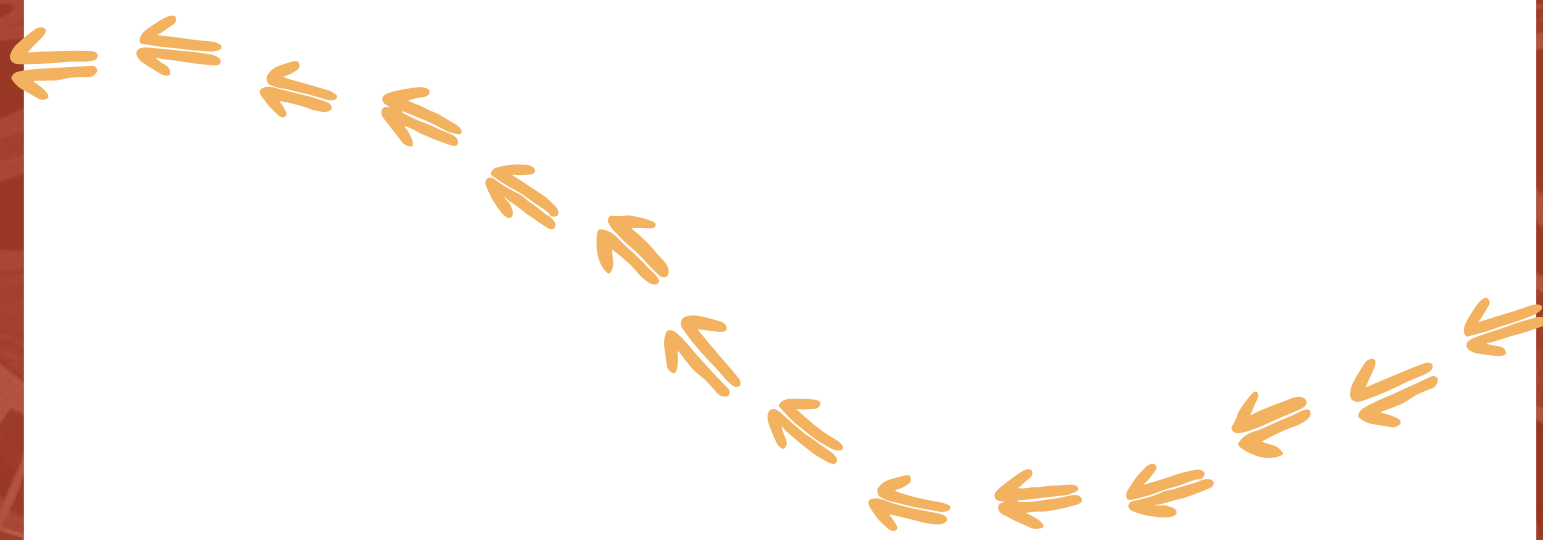
DFAT is committed to supporting programs to close the gap in opportunities available to First Nations peoples. By increasing First Nations Australians' access to employment, grants, procurement and other opportunities, the department will strengthen communities and promote our values internationally.



\* Denotes deliverables that continue embedded practices.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
<p>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and deployment.</p>	<p>Continue efforts to recruit and support careers of First Nations staff to meet APS-wide targets of 3 per cent by 2024 and 5 per cent by 2030 through the Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy.*</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>PPD</p>
	<p>Develop practical guidance for all business areas to enhance First Nations careers in DFAT, in line with the Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy including: creating a culturally safe environment, identified positions, affirmative measures Indigenous recruitment rounds, induction and onboarding, career planning, and educational, skills and professional opportunities to position staff for promotions and overseas postings and short-term assignments/postings.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>PPD</p>
	<p>Consult and seek advice from First Nations staff on strategies, programs and projects that improve recruitment, career development opportunities, and retention outcomes for First Nations staff.*</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>COO, CPO and Chief Security Officer</p>
	<p>Implement the Indigenous Leadership@DFAT strategy through 2024.*</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>PPD</p>
	<p>Develop the next phase of First Nations workforce initiatives through the Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>PPD</p>
<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<p>Deliver the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) implementation strategy.*</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>FND (FPS)</p>
	<p>Strive to meet the current IPP target of three per cent of contracts for goods and services for relevant expenditure.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>FND (FPS)</p>
	<p>Develop commercial relationships with First Nations owned businesses and adopt targets as follows: 2022-23: 1.75 per cent; 2023-24: 2 per cent; 2024-25: 2.25 per cent.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>FND (FPS)</p>
	<p>Review and update the existing First Nations Business Register to include over 50 First Nations businesses, including local businesses in states and territories. Implement a quarterly review process to maintain currency of the register.</p>	<p>Jan 2026 Report June annually</p>	<p>FND (FPS) and STO Directors</p>
	<p>Provide pathways for permanent employment through work placement opportunities, including working with First Nations ICT suppliers to train and mentor First Nations IT contractors.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>IMD and FND (FPS)</p>
	<p>Review internal tools and processes to support increased procurement of First Nations goods and services by DFAT's diplomatic network. This includes the ability of posts/HOMs to use their budget to showcase First Nations cultures.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>FSD</p>
<p>Ensure greater accessibility and uptake of DFAT opportunities by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples/communities/businesses.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure DFAT grant guidelines are accessible to First Nations applicants.*</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>FND</p>
	<p>Write to DFAT's foundations, councils, and institutes (FCI) to encourage them to set First Nations grant targets. FCI boards to be consulted on the suitability of targets for their programs.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>SGD and FCI secretariats/geographic desks</p>
	<p>Develop an annual program of high-profile First Nations speakers to engage with DFAT.</p>	<p>Report June annually</p>	<p>OFNE, SGD and IEN</p>

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses internationally, including in conjunction with portfolio partners, Austrade, ACIAR, EFA and Tourism Australia.	Continue working closely with Export Finance Australia (EFA) to enhance its engagement with First Nations businesses, including financing First Nations businesses to support export opportunities.*	Report June annually	TID
	Work with the First Nations business sector and state and territory governments through the Ministerial Council on Trade and Investment, develop and ratify a Statement of Intent about how governments will work together to better support First Nations trade and investment outcomes.	Report June annually	FSD
Embed First Nations perspectives on trade and investment issues into the First Nations Foreign and Trade Policy agenda.	Provide advice and recommendations to key decision makers, including portfolio Ministers, to increase the representation of First Nations people on DFAT's portfolio boards.	Report June annually	EXD
	Establish and maintain a First Nations trade and investment advisory function to directly influence and shape DFAT's trade and investment work, including but not limited to trade negotiations.	Report June annually	FSD (lead) in collaboration with OFNE
Leverage tourism opportunities by First Nations businesses.	Use the diplomatic network to promote tourism offerings by First Nations businesses in Australia to amplify cultural tourism opportunities through social media posts or other engagements showcasing cultural tourism.	Report June annually	FSD, OFNE and SGD
Improve trade and investment outcomes for First Nations businesses in Australia	Support efforts to increase First Nations uptake of trade and investment opportunities.	Report June annually	FSD lead with TIG and STOs
	Identify business interests and incorporate into our trade negotiations, strategies and engagement in key bilateral, regional and multilateral forums.	Report June annually	FSD lead with TIG and STOs
Support and promote training and development opportunities for First Nations students	Require NCP university partners to provide disaggregated data to DFAT on the number of First Nations participants in mobility programs and as scholars to provide baseline data.	Report June annually	DPD
	Require NCP university partners to provide targets for increasing participation by First Nations students and demonstrate how they are encouraging increased participation.	Report June annually	DPD





NAIDOC Week Secretary's Reception event, held at the RG Casey Building, Canberra on 5 July 2023.



# GOVERNANCE, MONITORING AND REPORTING

Implementation and reporting on this RAP will be monitored by the RWG with support from PPD.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	LEAD AREA
Establish and maintain an effective RWG to drive implementation of the RAP.	Maintain appropriate representation on the RWG, including representation from all DFAT groups, senior executives, First Nations staff, the IEN and the First Nations Champion.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
	Develop and review terms of reference for the RWG.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
	Ensure the RWG meets quarterly to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
	Embed key RAP actions in Performance Development Agreements of senior management and all staff.	For 2024-2025 (and beyond) performance cycle Report June annually	All Divisions
	Maintain internal RAP Co-Chair membership of two co-chairs from senior management.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
	Develop a monitoring tool to assist, track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Delivered by July 2024 Report June annually	PPD
	Support the First Nations Champion to lead an update on the RAP to Secretary's meeting with division heads.	Report June annually	PPD and RWG
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learning internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia*	Report September annually	PPD
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	2027 (RAP conclusion)	PPD
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders annually.	Report June annually	RWG and PPD
	Publicly report on our RAP achievements through the DFAT Annual Report and Corporate Plan.	Report July annually	EXD (GRB)
	Investigate participation in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	April 2024 and 2026	RWG
Register, via Reconciliation Australia's website, that DFAT is developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website that DFAT is developing our next RAP.*	July 2025	PPD

# GLOSSARY

CDB	Communications Planning and Public Diplomacy Branch
CPO	Chief People Officer
CSD	Climate Diplomacy and Development Finance Division
CTF	Capability Taskforce
DAC	Diplomatic Academy
DLS	Inclusion and Diversity Policy Section
DPD	Development Policy Division
DSD	Diplomatic Security Division
EXD	Executive Division
FCI	Foundations, Councils, and Institutes
FND	Finance Division
FSD	Free Trade Agreements & Stakeholder Engagement Division
GRB	Governance, Risk and Performance Branch
GSD	Global Service Division
HOM	Head of Mission
HOP	Head of Post
IEN	Indigenous Employees Network
IMD	Information Management and Technology Division
IPP	Indigenous Procurement Policy
IT	Information Technology
MPD	Multilateral Policy, First Nations and Human Rights Division
NCP	New Colombo Plan
NRW	National Reconciliation Week
OFNE	Office of First Nations International Engagement
OPO	Overseas Property Office and Services
PDD	Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division
PLB	Policy Planning Branch
PPD	People Division
PRB	Protocol and Events Branch
PRD	Development Effectiveness and Enabling Division
RWG	RAP Working Group
SES	Senior Executive Service
SGD	Strategic Communications Division
STO	State and Territory Office
TID	Trade Resilience, Indo-Pacific Economic, and Latin America Division
TSTLO	Torres Strait Treaty Liaison Office



Diversity and Inclusion Policy Section members Alex Wensing, Breanna Casserly and Murray O'Hanlon with artist Brooke Rigney Lively during a reception event for Brooke's artwork, March 30 2024 at the RG Casey Building, Canberra.



## RAP enquiries

**Inclusion and Diversity Policy Section**  
[workplacediversity@dfat.gov.au](mailto:workplacediversity@dfat.gov.au)

[x.com/DFAT](https://x.com/DFAT)

[www.facebook.com/dfat.gov.au](https://www.facebook.com/dfat.gov.au)

[www.instagram.com/dfat](https://www.instagram.com/dfat)

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[linkedin.com/company/department-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade](https://linkedin.com/company/department-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade)

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[blog.dfat.gov.au](https://blog.dfat.gov.au)