



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

NOVEMBER 2022 -
NOVEMBER 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Lower Murray Water (LMW) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and reside. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waterways, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

The Traditional Owner groups within Lower Murray Water's service region lie within the traditional lands of First Nations Peoples, from upstream at Koondrook moving downstream along the Murray River (Mil) through to the western edge of our region at the South Australian border. They are the Barapa Barapa Peoples, Wamba Wamba Peoples, Wadi Wadi Peoples, Tatti Tatti Peoples, Latji Latji Peoples, Nyeri Nyeri Peoples, Ngintait Peoples and the Wergaia Peoples.

The First Nation Peoples' connection to land and water is the living cultural knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation. The stories that connected the ancestors to their culture still live through the First Nations Peoples of today.

- Acknowledgement of Country written by Stephanie Sloane.

Stephanie works at Lower Murray Water as a People and Safety Trainee. She is a proud Ngilyampaa woman and has a strong connection to her culture, history, and the land. Stephanie has brought not only her experience and passion for people to this role but also a commitment to inspire and mentor others wishing to pursue a career at LMW.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Patricia Atkinson - "Journey of the long neck turtle"



Patricia Atkinson is a proud Barkindji/Yorta Yorta woman.

The "Journey of the long neck turtle" painting is acrylic and oil paint on canvas.

Story of the painting

"Growing up camping on the Murray River our family loved to fish, our water hole was the Psyche Pumps. One of treasured memories was seeing a long neck turtle swimming with it's little ones following"

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A MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Lower Murray Water to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its Reflect RAP.

Lower Murray Water joins a network of more than 2,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Lower Murray Water to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Lower Murray Water welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



A MESSAGE FROM LOWER MURRAY WATER

Lower Murray Water's journey to reconciliation formally started in 2019 with the development and endorsement of our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. This initial action plan kickstarted the enhanced engagement and relationships with the local Traditional Owners of our service region and began the learning journey for our staff and board.

The preparation of our next Reflect RAP has helped our organisation identify the gaps in knowledge that we still have to learn from First Nations people.

We recognise our important role as one of the stewards of water resources and the need to work closely with the community to share the cultural connections to our work.

In our efforts to deliver the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP), we have seen first-hand the importance of the involvement of Traditional Owners in decision-making processes to protect cultural heritage and restore ecological value.

Our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion has seen LMW embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values into our recruitment processes. Through the inaugural RAP, we implemented an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander position and successfully filled that position.

LMW is pleased to present our second Reflect RAP to continue our reconciliation journey.

Anthony Couroupis
Managing Director
Lower Murray Water



OUR ORGANISATION

LMW operates in an extensive area of Victoria, extending along the Murray River from Kerang (Baraba Baraba land) to the South Australian (Latji Latji land) border.

The region is home to many traditional lands and clans including the Baraba Baraba Peoples, Wamba Wamba Peoples, Wadi Wadi Peoples, Tatti Tatti Peoples, Latji Latji Peoples, Nyeri Nyeri Peoples, Ngintait Peoples and the Wergaia Peoples.

LMW operates the collection, treatment, storage, and delivery of water to approximately 35,000 households along the Murray River, from Koondrook to Merbein, servicing 14 townships including Mildura and Robinvale (Latji Latji land), Swan Hill (Wemba Wemba land), Kerang (Baraba Baraba land). LMW provides wastewater collection, treatment and effluent re-use and disposal services to more than 74,000.

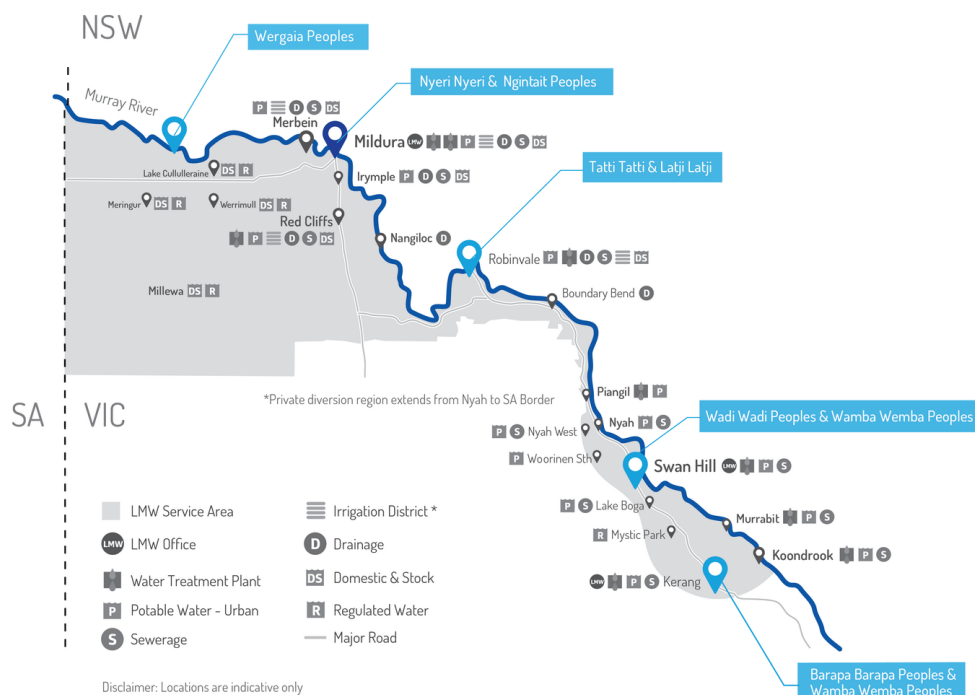
We also provide 2,666 irrigation and 2,240 stock and domestic customers with river quality water in the four pumped irrigation districts on Mildura, Merbein, Red Cliffs, Robinvale, and, as well as the Millewa rural district and some areas of the waterworks district of Yelta (Latji Latji Land).

Our region is serviced by 9 water treatment plants and 10 wastewater treatment facilities. Our head office is in Mildura (Latji Latji land), and we also have offices in Swan Hill (Wemba Wemba land) and Kerang (Baraba Baraba land). LMW currently employs approximately 207 staff with 2 staff members identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our organisation is committed to the growth and prosperity of our region and recognises the importance of investing in our people to better serve and educate our community.

Our region makes up a large part of Victoria's food supply and agricultural industry where their livelihood relies on the delivery of a clean and reliable supply of water. Another key industry in our region is tourism which relies heavily on the Murray River landscapes and we recognise the large environmental responsibility we have in water management.

How we manage our water resources recognises the intrinsic interrelation between this resource and the social and economic fabric of our region. Our focus is not only on our region but state-wide and cross-border, with water management and conservation practices a key part to the health of our rivers and communities that rely on them.



OUR RAP JOURNEY

LMW has developed a Reflect RAP for 2022-23 to re-build a foundation and commitment to construct meaningful relationships and connections with local First Nations Peoples and organisations. This is our second 'Reflect RAP' which will enable LMW to reset our momentum, following the impact of the pandemic, and see us continue on our reconciliation journey.

Our organisation aims to support and recognise the diverse backgrounds of our employees and foster an environment that ensures each one of our employees feel they can share their cultural backgrounds to enhance recognition of culture within the organisation. Through the utilisation of our RAP will help drive reconciliation outcomes between non-Indigenous people and First Nations People.

This RAP has been informed by Water Industry Diversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2025, LMW's Gender Equality Framework and Action Plan 2022-2025, and Corporate Plan 2022-23. These supporting documents provide inspirational and measurable targets to assist in our organisation's success for greater equality among our people.

We acknowledge the importance of reconciliation and the role of our organisation to honour the rich history of the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters .

Our aim for reconciliation is to engage, share and learn from First Nations People in caring for the land and waters on which we thrive, live and work on today.

Embedded in our strategic framework is to achieve greater equality, diversity, and inclusion within our people. We are committed to continue to grow, educate, and address the cultural and spiritual connections of the First Nations People to the surrounding lands and waterways in which they founded.

To succeed in our reconciliation journey, each staff member in the LMW community will need to be engaged and committed to the implementation of this plan and forge the change to combat the inequalities faced each day by First Nations People.

Our journey will continue, and our 2022-23 Reconciliation Action Plan will help strengthen our current relationships and ignite new relationships with First People organisations, groups, and businesses.

RAP WORKING GROUP

Our RAP Working Group is made up of the passionate staff members who are a part of our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. This working group is the force of change not only of our journey to reconciliation but gender equality, inclusivity, and cultural diversity.

Anthony Couroupis – Managing Director, **Deb Fankhauser** – General Manager, People and Stakeholders , **Parthee Gana** – Lead Engineer, **Deb Dash** – Team Leader, Strategic Planning Engineer, **David Zacher** – Customer and Stakeholder Liaison, **Claudia Scullino** – HR Generalist, **Stephanie Sloane** – Trainee, People and Safety, **Andrew Copping** – Team Leader, Urban Customer, **Nicolette Robson** – Engagement Officer, **Teana Barton** – Service Delivery and Operations Administration Officer, **Jay Steart** – Administration Officer, Land Development

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY SO FAR

Current activities and initiatives

From 2019 to 2021, employees from across Lower Murray Water developed and implemented our first Reflect RAP to guide the journey to reconciliation. Our first action plan has resulted in several important internal initiatives:

- Development of a Terms of Reference for the RAP working group .
- Introduction of an identified Aboriginal recruited position and successful recruitment of that position
- Regular reporting to the Executive and Board on reconciliation activities
- Hosting internal National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week activities for staff
- Partnering with a young First People artist to create specific artworks
- Development of an Acknowledgement of Country for our organisation written by Aboriginal employee, Stephanie Sloane.
- Appropriate cultural heritage and ecological restoration practices in the efforts to deliver the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project. This includes involving Traditional Owners in the decision-making processes to protect the cultural heritage and restore ecological value and the inclusion of ecology and cultural heritage awareness within the field inductions that all project staff complete.

Community partnerships

LMW has established relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and organisations including Mildura District Aboriginal Services, local Traditional Owners, art groups, educational institutions and youth services in the Mildura and Swan Hill regions.

Due to the 2020-2021 impacts of the pandemic, like many organisations, our focus shifted to keeping our staff, customers, and community safe by limiting contact with others, meaning less engagement with our community partners.

Through our Action Plan, LMW will again work closely with the First People of The Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council and Gannawarra Shire Council. We will also enhance our ongoing relationships with local health service providers, employment and educational providers and other local government agencies across our service region who support local First Peoples to better understand the needs of our community. LMW will also engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people where appropriate.

LOWER MURRAY WATER'S ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan sets out actions, deliverables, and timelines for LMW to achieve its aims under the RAP.



Relationships

We believe in building and strengthening relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Traditional Owner organisations, and communities for greater participation, continued education, and collaboration.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	November 2022	Customer and Stakeholder Liaison
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	February 2023	Customer and Stakeholder Liaison
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	27 May - 3 June 2023	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with through National Reconciliation Week	27 May - 3 June 2023	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Encourage RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event	27 May - 3 June 2023	RAP Champion RAP Working Group

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff internally through intranet blog posts, all staff emails and events throughout the year.	November 2022, Monthly	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey	November 2022	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Identify RAP and other local like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	January 2023	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination	February 2023	Customer and Stakeholder Liaison
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs	April 2023	Manager, People & Communications RAP Working Group



Respect

We are committed to raising awareness and developing our knowledge about the First Nations Peoples history and culture through actions outlined in this plan.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning</p>	<p>Conduct a review and consult with staff on cultural learning needs within our organisation</p>	<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Manager, People & Communications</p>
	<p>Develop a manual for staff and contractors to assist in identifying Aboriginal artifacts or remains within the environment</p>	<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Team Leader, Environment</p>
	<p>Develop a blueprint plan for each of the LMW sites to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, connection to our local land, water, and rights within our organisation</p>	<p>November 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Research the facilitation of a cultural immersion tour</p>	<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Ensure budget is allocated to support staff to complete the Centre of Cultural Competency Australia training</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Manager, People & Communications</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</p>	<p>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Customer and Stakeholder Liaison</p>
	<p>Increase employee understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Create and distribute an Acknowledgement of Country guidance card for each service region</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
<p>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week</p>	<p>Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Celebrate with an internal NAIDOC week celebration at each of our LMW sites.</p>	<p>3-9 July 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Encourage RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event</p>	<p>3-9 July 2023</p>	<p>RAP Champion</p>



Opportunities

Through these actions we will better understand the needs and potential of our local First Nations People.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development</p>	<p>Review current recruitment practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation</p>	<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Manager, People & Communications</p>
	<p>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Manager, People & Communications</p>
	<p>Engage with the SuniTAFE Dulka Yuppata Indigenous Training Centre to create pathways for students leading to employment within Lower Murray Water</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<p>Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists by procuring original art pieces.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Team Leader, Communications & Engagement</p>
	<p>Research opportunities for local procurement opportunities</p>	<p>January 2023</p>	<p>Manager, People & Communications</p>



Governance

We are committed to delivering all actions set out in this plan and ensuring a measurable impact is made on all staff members

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Re-establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	Re-form a RWG to govern RAP implementation	November 2022	RAP Champion
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG	December 2022	Customer and Stakeholder Liaison
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Define resource needs for RAP implementation	November 2022	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments	November 2022	Manager, People & Communications
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	November 2022	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia	30 September, annually	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	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	July, annually	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August, annually	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	July 2023	Team Leader, Communications & Engagement RAP Champion

Lower Murray Water

741-759 Fourteenth Street, Mildura

73 Beveridge Street, Swan Hill

56 Wellington Street, Kerang

Telephone: 1800 808 830

Email: comms@lmw.vic.gov.au

www.lmw.vic.gov.au