

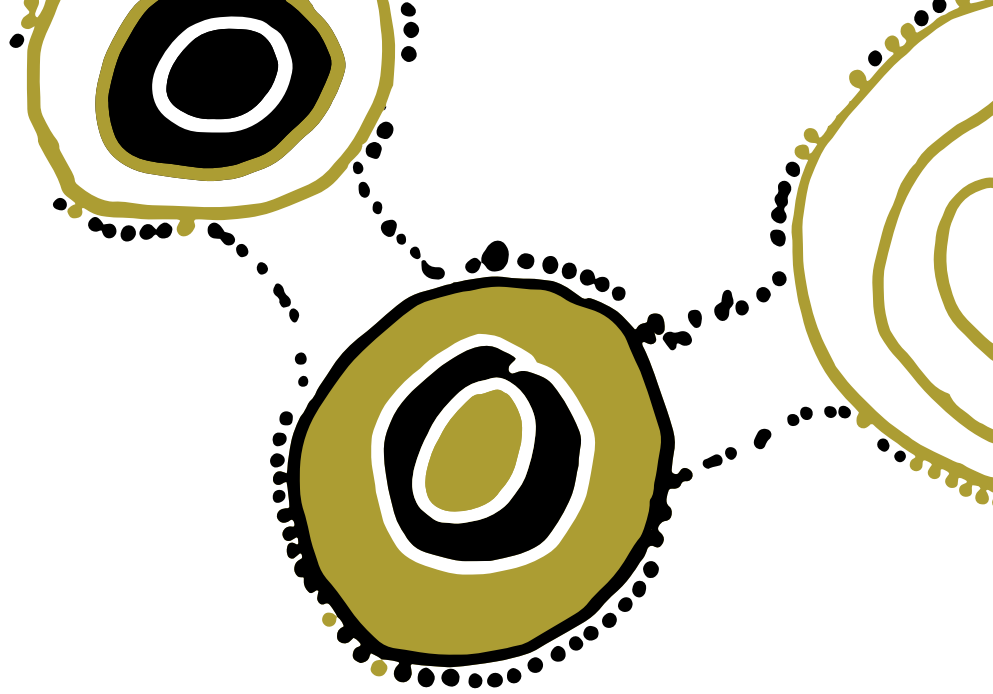


**Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA)**  
Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan July 2024 - July 2026









## Acknowledgement of country

Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges and respects Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and organisations. We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Victoria's lands and waters. We value partnerships with them for the health of people and country. Mallee CMA Board, management and staff pay their respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owners' obligations, rights, and responsibilities to use and care for their Traditional lands and waters.

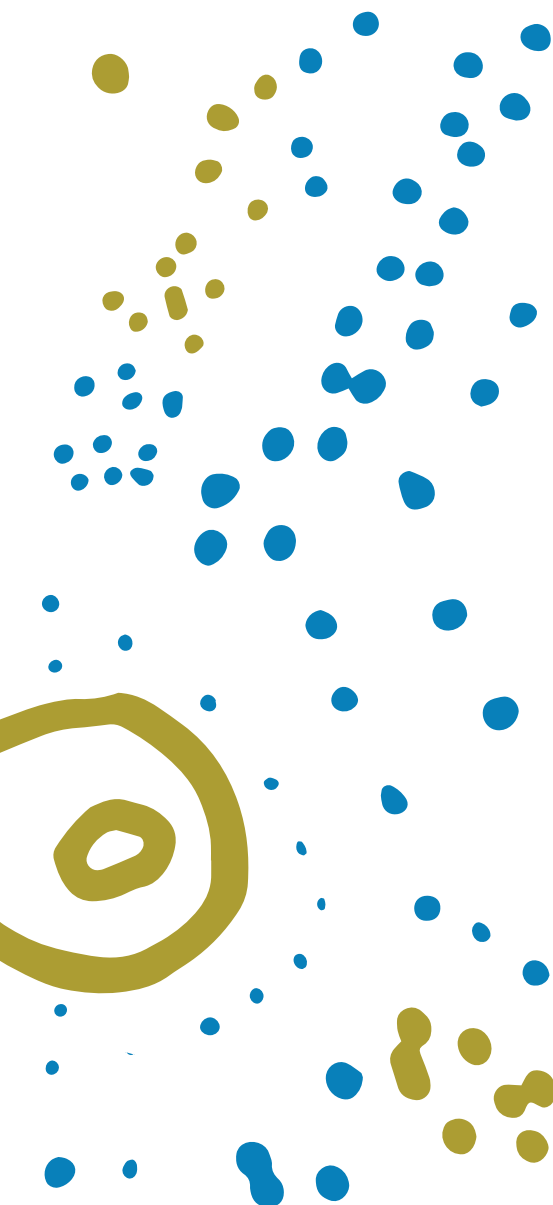


## Acknowledgement of artists

**Ava Best** River Dreaming, 2024. This artwork appears on the external cover pages.

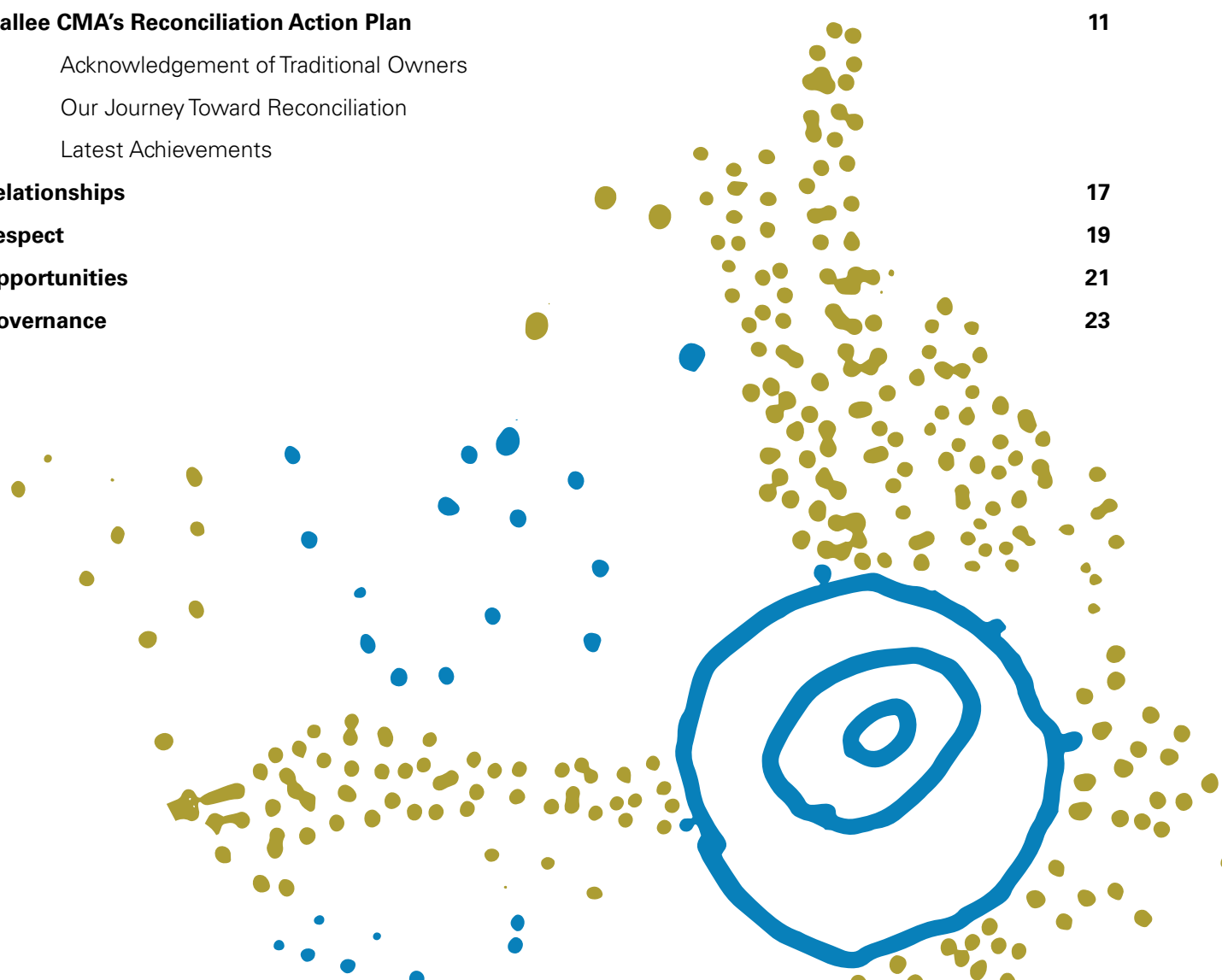
**Marley-Jo** Lingwoodock, Night Sky, 2024. This artwork appears on the internal cover pages.

**Ileita Bradley** Unnamed, 2024. This artwork appears on the internal spread.



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## CEO Statement

Reconciliation Australia commends Mallee Catchment Management Authority on the formal endorsement of its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Mallee Catchment Management Authority continues to be part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

An Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build the strong foundations and relationships that ensure sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that Mallee Catchment Management Authority will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to Mallee Catchment Management Authority using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

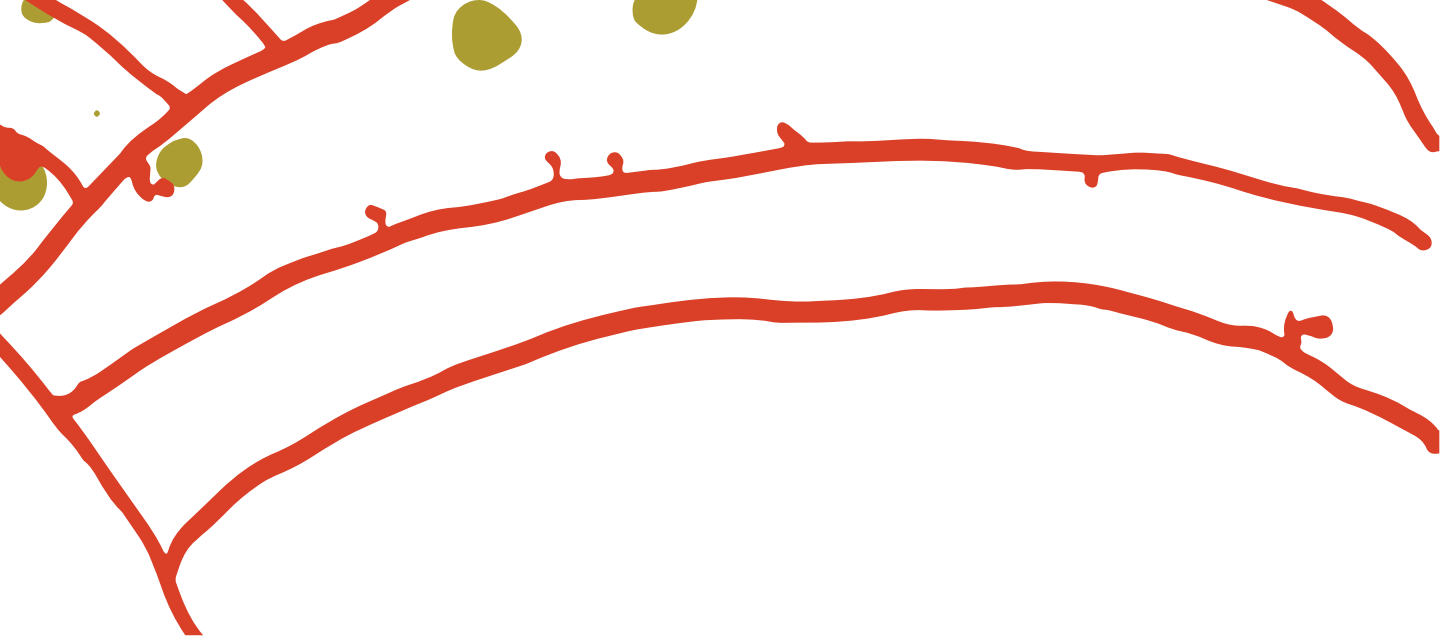
This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for Mallee Catchment Management Authority to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, Mallee Catchment Management Authority will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of Mallee Catchment Management Authority's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Mallee Catchment Management Authority on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

**Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia**



## Mallee CMA's Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to recognise, understand, value, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' connection to land, water and biodiversity. We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to protect the environment and cultural values through building caring, supportive and respectful relationships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be empowered to deliver programs and services on-Country, be provided with opportunities to participate in our workforce and have access to opportunities for career advancement.

Mallee CMA affirms its commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the oldest living cultures in the world, through the development and implementation of this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, culture, and custodianship of the Mallee Country.

We aspire to have an inclusive, diverse, culturally safe workplace where we can work together on Natural Resource Management (NRM) programs and where Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples can grow and share their knowledge and experience and heal Country together.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of Australia and respect their enduring connection to lands, skies, waters, plants and animals. Mallee CMA commits to enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to contribute to, participate in and benefit from our NRM activities. Working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we can have a positive impact on the Mallee landscape.

We will demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation and self-determination by utilising this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships between the Mallee CMA and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living and working in the Mallee.

We recognise the Traditional Owners as sovereign partners in land and water management.







## Our business

Mallee CMA is a statutory authority with clear duties and accountabilities set out in legislation such as the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and the *Water Act 1989*.

Our primary role is to facilitate integrated and ecologically sustainable management of natural, cultural, and productive landscapes within the region. Programs and projects are developed to deliver against regional priorities for these landscapes, as detailed in the Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and its associated sub-strategies and plans. As an organisation we are committed to working with our community across the region. Driving this momentum is ongoing delivery against the Mallee RCS, which provides for the tangible and effective implementation of an Integrated Catchment Management approach to NRM and is integral to the effective delivery of both Victorian and Australian Government priorities for land, water and biodiversity.

The Mallee catchment covers 39,939km<sup>2</sup>, around one-fifth of Victoria and is the largest catchment area in the state. The catchment runs along the Murray River from Nyah to the South Australian border and south through dryland cropping areas and public reserves. Recognised both nationally and internationally for the diversity and uniqueness of its natural, cultural, and productive landscapes, the Mallee has a rich and diverse Aboriginal heritage.

We regard Traditional Owner rights and interests in the management and healing of Country as central to the application of our partnership approach to land, water and biodiversity management.

Our organisation proudly employs around 60 people across north-west Victoria, three (3) of whom identify as First Nations people. Our head office is located in Irymple, Victoria. We have a dedicated Engagement Team to support and enhance the engagement and involvement of Traditional Owners in land, water and biodiversity management programs.

We take our commitment to reconciliation seriously and demonstrate this in many ways, including:

- Working with partner agencies to hold annual National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) celebrations and events as part of National Reconciliation Week;

- Renewing the Mallee Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP) (2023-28), which provides realistic and achievable actions and activities to ensure strengthened and collaborative engagement between Traditional Owners and Mallee CMA. The IPP forms an important part of Mallee CMA's cultural competency and skill development for staff to further enhance relationships and make more informed decisions about land, water and biodiversity management within the Mallee region;
- Actively working to increase the number of First Nations peoples employed by the Mallee CMA to reach 4% full time equivalent (FTE) by 2024 ;
- The ongoing facilitation of the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG), an advisory group that provides insights and advice to the Board and wider organisation on Aboriginal stakeholder: needs; engagement; emerging issues; and perspectives relevant to land, water and biodiversity management; and
- Regularly reporting on the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Who we work with

The Mallee has a long history of building effective partnerships between all sectors of the community, including Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, individual farmers, industry groups, community groups, government agencies and authorities.

We recognise the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country and have spent many years developing mutually respectful relationships to create meaningful partnerships in land, water and biodiversity management. We work with Traditional Owner groups who are Registered Aboriginal Parties and non-Registered Aboriginal Parties on projects and programs.

Recent highlights include:

- Collaborating on-water regimes for cultural outcomes and sites of cultural significance;
- Holding on-Country 'Talk Water' events, which provide tailored opportunities for direct involvement in planning environmental watering activities;
- Participating in events in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' organisations and groups; and
- Supporting Traditional Owners to undertake Aboriginal Waterway Assessments.

### Working with Traditional Owner businesses

Mallee CMA has developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's procurement strategy. We recognise the significant and measurable long-term business benefits of supplier diversity and, where possible seek to ensure expenditure supports businesses owned and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our region.

### Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Mallee CMA aims to foster strong relationships and knowledge sharing opportunities with local Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We do this through hosting 'Talk Water' events and fishing days, supporting community events, and planning and working on projects. These interactions have enabled our staff to strengthen relationships

and build their knowledge of cultural values, while developing opportunities for Traditional Owners to speak for their Country and have meaningful input into project planning.

Mallee CMA's IPP sets a pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to get involved with our core on-ground work which includes: water management, enhancing biodiversity, supporting sustainable agricultural practices, and controlling invasive pests, plants and animals. Throughout this work Mallee CMA staff have built and maintained strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and groups across the Mallee.

The Mallee has been occupied for thousands of generations by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with human activity dating as far back as 23,400 years. The region's rich and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's heritage has been formed through the historical and spiritual significance of sites associated with this habitation, together with the strong connection Traditional Owners continue to have with the Mallee's natural landscapes. Traditional Owner groups of the region (within the parameters of the Mallee CMA consultation and engagement processes) include but are not limited to: First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC); Latji Latji; Wadi Wadi; Wamba Wamba; Tati Tati; Nyeri Nyeri; Ngintait; and Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) – Wotjobaluk Nations, and Werigaia.

In Victoria, there are three different processes for groups to become formally recognised as Traditional Owners of Country, namely: as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006; through Native Title Determination under the Native Title Act 1993; or in accordance with the Recognition and Settlement Agreement under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010. Registered Aboriginal Parties are the appointed statutory authority under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and are recognised as the primary guardians, keepers, and knowledge holders of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage for their region. There are currently two Registered Aboriginal Parties who represent the interests of Traditional Owners in their respective Country areas across the Mallee: Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) and First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC).



## Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC)

BGLC is the trustee for the Native Title rights and interests of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergai and Japagulk peoples, collectively known as the Wotjobaluk Nations as recognised in a 2005 Native Title Consent Determination.

BGLC was appointed Registered Aboriginal Party status in 2007. Its area of responsibility encompasses much of the southern Mallee, including Wyperfeld National Park, and the Big Desert State Forest/Wilderness Area, and extends into the Wimmera, North Central and Glenelg Hopkins regions.

The Wimmera Co-operative Management Agreement between the state and BGLC authorises Wotjobaluk Peoples to participate in the management of certain parks and reserves within the determination area established under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). Wotjobaluk Peoples also assert interests in land outside the ILUA boundary. The Victorian Government and BGLC have negotiated both a Recognition and Settlement Agreement and an associated Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement. This enables Wotjobaluk Peoples and the State of Victoria to jointly manage agreed national parks, conservation reserves and other Crown land transferred to BGLC under Aboriginal Title.

The BGLC Country Plan: Growing What is Good Country Plan — Voices of the Wotjobaluk Nations (2017), highlights connections to Country, identifies impacts of colonisation, and outlines goals, priorities and actions to progress its vision of: “Wotjobaluk Nations working together as custodians of Culture, Country, Heritage, Lore and Language; sharing our values and representing the rights and interests of our people”

Overarching goals of BGLC’s Country Plan include: strong and healthy Culture; healthy Country; an engaged and connected community; recognition and respect; economic sustainability; healthy peoples; and a strong voice.

## First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC)

The FPMMAC Registered Aboriginal Party area encompasses a large portion of the northern Mallee, including the Murray River floodplain and its associated waterways, and parts of Murray-Sunset

National Park. FPMMAC was formed by Latji Latji and Ngintait Traditional Owners, registered in 2015 and appointed Registered Aboriginal Party status in 2018. FPMMAC is currently seeking to negotiate a Recognition and Settlement Agreement and Native Title determination over land that includes and extends its current Registered Aboriginal Party area.

FPMMAC has a Country and Water Plan and a Country-Culture-People Action Plan (2020) which states the following objective:

“Our Action Plan and strategic Country and Water Plan seeks to repair the natural environment and our people’s place in the environment.

- We will do this by rejuvenating the land, floodplains, and river system, while rejuvenating our culture and people.
- We will do this with and by our people, in conjunction with the broader community and governments.

We are implementing our Indigenous cultural model of self-determination, on Country with Culture for People.”

Mallee CMA acknowledges there may be further claims and applications in process and will ensure this Reconciliation Action Plan is updated as required to acknowledge the procedural rights of those involved.

Mallee CMA would also like to acknowledge the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the Mallee whose Traditional land may be outside the Mallee region and those whose families have lived in an area for many generations, who are not part of Traditional Owner groups.

Mallee CMA would like to thank the many Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities, and organisations it has worked with over many years who have helped implement a range of plans, projects, and programs to improve and protect our natural resources. We greatly value these partnerships and look forward to continuing to work together in the future.







## Mallee CMA's Reconciliation Action Plan

Mallee CMA has developed this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to reaffirm its commitment to creating meaningful, respectful relationships and to promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, and individuals to care for our land, water, and biodiversity. This Reconciliation Action Plan builds on the strong relationships already formed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and groups across the catchment.

In reviewing our last Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan we noted good progression across our stated organisational actions and deliverables, but believe we should continue with a second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to help ensure we continue to build a strong foundation and embed actions across our whole organisation and external spheres of influence. This will deliver a deeper understanding and business as usual practices to advance reconciliation.

**Mallee CMA's focus has been on:** building trusting relationships, developing employment opportunities and building work programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our catchment. We believe our next focus should be on developing a deeper understanding of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, its objectives and our pathways to success with our Board and staff. This would seem the next step toward building on the gains we have made and ensuring a strong foundation for our next Reconciliation Action Plan.

This Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan documents our commitment to developing innovative strategies to establish the best pathway for advancing reconciliation in our workplace. It's an important tool in holding ourselves accountable, reflecting on how far we have come, and contributing to building better relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Advice, guidance, and support for this Reconciliation Action Plan has been provided by our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, which consists of Mallee CMA staff and members of the Mallee CMA ARG. The Working Group continues to guide us through the delivery of this plan. Six of the nine members of the Working Group identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, with membership including:

- Chair of the ARG
- Three members of the Aboriginal Reference Group
- Manager Strategic Communications
- Executive Manager Projects and Business Development
- Aboriginal Partnerships and Engagement Officer
- Program Support Officer – Commonwealth Investment
- Manager Contracts and Compliance

Our Mallee CMA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan champion is the General Manager for Operations and Community, as supported by the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Mallee CMA Board, management, and staff.

Mallee CMA has undertaken extensive engagement through the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, with meetings held monthly over a nine-month period to develop and inform the content for this current Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. Consultation and meetings took place around the region including at our Irymple office and in the Robinvale/Euston area to ensure inclusive and accessible engagement for our working group members. The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group signed off on the draft Reconciliation Action Plan in April 2023, with all members providing feedback and input.

In this Reconciliation Action Plan, our proposed actions are listed in the following tables under four key themes:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Governance.

Each action listed includes responsibilities for implementation; associated targets; and the timeframe for implementation.

Mallee CMA has a long history of working in partnership with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to care for the region's land, water, and biodiversity, as highlighted in the following examples:

**Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs)**

**and assessments:** Mallee CMA, in partnership with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, completed its first CHMP in 2008 to inform large-scale environmental construction works. Prior to this, Mallee CMA worked closely with the North-West Cultural Heritage Program, which represented Traditional Owners in the region. Mallee CMA has since completed a further 10 CHMPs and conducts Cultural Heritage assessments of on-ground works projects, prior to the commencement of works. Traditional Owners have generously supported and been actively involved in this process, and it is hoped this will continue.

**NAIDOC Celebrations:** Together with partner agencies (Parks Victoria; Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA); and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), Mallee CMA hosts annual NAIDOC celebrations. For many years these celebrations have been held in cooperation with regional NAIDOC events (i.e. to avoid events overlapping in the community) and are open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. Mallee CMA also proudly supports the "Uncle Ralph Harradine Caring for Country Award", which is awarded each year in recognition of an individual's work in caring for Country.

**Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG):** Established in 2012, the ARG is a sub-committee of the Mallee CMA Board. The ARG was established to foster two-way communication between the Mallee CMA and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and to provide guidance on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement and input into Mallee CMA initiatives and regional plans. ARG members evaluate the value of the group each year to ensure it continues to be facilitated in a way that allows for culturally appropriate and meaningful engagement.

Key findings regarding the ARG 2023 evaluation included that members' primary motivations for participating were to:

- Be able to update the Aboriginal community (100%)

- Work with Mallee CMA Indigenous Facilitator (100%)
- Participate in field trips/tours on Country (66%)
- Keep up to date with Natural Resource Management projects in the area (66%).

The results of this evaluation also showed:

- Awareness of Mallee NRM projects/programs as a result of ARG participation was among members
- Members generally rated the opportunity to provide feedback at meetings/workshops as good (100%)
- Members rated their confidence that the feedback the group provides is being listened to/acted on as being between moderate and significant

## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

In March 2016, the Mallee CMA Board endorsed the Mallee CMA's Cultural Competency Framework, which was renewed in 2023. The framework articulates the organisation's commitment to support and deliver effective engagement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal peoples in decision making and management processes and articulates our commitment to meaningful, culturally appropriate, and effective consultation and engagement. Key components of the framework are the development and implementation of both the Mallee IPP and the Mallee CMA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. The IPP aims to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Mallee CMA's NRM programs. The IPP is a practical guide for Mallee CMA to partner with and involve Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the planning, consultation, and implementation of NRM investment. This Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan will help Mallee CMA to continue to formalise existing strategies, and build on existing partnerships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The ARG will have an active role in overseeing the delivery of actions identified in both the Mallee IPP and this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.





In delivery of the Cultural Competency Framework, Mallee CMA Board, management and staff have (or will) undertake accredited cultural competency training; an Acknowledgement of Country is displayed at each physical entry to the organisation; each event/formal meeting facilitated by the organisation commences with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country; and all staff and on-ground contractors complete an online Cultural Heritage compliance induction. Relevant internal policies and procedures are in place to support the delivery of the Mallee CMA Cultural Competency Framework and associated plans. Mallee CMA also actively supports the implementation of the Aboriginal Participation Guideline for Victorian CMAs, and the subsequent Implementation Plan – Pathways to Participation.

## Our journey toward reconciliation

The following timeline illustrates Mallee CMA's reconciliation journey:

**2008** – Mallee CMA, in partnership with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples completed its first CHMP to inform large-scale environmental construction works

**2012** – Mallee CMA ARG established

**2016** – First Mallee IPP released; Board endorsed first Cultural Competency Framework

**2016** – Mallee CMA Board and staff commenced mandatory Cultural Competency training

**2018** – Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group established

**2018** – First Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan launched

**2019** – Began working with Traditional Owners to undertake Aboriginal Waterway Assessments

**2019** – First Talk Water on-Country event held

**2021** – Traditional Owner Engagement Strategy developed

**2022** – Dedicated Aboriginal engagement team established for Mallee CMA

**2023** – Second Mallee IPP released

**2023** – Development of Mallee CMA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

## Achievements

We are proud to celebrate the following achievements delivered as part of the first Mallee CMA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-21.

RELATIONSHIPS	RESPECT	OPPORTUNITIES	GOVERNANCE
Worked with Traditional Owners to hold On-Country Talk Water events; undertake Aboriginal Water Assessments; and collaborate on planning water regimes at a cultural site of very high significance.	Continued implementation of our Cultural Competency Framework across the organisation.	One Board member and six staff members in executive/leadership positions in our organisation identified as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander.	Maintained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples representation on the Reconciliation Working Group.
Individual staff members identified potential partners for Mallee CMA to work with, which demonstrates how our people champion reconciliation in the workplace.	12 staff members completed cultural e-learning modules during 2020-21, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to embedding cultural awareness and safety in our workplace.	Provided professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through pre-employment training and training to help them progress in their existing roles.	Reported to staff, the ARG and Executive Management regularly regarding the implementation of the Mallee CMA Reconciliation Action Plan.
Hosted a National Reconciliation Week event to raise staff awareness of our shared history, distributed information resources and raised awareness through social media channels.	Celebrated NAIDOC Week with a smoking ceremony, traditional bush tucker morning tea and cultural walk/tour adjacent to the Murray River.	Supported four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Continued to facilitate the ARG to provide advice to the Board and wider organisation.

### Key learnings

The delivery of our 2019-21 Reconciliation Action Plan occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused significant upheaval and severely limited opportunities for face-to-face engagement. Mallee CMA remained committed to delivering our Reconciliation Action Plan and took from the experience the following insights:

- The value and importance of face-to-face engagement can't be over-estimated. One-on-one interactions allow for more personal and in-depth discussions with Traditional Owners, and the opportunity to build stronger connections for the future.
- When it is possible to talk face-to-face, being on-Country is preferable.
- When in-person engagement isn't possible, online video conferencing can be useful and help reduce travel requirements.
- Sharing videos across our online platforms can help get information to our community.
- Social media can be a great platform to reach a wide audience and provide opportunities for community members to give feedback.
- As partnerships mature with Traditional Owner Groups there is more opportunity for integration and sharing of employment opportunities.





- As partnerships are strengthened there is more opportunity and willingness to participate in programs that progress and share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and aspirations for the landscape.

We are taking these learnings with us as we implement our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and see them as opportunities to develop a level of maturity in this reconciliation journey. In our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2028 we aim to:

- Support Aboriginal representation on our Board through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples delegate program;
- Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal

peoples through our internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples engagement team;

- Provide opportunities for secondments from Recognised Aboriginal Party corporations to work in the Mallee CMA for mentorship and skill development;
- Continue to develop and advance our 'Aspirations' project across the Murray River Corridor where we are working with Traditional Owners to understand their values and aspirations for the Murray Landscapes.







The people of the Victorian Mallee are at the centre of the management of our natural, cultural, and productive landscapes. To Mallee CMA, building and maintaining strong relationships is our core business. By connecting people, recognising, and valuing their knowledge, skills, and experience we can work together to implement positive long-term changes that care for our region's land, water, and biodiversity.

### Focus area:

We are committed to establishing and maintaining long-term relationships built on mutual trust and respect. This is acknowledged in the first of our three core business objectives, which is to “ensure our community is central to the planning, delivery and evaluation of natural resource management (NRM) outcomes” .

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement including being responsive to their preferred approaches (e.g. meeting on-Country, face to face)	July 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Review and update engagement plan to include promotion and embedding of Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan across whole of organisation and with external stakeholders.	August 2024	Manager Strategic Communications
	Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders with a renewed emphasis on the whole of organisation.	January 2026	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	Review and update IPP and Indigenous Engagement guidelines	August 2024 June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2025	Manager Strategic Communications
	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2025	Manager Strategic Communications
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Organise at least one NRW event each year. (Staff to attend Reconciliation Week Conference or other relevant event)	27 May - 3 June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	Register our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2025 May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Review and update engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce including a greater focus on whole-of-organisation and external stakeholders.	July 2024	Manager Strategic Communications
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through social media and our website to display achievements of the ARG.	Jan 2025 Jan 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2025 June 2025 January 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Utilise Mallee CMA Community Capacity Evaluation methodology to track stakeholder satisfaction and effectiveness of programs to ensure feedback is being utilised to improve relationships and progress toward reconciliation.	June 2025	Chief Executive Officer
	Collaborate with Reconciliation Action Plan organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	Communicate CMA projects to Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, ARG and community via culturally appropriate means, which may include on-Country visits.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	ARG members attend annual National Reconciliation Action Plan Conference.	January 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	October 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	February 2025	Chief Finance Officer
	Share stories and information of interactions and collaboration with First Nations committees and community.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications



5. Elevate First Nations voices in policy and procedure reviews across the HR function	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to help support the review of the following HR-related policies and procedures: On-boarding procedure Cultural Heritage Induction Leave Policy	June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or advisors to consult on opportunities for cultural safety initiatives in the workplace	June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community

## Respect

We recognise and value the innate and enduring connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to Country, culture, history, and knowledge. Our respect for this underpins our relationships and we seek to improve and enhance our appreciation of this by implementing our Cultural Competency Framework; increasing our staff members' understanding of cultural safety and protocols; supporting our staff to be part of NAIDOC Week celebrations; and encouraging cultural learning.

### Focus area:

Respect is a key tenet of the Code of Conduct under which the Mallee CMA operates and aligns with our third business objective, which states our intention to "strengthen our capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation". Our organisation is committed to fostering a culture that values respect, and we demonstrate this by developing a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion in all areas of our business.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	August 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Review, update and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff	August 2024	Chief Executive Officer
	Include opportunities for Aboriginal language and perspectives in material generated by the CMA, with guidance from community Elders and Traditional Owners	September 2024	Manager Strategic Communications

7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff members' understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2024	Chief Executive Officer
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	January 2025	Manager Strategic Communications
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	All staff / Management
	Workshop an event with the ARG, about development of guidance and training for the Acknowledgement of Country and its importance and meaning for staff.	Dec 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024 and 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
	Review Human Resources policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	Chief Finance Officer
	Look for opportunities to extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences or stories, during staff inductions, NAIDOC week (for example).	July 2024 July 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
9. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and traditional knowledge by celebrating Traditional Owner language	Celebrate and acknowledge Traditional Owner language by including it in communications materials, maps and in meetings, when supported by Traditional Owners.	July 2024 June 2025 June 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Celebrate Traditional Owner language by featuring it in social media posts, as supported by Traditional Owners.	August 2024 August 2025	Manager Strategic Communications



## Opportunities

Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities is important to the Mallee CMA and the communities we serve because it strengthens the fabric of our society. By actively seeking out opportunities that can be provided through our organisation, we can make a tangible contribution to overcoming barriers to employment, procurement, professional development, and retention of staff. When these barriers are removed, our communities' benefit.

### Focus area:

This component of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan aligns with our third business objective of strengthening our "capacity to operate as a corporately and socially responsible organisation". Our organisation is committed to improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses within our sphere of influence and we demonstrate this by developing a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion in all areas.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment, professional development, and cultural opportunities.	December 2024	Chief Executive Officer
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to consult on our review of the recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	January 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
	Support the appointment of an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander person to the Mallee CMA Board through the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander peoples Board Delegate Program.	July 2024	Chief Executive Officer
	Review the effectiveness of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples recruitment, retention and professional development strategy and update as required.	July 2024	Manager Strategic Communications
	Encourage employment of Aboriginal peoples in broader career roles across the organisation through promotion of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy to all levels of the Mallee CMA.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications

11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Advertise designated identified roles to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, by advertising in the local relevant publications and Indigenous news publications when timing permits.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Provide a peer support network and mentor for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. (New staff are welcomed and supported, if from away, formally welcomed to community.)	Dec 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Providing opportunities for secondments from Recognised Aboriginal Party Corporations to work in the Mallee CMA for mentorship and skills development.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Mallee CMA Board.	September 2025	MCMA Chair
12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Review, strengthen and update the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	December 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	Investigate new ways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners.	July 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. i.e., upfront, or seven-day accounts instead of 30-day accounts or flexible payment options can be made available for small businesses.	July 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	Assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses to be registered in our TechOne procurement system (complete new supplier form).	July 2024	Chief Finance Officer

13. Support Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to meaningfully partner in project development and implementation across the range of organisations project areas.	Work with Traditional Owners on identifying their values and aspirations for Mallee landscape areas.	June 2025	General Manager Operations and Community
	Ensure early engagement of Traditional Owners in project co design and development phases.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Identify early Traditional Owner involvement in project implementation and delivery opportunities.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Support Traditional Owner led project development and implementation.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community



## Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to drive governance of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples representation on the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	General Manager Operations and Community
	Review and update the Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	December 2024	Manager Strategic Communications
	CMA Chair and ARG to meet annually to discuss programs and other opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' involvement.	September 2024 and September 2025	Chair Mallee CMA Board
15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	Define resource needs for Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	July 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Engage our Mallee CMA senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	July 2024 July 2025 May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	July 2024	General Manager Operations and Community
	Appoint and maintain an internal Reconciliation Action Plan Champion from senior management (General Manager Operations and Community).	July 2024	Chief Executive Officer



16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important Reconciliation Action Plan correspondence.	June annually	Manager Strategic Communications
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Manager Strategic Communications
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Manager Strategic Communications
	Report Reconciliation Action Plan progress to senior leaders biannually and to Executive Management Team and ARG.	July/Dec 2024/2025	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	Provide Reconciliation Action Plan biannual updates to Mallee CMA Executive Management Team and annually to the Board	July/Dec 2024/2025	General Manager Operations and Community Manager Strategic Communications
	Publicly report our Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges, and learnings, annually.	October 2024 October 2025	Manager Strategic Communications
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer.	May 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this Reconciliation Action Plan.	June 2026	Manager Strategic Communications
	Provide Reconciliation Action Plan biannual updates to Mallee CMA Executive Management Team and annually to the Board	<b>Executive Management Team Updates:</b> August 2024 April 2025 August 2025 April 2026 <b>Board updates:</b> September 2024 September 2025	Manager Strategic Communications
17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	January 2026	Manager Strategic Communications





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