



REFLECT

Reconciliation Action Plan

MAY 2022 - MAY 2023



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



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Acknowledgements

LGANT acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout the Northern Territory in which we meet today and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and cultures. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Front cover photo by Kerriekerr: *A close up of an Aboriginal man's hand drawing the dreamtime stories in the dirt*

Back cover photo by Tourism Australia: *People dancing at Barunga festival*

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STATEMENT FROM CEO RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



Photo: Karen Mundine, CEO Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory joins a network of more than 1,100 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 the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory 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 Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, 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

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD



Photo: Kon Vatskalis, President LGANT

Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples for the benefit of all Australians. It is an ongoing journey that reminds us that while generations of Australians have fought hard for meaningful change, future gains are likely to take just as much, if not more, effort.

Given 30% of the Northern Territory's population is Aboriginal, the highest by far of all jurisdictions, reconciliation efforts by individuals and organisations can make a real impact – and with local government councils in the Territory collectively employing around 3,000 Territorians, we feel our sector has an important role to play.

Local government councils in the Territory are also often the largest employer of Aboriginal people in remote and regional areas and additionally, 59.87% all elected members are Aboriginal and 87.63% of regional elected members are Aboriginal.

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) however, is just about how Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) can advance reconciliation. Our Reflect RAP formalises some of our existing reconciliation initiatives, such as being a signatory to the Closing the Gap Northern Territory Implementation Plan, but also includes new initiatives.

The LGANT team has already started implementing the initiatives and we aim to make a meaningful difference toward reconciliation before progressing to an Innovate RAP.

Kon Vatskalis
President
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory



Photo: Northern Territory Delegates attending the Australian Local Government (ALGA) 2022 National General Assembly

OUR BUSINESS

The mission of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) is to provide leadership, support, and influential representation to the local government sector of the Northern Territory (NT). LGANT was first incorporated in 1992 as the single peak body representing Local Government in the Northern Territory.

Along with other State/Territory Local Government Associations in Australia, LGANT is a member of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) which represents the local government sector at the national level.

LGANT has its office in Parap NT and operates only within the Territory.

WHAT WE DO

LGANT:

- Advocates to the Commonwealth and Territory governments on policy issues of concern to its member councils.
- Engages in research and policy development on behalf of the local government sector.
- Provides councils across the Northern Territory advice on good governance practices as well as a suite of non-accredited governance training.
- Manages 1880 kilometres of mostly unsealed roads on behalf of local government, majority on Aboriginal lands – the only local government peak organization in Australia to do so.
- Provides industrial relations and human resources services through its relationship with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA).
- Provides waste management expertise to member councils.
- Reduce procurement costs through access to the National Procurement Network (NPN) and Local Buy preferred panel contracts.

EMPLOYEES

The LGANT Secretariat consists of 8 full time staff. This includes a Chief Executive Officer, Director Member Services and Infrastructure, Manager Corporate Services, Senior Policy Advisor, Senior Governance Advisor and 2 project officers. Currently, there are no staff members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

MANAGEMENT

As of November 2021, sixteen local government councils are subscription members of LGANT. This includes four municipal, three shire and nine regional councils.

At a strategic level, LGANT is guided by a nine-person Executive Committee (Board) elected from the member councils. Each member of the Executive serves a 2-year term. Three of the nine current Executive Committee members are Aboriginal. The functioning of LGANT is guided by its Constitution and Charter.

LGANT's CEO is responsible for LGANT's day-to-day operations and manages the work of the Executive Committee Secretariat.



Photo: Staff, delegates and speakers attending the LGANT General Meeting in 2021 and 2022.

OUR RAP

Why we want to develop a RAP

Several factors underpin LGANT's desire to develop a RAP:

- At the heart of the reconciliation process is strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians. This is an objective that LGANT very much supports.
- In July 2020, ALGA signed onto the National Agreement on Closing the Gap making the local government sector (including LGANT) a more active participant in efforts to improve the socio-economic and cultural outcomes of Aboriginal people in Australia.
- LGANT is one of three parties to the NT's first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The other parties are the NT Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs division) and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT. The Closing the Gap Implementation Plan was endorsed by the NT Cabinet in July 2021.
- We view the preparation and implementation of a RAP to be an important complementary activity to our participation in Closing the Gap. In fact, preparing and implementing a RAP is a LGANT commitment in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan along with reviewing our employment and procurement policies to eliminate any impediments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in both areas.
- Our member regional councils are the largest employers of Aboriginal people in remote Aboriginal communities in the NT. In addition to the usual functions of local government, regional councils also provide a wide range of essential services (e.g., postal, Centrelink) on behalf of other levels of government (NT and Commonwealth) in remote areas. Through grant funding supplied by Commonwealth and NT grant programs, regional councils provide a variety of community-based programs such as aged care, school nutrition, youth diversion, and sports and recreation.
- As the peak body for the local government sector, we believe we should show leadership in our sector by having our own RAP. Preparing and implementing a RAP is a priority action identified in our recent Strategic Plan (2021-2024). It should be noted that this RAP is for LGANT as an organisation. It does not include actions to be taken by its member councils. However, we hope that by having a LGANT RAP, we can share our experience with our member councils and encourage those local councils that do not already have a RAP to prepare their own.
- Three of the nine members of the 2022 current LGANT Executive are Aboriginal people. 87.6 percent of elected members in NT's nine regional councils are Aboriginal. following the August 2021 NT Local Government Elections. Three regional councils have 100 percent Aboriginal elected members: MacDonnell Regional Council, Tiwi Islands Regional Council, and West Arnhem Regional Council.

RAP WORKING GROUP

We established a 5-member RAP Working Group to prepare the RAP. The Working Group consists of two Executive members (two Aboriginal), an Aboriginal council representative from each of the Alice Springs Town Council and the Tiwi Islands Regional Council, and our Senior Policy Advisor (non-Aboriginal).

A new Working Group will be formed for the implementation phase.

RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

This is the start of LGANT's reconciliation journey. For this reason, LGANT has prepared a Reflect RAP.



Photo by Neil Hummerston: *Join the dance - Uluru Festival*

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

LGANT is one of three parties to the NT's first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The other parties are the NT Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs division) and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT. The Closing the Gap Implementation Plan was endorsed by the NT Cabinet in July 2021.

LGANT continues to partner with NT Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs division) and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT in the implementation phase of the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. This includes representation by our CEO as a member of the Executive Council overseeing the Plan's implementation and participation by our Senior Policy Advisor on the NT Partnership Working Group

LGANT is a member of the Steering Group established to guide preparation of the NT Government's Burial and Cremation Bill. The Steering Group's efforts focus on determining cultural appropriate ways for burials to occur on Aboriginal lands. The Steering Group is administered by the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet's Local Government and Regional Development (LGRD) unit. Steering Group membership includes LGRD, LGANT and all Aboriginal Land Councils in the NT.

LGANT has become more active in the Aboriginal policy space over the past year. To assist in engaging LGANT and its member councils with Aboriginal policy issues, LGANT has sought out Aboriginal policy thought leaders and had them present at LGANT's biannual conferences. In April 2021, LGANT hosted a forum for its member councils focused on new and recently reformed Aboriginal policy initiatives at the national and Territory levels. This included presentations by leaders of NT Treaty, NT Local Decision Making, Closing the Gap, and Indigenous Regional and Local Voice.

At LGANT's November 2021 General Meeting and Conference in Alice Springs, the Hon Selena Uibo MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, presented on the NT's landmark Aboriginal Justice Agreement. There was also a presentation by the Children and Families Tripartite Forum on the 10-Year Generational Strategy for the NT and a presentation by Victoria Daly Regional Council member Shirley Garlett on the importance of youth recreation in relation to mental health and Closing the Gap objectives.

Each LGANT major event (e.g., Conferences, general meetings, symposiums) include a Welcome to Country protocol. An Acknowledgement of Country is given at the start of all LGANT Executive Meeting.



RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	May 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	May 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to LGANT staff and Executive. 	May 27 – June 3 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	May 27 – June 3 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support LGANT staff and Executive to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May 27 – June 3 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate LGANT's commitment to reconciliation to all staff and Executive. 	May 2022	LGANT CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that LGANT can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	May 2022 (ongoing)	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	May 2022 (ongoing)	Senior Policy Advisor
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	August 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of LGANT HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	August 2022	HR Manager + Senior Policy Advisor



RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within LGANT. 	August 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within LGANT. 	August 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within LGANT's operational area. 	August 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase LGANT staff and Executive's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	August 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst LGANT staff and Executive about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. Recognition of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders local government elected members in the Northern Territory. 	3 – 10 July 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce LGANT staff and Executive to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	3 – 10 July 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	3 – 10 July 2022	Senior Policy Adviser



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within LGANT. 	August 2022	HR Manager + Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	August 2022	HR Manager + Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review LGANT's employment policies to remove any barriers to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 	August 2022	HR Manager + Senior Policy Advisor
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for LGANT procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	August 2022	Member Services Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership for LGANT. 	August 2022	Member Services Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review procurement practices with the objective of encouraging greater Aboriginal Business involvement. 	August 2022	Member Services Officer



GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May 2022	LGANT CEO
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	• Engage LGANT senior leaders and Executive in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2022	LGANT CEO
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on LGANT's RAP commitments.	July 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
12. 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 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2023	Senior Policy Advisor

