REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

July 2019 - June 2020
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We are delighted to introduce our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Hunter Water. This RAP is a reflection of our commitment to create improved economic, health and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our business operates within the traditional country of the Awabakal, Birpai, Darkinjung, Wonaruah and Worimi peoples. We recognise and deeply value their cultural heritage and beliefs and in particular, their custodianship of the waters of the Hunter for more than 40,000 years. We also wish to express our gratitude that we share this land today and our sorrow for the costs of that sharing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through the contribution we commit to make with our Reflect RAP, our hope and intention is that we can move to a place of equity, justice and partnership together.

Over the past few years we have been working to improve relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, increase the number of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers and improve employment opportunities and outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This RAP builds on that journey in a real way and symbolises our move towards a deeper commitment to reconciliation. It provides a framework and plan to help us focus and coordinate our reconciliation efforts over the next 12 months.

We would like to thank Gidgee Group for their guidance and support to Hunter Water as we take this journey. We look forward to delivering on this plan and are excited by the prospect of what we can achieve with our communities, our partners and our workforce.

Terry Lawler AO
Chairman

Jim Bentley
Managing Director

A Message from the Chairman and MD

As a State Owned Corporation Hunter Water provides drinking water, wastewater, recycled water and some stormwater services to a population of almost 600,000 people in homes and businesses across the Lower Hunter.

We aspire to be a valued partner in delivering the aspirations of our region. We are working to enable sustainable growth, and the life our communities desire, with high quality, affordable services.

We are proud of our humble beginnings, starting in the 1880s when water was first delivered to Newcastle from a temporary pumping station on the Hunter River at Oakhampton to Newcastle No.1 Reservoir.

Like our region, we have grown considerably, and we are constantly looking for new ways to provide great services, enable good development and be a thought leader.

We are committed to being a great employer that operates in an efficient and productive manner, enhancing the wellbeing of our employees.

In the Hunter region we employ 474 people across a number of sites who are committed to delivering safe, affordable and reliable services to our community.

Currently we employ 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff based on staff identifying when they commence employment.

Our employees help deliver the life our communities desire, working closely with contractors, stakeholders and the community. Together we are building our water resilience capabilities and ensuring a sustainable water future for the Lower Hunter.

About Hunter Water
A Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome Hunter Water to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program and to formally endorse its inaugural Reflect RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, Hunter Water joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Reflect RAP provides Hunter Water a roadmap to begin its reconciliation journey. Through implementing a Reflect RAP, Hunter Water will lay the foundations for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

We wish Hunter Water well as it takes these first critical steps in its reconciliation journey. We encourage the organisation to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on the successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

“Reconciliation is hard work—it’s a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.”

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Hunter Water on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia
Our RAP
Developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will contribute to the national reconciliation movement by building strong relationships, respect and opportunities within our organisation and the communities that we serve.

This RAP will support our strategic plan and includes practical actions that will drive our contribution to reconciliation both internally and within our local communities.

A RAP Working Group has been formed to provide a range of perspectives to the Executive Team which is responsible for the implementation of the actions and supporting initiatives. The RAP’s Executive Sponsor is Victor Prasad, Executive Manager Customer Strategy and Retail.

Whilst Hunter Water Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employment currently sits at 2.1% of our workforce, there is a diversity across categories from apprenticeships & traineeships, under graduates, field civil operatives, administration and engineering.

We understand the importance of increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members and have committed to a target of 3.8% by the end of the 2021/2022 financial year.

This target represents the proportion of the community in our region that are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation
For Hunter Water, developing a RAP is about contributing to the national reconciliation movement by building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout the Lower Hunter.

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their strong and ongoing connection to the land, rivers, creeks and oceans of the region in which we live and work together, and we value this rich history which spans many thousands of years.

We seek to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, embrace their wisdom, listen and learn from them as we continue to improve how we deliver our services to local communities.

This RAP outlines how Hunter Water will contribute to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our organisation and in the communities in which we operate.

It is the beginning of a journey towards developing and strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and engaging our staff and stakeholders in reconciliation.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, respect their knowledge and seek to partner with and learn from them.

In enabling the aspirations of our region, we seek to build and maintain strong relationships with the communities in which we operate, and we seek to gain their input and support towards our decisions.

We value diversity and want our workforce to be representative of the communities that we serve.

We are committed to being a valued partner to our community and positively contributing to our region. Our approach is collaborative and is focussed on 3 main areas:
About the Artwork

Mariin Kaling - All for Water

This highly textured artwork celebrates our shared natural resource of water and Hunter Water’s vision to work together across communities to enhance a love of water and invite all to participate in custodianship of this precious and valuable resource.

A large gathering circle sits at the very centre of the design, highlighting a love of water and the water cycle. Encircled by the traditional symbol for water, three water holes are each made up of three inner circles and embraced by people symbols. The imagery holds significant meaning of inclusiveness, joining together in respectful relationships, partnership and as one team, as we plan for the sustainable use of water, regeneration and caring for country both now and into the future.

The three waterholes within this central design hold a threefold meaning across key focus areas:

- It depicts the three key RAP areas being Relationship, Respect and Opportunities
- The care of water across time:
  - Past - Gaining insight and wisdom from traditional practices and our history
  - Present - Invitation to collaborate, have a voice and bring ideas forward
  - Future - Creating sustainability for future generations
- Community input through Youth Programs, Learning and Your Voice

The traditional people symbols embracing each of the waterholes highlight it’s about people and being inclusive of all in this journey, while four waterways flowing horizontally across the canvas highlight this journey from the history of water and into the future. This imagery also depicts the four core business areas of Hunter Water: drinking water, wastewater, recycled water and storm water and relates to all of our waterways including natural springs, dams, wetlands, rivers and oceans.

Five gathering circles interwoven within the artwork backdrop highlight Hunter Water’s footprint on country through representation of tribal groups located across Hunter Water’s operations, being Awabakal, Birpai, Darkinjung, Wonaruah and Worimi people. In addition, these symbols also reflect Hunter Water’s five values: Trust, Wellbeing, Leading, Learning and Inclusion.

Waterhole imagery on either side of the central image shows working together around a shared vision across all areas of water management. This is also reflective of the history of Newcastle through depicting two of our water history icons in the temporary pumping station on the Hunter River at Oakhampton and Newcastle No. 1 reservoir on Tyrell Street.

The artwork backdrop reflects our local country and water through colour palette and design. These invaluable resources invite a reconnection back to nature and undergird Hunter Water’s commitment to building better relationships and closing the gap through reconciliation.

The artist, Saretta Fielding, is an award winning Aboriginal artist of the Wonaruah and Awabakal Nations located in the Hunter Valley NSW.

The Artist

The artist, Saretta Fielding, is an award winning Aboriginal artist of the Wonaruah and Awabakal Nations located in the Hunter Valley NSW.
Our Partnerships and Current Activities

Learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Hunter Water has engaged the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle to conduct a literature review to understand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community’s values and attitudes regarding bodies of water, waterways, water services, and the disposal and reuse of wastewater in Hunter Water’s area of operations.

It is expected that this literature review will provide an initial point of knowledge while gathering meaningful information to help inform Hunter Water’s long term planning for our region’s resilient water future.

Hunter Water commenced a formal program of NAIDOC celebrations in 2018 through the production of a NAIDOC video featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the engagement of Professor John Maynard from the Wollotuka Institute to provide a NAIDOC speech to staff.

Community Partnerships

- Annual attendance and participation in NAIDOC Celebrations hosted by the Awabakal; Biraban and Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

- Participation in the NAIDOC Community Day at the Newcastle Foreshore through provision of a hydration station.

Pictured: Hunter Water staff with the Director of the Wollotuka Institute, Leah Armstrong, and scholarship recipients.

Internal Activities and Initiatives


- A partnership with the Wollotuka Institute to award two scholarships every three years, commenced in 2018.
## Relationships

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<tr>
<td>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations</td>
<td>• Identify current and previous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers involved in investigating and assessing Aboriginal cultural heritage and communicate the actions and deliverables within the RAP to better engage them as members of our community.</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>GMP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area to collaborate with and share our reconciliation journey.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>EMCSR</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Research and apply best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>EMCSR</td>
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<td>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</td>
<td>• Promote Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and materials by circulating them to staff through our internal communication channels and making them available on the intranet.</td>
<td>27 May-3 June 2020</td>
<td>HPA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event and promote this participation through our social media platforms.</td>
<td>27 May-3 June 2020</td>
<td>TLCCA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage senior leaders to participate in at least one external local community event to recognise and celebrate NRW and promote this participation through our social media platforms.</td>
<td>27 May-3 June 2020</td>
<td>TLCCA</td>
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<td>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</td>
<td>• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff during Sorry Day, NRW and NAIDOC Week through our internal communication and social media platforms. &lt;br&gt; • Develop a list of external stakeholders to engage and/or partner with on our reconciliation journey to better engage them as members of our community. &lt;br&gt; • Develop a list of other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with and share RAP learnings on our reconciliation journey.</td>
<td>July 2019, 27 May - 3 June 2020</td>
<td>MD &lt;br&gt; December 2019 &lt;br&gt; April 2020 &lt;br&gt; HPA, TLCCA &lt;br&gt; HPA, HPC</td>
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<td>4. Build public and community awareness of Hunter Water’s RAP</td>
<td>• In consultation with an Aboriginal artist, develop a range of digital media of Hunter Water’s RAP artwork, such as watermarks, to be used in Hunter Water external communications and promotions to raise the awareness of the Hunter Water RAP. &lt;br&gt; • Report on RAP progress in all appropriate external platforms including the Annual Report, website and social media platforms.</td>
<td>September 2019 &lt;br&gt; December 2019</td>
<td>HPA &lt;br&gt; HPA &lt;br&gt; HPA, TLCCA</td>
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<td>5. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies</td>
<td>• Continue the implementation, communication and ongoing review of the Hunter Water Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: 2018-2020. &lt;br&gt; • Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination provisions, and go beyond compliance to promote reconciliation. &lt;br&gt; • Research and apply best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</td>
<td>July 2019 &lt;br&gt; December 2019 &lt;br&gt; April 2020</td>
<td>HPC</td>
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<td>6. Promote staff awareness of Hunter Water activities on country and RAP initiatives</td>
<td>• Include information on the RAP within the staff induction process. &lt;br&gt; • Invite staff and contractors that are engaging with Traditional Owners and Land Councils to speak at ‘Lunch and Learn’ educational sessions, including inviting Local Elders to attend and speak. &lt;br&gt; • Produce ‘Good News Stories’ to promote awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and community engagement on Hunter Water projects.</td>
<td>July 2019 &lt;br&gt; September 2019 &lt;br&gt; September 2019</td>
<td>HPC &lt;br&gt; HPC &lt;br&gt; HPA</td>
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## Respect

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<td>7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning</td>
<td>• Promote Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool on the intranet and encourage employees to use the tool through targeted communications.</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>HPC</td>
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<td>• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>HPC</td>
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<td>• Develop a plan for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>HPC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Engage a locally recognised Aboriginal Leader in the development and delivery of a Cultural Competency/Awareness training program to staff.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>HPC</td>
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<td>8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</td>
<td>• Engage a locally recognised Aboriginal Leader to commence a ‘place name’ project for Hunter Water meeting and conference rooms.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>TLCCA</td>
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<td>• Develop a list of local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area as a resource for community engagement.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>EO, HPC</td>
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<td>• Develop protocols for using Acknowledgement to Country.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>EO, HPC</td>
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<td>• Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>EO, HPC</td>
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<td>9. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week</td>
<td>• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal peoples and communities in the area in which we operate.</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>HPC, HPA</td>
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<td>• Promote NAIDOC Week to our staff, including external events in our local area, through our internal communications.</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>HPC, HPA</td>
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<td>• Ensure RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event.</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>HPC, HPA</td>
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<td>• In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organise an in-house NAIDOC Week event hosted by a Local Elder to celebrate and promote awareness of NAIDOC Week to staff.</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>HPC, HPA</td>
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## Opportunities

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| **10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development** | • Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy within our organisation.  
• Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.  
• Build a deeper understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment experience to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | September 2019 | HPC            |
| **11. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student career pathways** | • Build partnerships with local high schools to participate in student careers events aimed at increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ awareness of career opportunities within Hunter Water. | October 2019   | HPC            |
| **12. Build collaborative partnerships with Hunter Water contractors to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment** | • Engage with Hunter Water contractors to promote the RAP and develop initiatives aimed at supporting contractors to increase their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. | December 2019  | GMP            |
| **13. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes** | • Develop and implement a plan for sustainable procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.  
• Assess NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and Supply Nation membership and subscribe to the one that best supports the achievements of the RAP deliverables.  
• Source Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander catering services and function centres to be utilised for staff development and management meetings. | August 2019    | GMP            |
## Tracking and Progress

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| 14. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP | • Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.  
• Draft a Terms of Reference and meeting schedule for the RWG. | July 2019  
August 2019 | EMCSR, HPC |
| 15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments | • Hold senior leaders accountable for the delivery of RAP commitments.  
• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.  
• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | July 2019  
August 2019  
December 2019 | EMCSR, HPC  
EMCSR, HPC  
RAP Working Group |
| 16. 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.  
• Ensure six monthly reporting to the Executive Management team on progress.  
• Ensure six monthly reporting to the Board’s Corporate Governance Committee as part of Diversity and Inclusion reporting. | September 2019  
October 2019, April 2020  
October 2019, April 2020 | EMCSR, HPC  
EMCSR, HPC  
EMCSR, HPC |
| 17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP | • Review the RAP based on lessons learned and identify and record both achievements and ongoing challenges.  
• Consider and implement approved changes to the RAP based on the learnings.  
• Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP. | February 2020  
March 2020  
April 2020 | EMCSR, HPC  
EMCSR, HPC  
EMCSR, HPC |

EO   Executive Officer  
EMCSR  Executive Manager Customer Strategy & Retail  
GMP   Group Manager Procurement  
HPA   Head of Public Affairs  
HPC   Head of People and Culture  
MD   Managing Director  
TLCCA  Team Leader Customer & Community Advocacy
Mariin Kaling - All for Water
By Saretta Fielding

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For more information about this RAP contact
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