



Reflect

**Reconciliation Action Plan
October 2020 – December 2021**



Message from the Electoral Commissioner



It is my pleasure to present the Electoral Commission of Queensland's (ECQ) Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This is the ECQ's first RAP, which I hope lays the groundwork for future plans. The ECQ has a proud history of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Queensland to ensure they can exercise their right to participate in public life. This Reflect RAP aims build upon and consolidate these previous efforts and enshrines reconciliation as a core priority of the ECQ in leading up to the State and local government elections in 2024.

The RAP is only the first step and will focus on the internal changes necessary for ECQ to develop its capacity as a culturally capable service provider. Doing so will ensure the ECQ can effectively work with the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, remote, regional and urban, and deliver electoral services that meet their needs. It is my hope that the ECQ will be able to support more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enrol to vote, cast ballots to have their say, and stand for elected office to represent their communities. I also hope the ECQ becomes an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I recognise, however, the ECQ will have limited success if it tries to achieve its ambitious goals on its own. This RAP will also encourage the ECQ to build stronger and enduring relationships with other organisations to work together on the path towards reconciliation.

Both myself and Wade Lewis, the Assistant Electoral Commissioner and RAP champion, look forward to starting this journey with the ECQ.

Pat Vidgen PSM
Electoral Commissioner of Queensland

Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Electoral Commission of Queensland to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Electoral Commission of Queensland 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 over 2.3 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 Electoral Commission of Queensland 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 to the Electoral Commission Queensland, 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

Our Business

The Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) is an independent statutory authority responsible for the impartial conduct of Queensland elections. To achieve this the ECQ's primary functions encompass several areas.

- Preparing, planning and delivering fair, transparent and accessible elections, including State general elections, local government elections and industrial elections.
- Regulating and promoting compliance with electoral funding and disclosure requirements by political parties and candidates.
- Maintaining equitable representation across electoral boundaries to ensure the vote of every Queensland elector holds the same value.

The ECQ's vision is to deliver electoral excellence with integrity for Queensland.

Outside elections, the ECQ employs approximately 70 people in its head office and warehouse facility in Brisbane. However, during a major election, employee numbers expand to approximately 12,000 temporary election staff employed in every locality across Queensland. As of 30 June 2020, no members of the ECQ's permanent head office staff identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. During the 2020 local government elections, held in March, the ECQ employed 347 individuals who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander peoples.

Our RAP – Towards 2024

The ECQ is committed to the process of reconciliation through building its organisational capability, cultural capacity and improving the accessibility of electoral services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This initial Reflect RAP demonstrates that commitment and outlines the first steps on the path towards reconciliation. Building on this RAP, by the State general election in 2024 the ECQ aims to increase:

- the numbers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples employed as temporary election staff
- the numbers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples employed by the ECQ across a range of roles
- the enrolment and election turnout rates of eligible Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Every eligible Queensland adult has the right to participate in elections, however this was not always the case. From 1885, Queensland law explicitly excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from voting and Queensland was the last state in Australia to lift these prohibitions in 1965. Extending compulsory voting to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a recognition that they have the same legal status and rights of the rest of the population did not occur in Queensland until 1971.

Almost 50 years after the Queensland Government repealed discriminatory electoral laws against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there are still gaps in participation that need to be addressed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are among the least likely to participate in Queensland's elections. According to the estimates based on population and Census data, as at 30 June 2020, only 76.2 per cent of eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are on the electoral roll compared to 95.3 per cent of all eligible Queenslanders. In addition to the low rates of enrolment, low levels of election turnout are apparent within Queensland's discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In the 2016 local government elections, Queensland's 16 Indigenous local governments recorded an average turnout of approximately 73.8 per cent compared to 83 per cent recorded for all of Queensland. In the March 2020 elections, participation appeared to increase slightly to 74.7 per cent compared to 77 per cent across Queensland.

The ECQ is committed to creating an inclusive electoral system that facilitates electoral participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban and regional communities across Queensland. To achieve this, the ECQ aims to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, build respect and understanding with communities, and facilitate co-design of culturally appropriate electoral services.

An important step in improving the electoral participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as progressing reconciliation, is to facilitate economic opportunities. During major State and local government elections, the ECQ employs in excess of 12,000 temporary election staff, however, until recently no diversity data had been collected on the composition of the election workforce. The ECQ has already taken steps to remedy this and will use the data gathered to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For 2020, targeted promotion of election employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been undertaken by disseminating information through relevant communication channels. The ECQ will consider its current employment policies and recruitment strategies to

facilitate increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The commitment to reconciliation will also make the ECQ a better service provider to all Queensland electors. Queensland is one of the most diverse states in Australia in terms of its people, their distribution across different communities as well as the geography and size of the terrain that needs to be covered. The development and implementation of a RAP reflects the ECQ's commitment to develop creative and innovative solutions to these challenges that will ultimately improve services to all of Queensland's 3.3 million electors.

The ECQ has offered many services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and delivered numerous elections in Indigenous local governments. However, this first Reflect RAP marks the ECQ's commitment to the process of reconciliation. The RAP will set the course for how the ECQ will develop organisationally, design culturally appropriate services and create more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To drive engagement and awareness of the ECQ's commitment to reconciliation, the Assistant Electoral Commissioner will be the RAP champion.

Our partnerships and activities

The ECQ has, for many years, been undertaking positive steps in assisting and supporting the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. The ECQ has engaged and provided services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and takes extra steps to ensure these activities are delivered in culturally appropriate ways. In recent years the ECQ has:

- delivered electoral services in Queensland's Indigenous local governments, including a bespoke service delivery model operating out of Cairns to service remote councils during the March 2020 local government elections
- invested heavily in the Aurukun Shire Council elections in recognition of its unique circumstances, including developing a separate service plan for the Aurukun community
- supported the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), including the provision of staff members, to deliver Remote Area Mobile Polling in Far North Queensland
- worked closely with the AEC Indigenous Electoral Participation Program
- provided all ECQ staff with cultural competency training in providing services to and engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and
- engaged closely with leaders from Indigenous local governments to improve service delivery in these regions.



Relationships

1 Action

Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations that represent both regional and urban communities.	June 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2020	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance

2 Action

Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2021	Team Leader, Communications
RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2021	Electoral Commissioner

3 Action

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2020	Electoral Commissioner
Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2020	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2020	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Continue engagement and participation in the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand Indigenous Participation Working Group.	December 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance

4 Action

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2021	Team Leader, Human Resources



Respect

5 Action

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Examine opportunities for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	December 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2021	Team Leader, Human Resources

6 Action

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	December 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Build upon the existing staff awareness of and understanding of cultural protocols, such as Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, and embed these in practice, including conducting a Welcome to Country at training sessions for temporary election staff.	July 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance Director, Corporate Services

7 Action

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2021	Team Leader, Communications
Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2021	RAP Working Group Chair



Opportunities

8 Action

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve the quality of diversity data on temporary election staff.	December 2020	Director, Corporate Services
Develop strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander temporary election staff employed to deliver future major elections using diversity data as a benchmark.	July 2021	Team Leader, Human Resources
Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing as part of the ECQ's strategic workforce planning to inform future head office employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2021	Director, Corporate Services

9 Action

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Examine opportunities for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2021	Chief Financial Officer
Investigate Supply Nation membership and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises.	December 2021	Chief Financial Officer

10 Action

Increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the electoral process.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Plan and implement, under the advice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, appropriate electoral services in discrete Indigenous communities during the 2020 State election to maximise voter turnout.	October 2020	Executive Director, Election Events Management
Partner with the Australian Electoral Commission and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to develop targeted strategies to increase the rate of electoral enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	December 2021	Executive Director, Election Events Management Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Develop culturally appropriate services that aim to increase the turnout of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at State and local government elections.	December 2021	Executive Director, Election Events Management
Develop culturally appropriate education tools and engagement programs to minimise barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples standing as candidates in State and local government elections.	December 2021	Director, Funding, Disclosure and Compliance



Governance

11 Action

Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2020	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance
Finalise Terms of Reference for the RWG.	March 2021	Chair RAP Working Group
Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group

12 Action

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	January 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group
Engage the ECQ's Senior Management Team in the delivery of RAP commitments through quarterly reports on progress.	January 2021	Electoral Commissioner
Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group

13 Action

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance

14 Action

Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	August 2021	Director, Strategy, Policy and Governance