



Reflect **Reconciliation** **Action Plan**

AUGUST 2023 – DECEMBER 2024

rowland.



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Rowland acknowledges the Yuggera and Turrbal people as the Traditional Owners of the land where we have met and worked for more than 30 years. We pay our respects to their Elders and recognise we are part of a long history of storytelling on Meeanjin.

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Our RAP is one of the stepping stones on our journey to expand our awareness of where we fit in the landscape of the past, present and future.

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



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

Rowland joins a network of more than 2,200 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 Rowland 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 Rowland, 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



We believe that driving a successful organisation is significantly about people, relationships, conversations and decisions.

Rowland is one of Australia's leading strategic communication and advisory firms.

Over the past 30 years, we have cemented ourselves as an independent, full-service corporate communication, digital, creative and training agency.

We champion communication as a powerful strategic function to help clients build sustainable organisational, corporate and commercial value.

We support our clients on business-critical issues and events, such as corporate or financial transactions, managing sensitive issues or crises, securing licences to operate for organisations, as well as major infrastructure, development and resources projects, and bringing exciting new brands, products or services to market.

We have assisted many leading Australian and global corporations, brands and government agencies successfully achieve their corporate strategies, shape their internal cultures and manage their external reputations. We have also provided individuals within these organisations with communication training to assist them effectively engage, present, interview and lead.

Known for our market insights and intelligence on current issues and trends, we understand the media, digital, political and societal landscapes that matter to our clients. Our awareness of the multiplicity of environments in which our clients operate and our ability to combine strategy with creativity, means we can build relationships that maintain stakeholder trust and create growth opportunities.

We believe that driving a successful organisation is significantly about people, relationships, conversations and decisions. We know that behind every corporate story — including our own — are the values and relationships that build businesses, protect reputations and transform organisations.

Rowland employs 56 staff and 25 contractors, and currently our organisation has no known staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not known, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this. Rowland has engaged Noel Niddrie from Winangali as an Associate for more than 20 years. Noel provides cultural context and advice to clients, and as part of the Rowland family, guides us on our long-term reconciliation journey.

Rowland is based in Brisbane with regional and national affiliates. We have also enjoyed an association with FleishmanHillard — one of the world's largest communication groups — since May 2007. This alliance offers our Australian clients easy access to knowledgeable advice on reaching worldwide stakeholders and specialist communication advice for entering new international markets. With headquarters in St Louis in the United States where it was founded in 1946, FleishmanHillard has more than 80 offices and 3,600 people across the key global markets of North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, South Africa and Latin America.

Rowland has one office at Level 2, 10 Eagle Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4000.

Our RAP

Rowland is in constant pursuit of greater knowledge and understanding, applying this thirst across our client work and internal business development.

Achieving greater knowledge is a journey and our RAP is part of our ambition to understand the true histories of this Country in which we do business, and the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages. Rowland's RAP champion is our Chief Operating Officer.

Our leadership team sees our RAP as one of the stepping stones on our journey to expand our awareness of where we fit in the landscape of the past, present and future. We want to challenge what we think we know, become culturally competent, and change behaviour and mindsets.

As a proportion of our clients are in the resources and agriculture sector (among many other sectors), we undertake this RAP to help our clients make the best decisions in the interests of the land on which we are working. We want to be part of wider, genuine reconciliation across Queensland and Australia.

For Rowland, our RAP is not a once-off document to be completed and tucked away — this plan will assimilate into our business, influencing key environmental, social and governance decisions for our organisation and our clients.

Our RAP Working Group, under the authority of senior management and the Rowland Board, are the key persons dedicated to integrating our RAP into our everyday business. Our governance of the RAP will be focused on enduring longevity and keeping our learnings front of mind for our staff; RAP activities are assigned to roles, not people, to ensure the reconciliation process continues. Our future RAP Working Group will be expanded to comprise at least one representative from each practice area within Rowland. Our RAP Working Group consists of the following positions:

- ▶ Chief Operating Officer
- ▶ Design Director
- ▶ Senior Designer
- ▶ Senior Account Manager
- ▶ Senior Account Executive
- ▶ Account Executive
- ▶ First Nations Advisor (identifies as First Nations).

We currently undertake monthly presentations to staff and have an open invitation to any staff who want to join the Group or learn more about our reconciliation journey. As our knowledge grows, we will continue to review and update our processes, strategic plans and language (to ensure inclusivity and respect). Internally, we will include Acknowledgement of Country within our email signatures, internal and external meetings and events. We have, and will continue to, celebrate and value key milestones including NAIDOC Week and significant dates for the Traditional Owners of the Country in which we operate (Yuggera). We want to incorporate First Nation Peoples' voices in our storytelling, and we have the opportunity to change perceptions by highlighting the diversity of First Nations peoples and their roles within society.

We want to incorporate First Nation Peoples' voices in our storytelling.

◀ We encouraged staff to present their knowledge of Traditional Owners in a place particularly close to their heart ▶

CASE STUDY

Discovering the traditional lands of Australia's First Peoples

During NAIDOC Week 2022, the RAP Working Group encouraged staff to research and present their knowledge of Traditional Owners in a place particularly close to their heart.

Staff provided an image and a story of their connection to the place, along with the name of the First Nations group, based on the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Map of Indigenous Australia. For many Rowlanders, this was a new resource and seeing a map of Australia with different geo-political boundaries, including many that straddle state borders, provided a fresh outlook.

While only a small proportion of the workplace provided place names, anecdotally many more engaged with the activity, reading their colleagues' reflections via posters in our staff kitchen.

We built on this first activity via our 2022 Festive Season external communication to clients. Rowlanders were asked to recommend a favourite activity or Australian destination with the corresponding First Nations group. The transmedia campaign appeared on printed cards, eDM and socials, with the full suite of Rowlander recommendations on an interactive microsite.

My maternal grandmother was an Aboriginal woman and I felt proud to be honouring her heritage

Helen Besly,
Group Senior Executive and
Rowland Board member

CASE STUDY

Connecting to the past

Rowland's former Managing Director and current Group Senior Executive and Rowland Board member, Helen Besly, joined the Meeanjin Board after Wayne Coolwell, of Mununjali heritage, reached out for support in bringing the Meeanjin Heritage and Remembrance Centre to life. Alongside her fellow volunteers, Helen jumped at the chance to be involved.

"My maternal grandmother was an Aboriginal woman and I felt proud to be honouring her heritage through this project, even though I didn't know a lot about her background. I saw this as an opportunity to understand her life and experiences," Helen said.

"She was a beautiful woman and I remember being fascinated by her hands as a child as they were darker on top than on her palms. She used to use a lot of white powder on her face and wore long sleeves. As we didn't speak about her past, I didn't know she was an Aboriginal woman until much later in life."

From 2014-2018, Helen was the key driver of the coordination and administration of the Meeanjin Board, which comprised business, government, civic and not-for-profit representatives all working towards establishing a dedicated First Nations Heritage/Remembrance Centre.

The Centre was designed to be a hub of excellence for First Nations education and research, and to serve as a focal point for the display and preservation of First Nations heritage. At this time, the dream has not yet been realised.

"Wayne's vision was extraordinary — he wanted to tell the deep histories across food, medicine, art and storytelling," Helen said.

"I learnt a lot about First Nations community knowledge and practice, the importance of consultation (yarning), and absolute respect for elders and ancestors. While I'm sad the initiative has not yet reached fruition, I was proud to connect my heritage with my work."

We endorse and commit to developing relationships with the local First Nations community, including investigating the development of an advisory group to provide a sounding board or cultural echo chamber to support us in our journey, and ensure every step we take is respectful and inclusive. There are various levels of knowledge within the Rowland workplace; we encourage staff to continue to explore events and additional external learning and professional development opportunities to improve our knowledge, develop our careers and enhance/improve social awareness.

Rowland has commenced its reconciliation journey through partnerships with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses such as Winangali (strategic advice and guidance) and Bibbulmun (stationery). Rowland and our Chairman Geoff Rodgers are long-term supporters of Yalari (see *Case Study — Supporting the passion of Yalari*). Our former Managing Director and current Group Senior Executive and Rowland Board member, Helen Besly, is the former Deputy Board Chair of the Meeanjin Heritage and Remembrance Centre — an initiative led by The Centre for Aboriginal Independence and Enterprise. The Meeanjin Heritage and Remembrance Centre was designed to serve as an essential focal point for First Nations peoples in south-east Queensland and a key contributor to the advancement of First Nations cultures for all peoples through artistic, cultural, educational, hospitality and tourism business units. Helen joined the Board of Meeanjin in February 2014 and supported the strategic decisions for the Centre until stepping down in May 2018 (see *Case Study — Connecting to the past*).

Rowland participated in NAIDOC Week 2022, encouraging staff to research and present their knowledge of Traditional Owners for a place in Australia that is particularly close to their heart (see *Case Study — Discovering the traditional lands of Australia's First Peoples*).

Through our work with key clients, we have learned to become more culturally competent and aware of how First Nations businesses and cultures work to successfully implement projects. This is also a professional development opportunity for staff.

In addition, several staff have attended Supply Nation events, gaining a greater awareness about the sector including the scope and range of what First Nations businesses offer.

We encourage staff to continue to explore events and additional external learning and professional development opportunities to improve our knowledge.

Our partnerships

At Rowland, we are committed to creating a work environment where the cultures, beliefs and values of all staff, including First Nations peoples, are acknowledged and respected.

This inclusive employment approach is driven by an executive team with a demonstrated commitment to supporting local First Nations culture groups. Rowland's Chairman Geoff Rodgers continues to be a supporter of Yalari, a provider of top-line secondary educational opportunities for First Nations students (see *Case Study – Supporting the passion of Yalari*). Rowland's former Managing Director and current Group Senior Executive and Rowland Board member, Helen Besly, is the former Deputy Board Chair of the Meeanjin Heritage and Remembrance Centre — an initiative led by The Centre for Aboriginal Independence and Enterprise (see *Case Study – Connecting to the past*). Rowland has also provided significant pro bono support to both of these organisations.

We feel extremely fortunate to have worked with many First Nations peoples on various client projects, and have forged strong friendships and working relationships with numerous First Nations culture groups throughout Australia.

Our staff include individuals with a variety of cultural backgrounds, and we engage First Nations Associates who are respected leaders in First Nations issues such as cultural heritage management, cultural awareness, native title and Traditional Owner engagement.

For projects and clients we work with, we aim to:

- ▶ familiarise ourselves with the business/project's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) — if available
- ▶ promote our RAP and its goals as part of who we are
- ▶ meet with client/project representatives with responsibility for the plan to understand how we can help facilitate outcomes
- ▶ draw on the skills and experience of our staff and Associates who identify as First Nations to understand cultural issues relating to the client/project
- ▶ where possible, proactively identify opportunities to engage Traditional Owners and local First Nations culture groups in the development of strategies and plans — to ensure cultural issues are understood, acknowledged and addressed.

In addition, Rowland holds a strategic alliance with Winangali — a Supply Nation-certified First Nations business. Rowland and Winangali's business relationship spans more than 20 years. Our combined corporate histories tell a story of demonstrated strategic communication and consultation experience. Together, we have worked on numerous First Nations engagement projects to assist each other's clients to engage appropriately with their key stakeholders.

Internal activities/initiatives include:

- ▶ NAIDOC Week — we encouraged staff to research and present their knowledge of Traditional Owners for a place in Australia that is particularly close to their heart
- ▶ In 2023, we plan to celebrate Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

◀ All Australians should be proud to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as one of the oldest civilisations on earth ▶

Geoff Rodgers,
Chairman, Rowland

CASE STUDY

Supporting the passion of Yalari

Rowland's Chairman Geoff Rodgers continues to be a supporter of Yalari, a provider of top-line secondary educational opportunities for First Nations students, after meeting founder Waverley Stanley over 20 years ago. Waverley's story, persona and ambition with Yalari captivated Geoff from the first meeting.

"Waverley's passion and commitment resonated with me strongly — not only because he was championing a good cause, but his work provided an extremely important opportunity for First Nations youth, their communities and Australia in general," Geoff said.

"All Australians should be proud to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as one of the oldest civilisations on earth, and when I saw such a practical and value-adding approach making a difference for our First Nations peoples, I couldn't help but feel amazingly awe-inspired."

Country speaks to us all, but you have to know how to listen

Noel Niddrie,
Winangali

CASE STUDY Winangali

For more than 20 years, Rowland has been privileged to partner with Noel Niddrie, a Kamilaroi and Dharug man, who has dedicated much of his 30-year professional life to improving the lives of First Nations Australians.

Rowland has held a highly valued relationship with Noel and his business, Winangali — one of Australia’s leading agencies in the highly specialised area of First Nations research, communication and community engagement. Together we have worked on numerous projects.

Through our relationship with Noel, we have learned as an organisation about our reconciliation journey, we have absorbed knowledge, we have been guided to put this knowledge into practice — both inside Rowland and when consulting with our clients — and most importantly, we understand there is much more to do and much more to recognise. Together, through our ongoing relationship with Noel and Winangali, our long-term reconciliation journey continues.

Rowland’s Chairman Geoff Rodgers often refers to Noel as “a key part of the Rowland family for more than 20 years.”

Noel has been instrumental in teaching and guiding all Rowlanders about the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia, and how to effectively and respectfully communicate with First Nations Australians.

Noel has taught us (using his words)... **“Country speaks to us all, but you have to know how to listen.”**

We are continuing our listening journey.

Relationships

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	August 2023	Lead: Senior Account Manager Support: First Nations Advisor
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	August 2023	Lead: Design Director Support: First Nations Advisor
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Senior Account Executive
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: Senior Account Executive Support: Account Executive
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2024	Chief Operating Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2023	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Design Director and Senior Account Executive
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2023	Lead: Design Director
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2023	First Nations Advisor
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	February 2024	Head of People and Culture
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	February 2024	Head of People and Culture

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.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	April 2024	Lead: Chief Financial Officer Support: First Nations Advisor
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	February 2024	Lead: First Nations Advisor
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	July 2023	Lead: Design Director Support: First Nations Advisor
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2023	Lead: Senior Account Manager Support: Account Executive
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Lead: Senior Account Executive Support: Account Executive
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Senior Account Executive
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2024	Lead: Senior Designer

Opportunities

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	April 2024	Lead: Chief Financial Officer Support: Head of Corporate Services and Operations and Head of People and Culture
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2024	Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Head of Corporate Services and Operations
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2023	Lead: Head of Corporate Services and Operations
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2024	Lead: Head of Corporate Services and Operations Support: First Nations Advisor

Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	March 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	October 2023	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Account Executive
	Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March 2024	Lead: First Nations Advisor Support: Head of People and Culture
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2023	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Design Director
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	October 2023	Lead: Chief Operating Officer
	Review senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	March 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	October 2024	Lead: Head of Corporate Services and Operations Support: First Nations Advisor
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP 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 RAP correspondence.	June annually	Chief Operating Officer
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Chief Operating Officer
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Chief Operating Officer
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	October 2024	Chief Operating Officer

Contact details

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