

Reconciliation Action Plan

January 2020 – December 2021

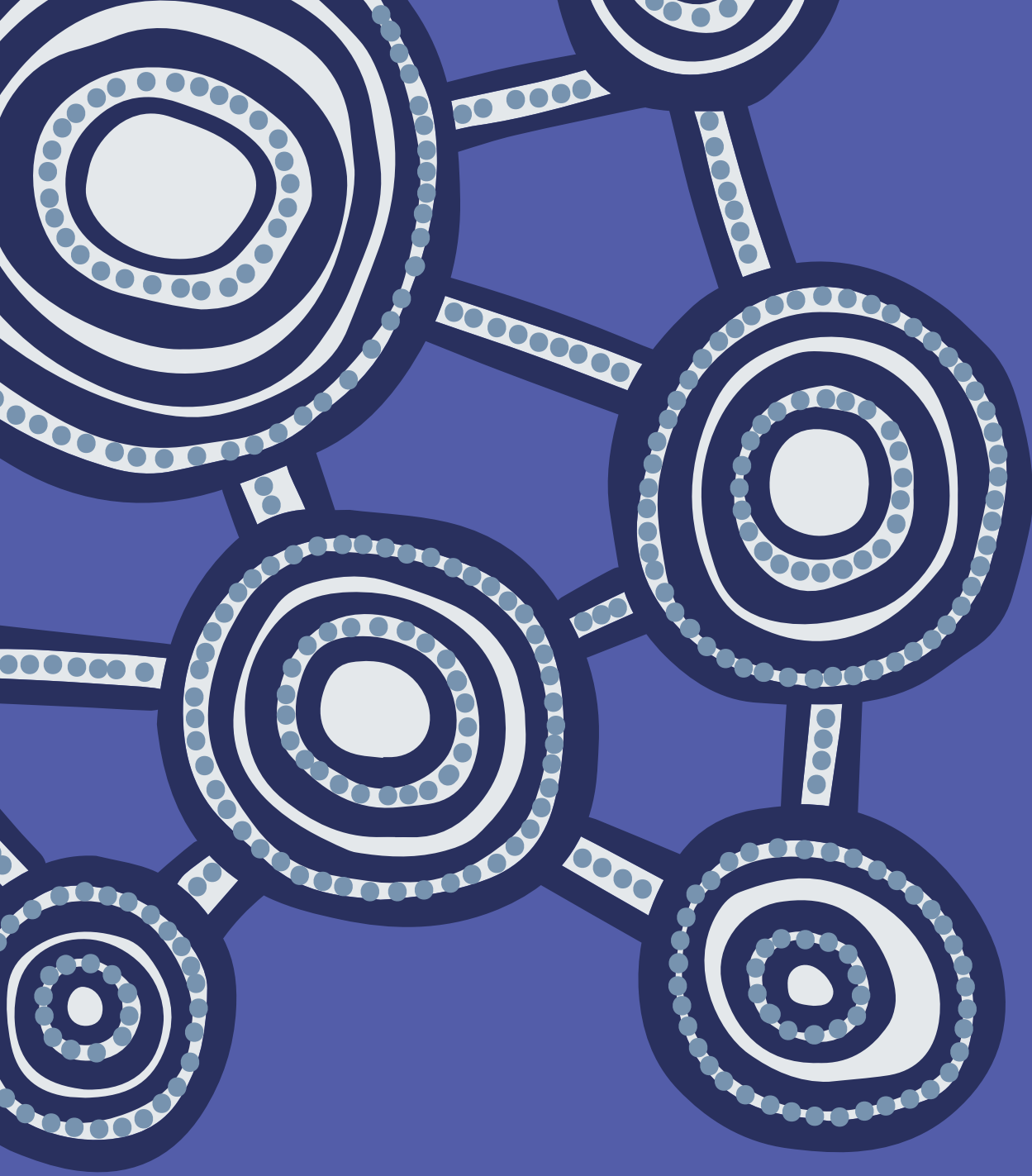


**Energy & Water
Ombudsman**
Queensland



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE





Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

Our vision for reconciliation

At the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ), we help Queenslanders resolve issues with their electricity, gas and – in South East Queensland – water providers. As a free, fair and independent service, we strive to create equal opportunities and help to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others in our nation.

Our continued aim is to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to become confident and informed consumers, and ensure they are aware of their right to assistance.

Our first Reconciliation Action Plan – our Reflect RAP – formalised our commitment to engage, strengthen and maintain our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The aim of the Innovate RAP is to advance this conversation by continuing to promote a culture of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both within our organisation and the communities we help across Queensland. Our commitment towards reconciliation over the next two years is detailed in the actions of this plan and we hold ourselves accountable for every commitment.

Our vision for our reconciliation journey is to have a positive influence across our sector, and for industry to join us in contributing to a better Australia.

Our values underpin our vision:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Respect | We act and interact with honesty and integrity – manners, respect and courtesy are a given. |
| Integrity | Our actions are consistent with our words and we demonstrate our values through our actions. |
| Competency | We encourage each other and seek opportunities to learn as well as share our knowledge and ideas to continuously improve ourselves. |
| Accountability | We are each accountable and responsible for our own work, attitude and behaviours. |
| Excellence | We strive to be the best we can be and work hard to deliver excellent service and quality results. |

A message from the Energy and Water Ombudsman



As the Energy and Water Ombudsman for Queensland, I am proud to present the next step of EWOQ's journey towards reconciliation: our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2021. Our Innovate RAP aims to create equal opportunities and promote a culture of respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both within our organisation and the communities we help. Our vision for reconciliation is underpinned by our core values of respect, integrity, competency, accountability, and excellence.

Our Innovate RAP builds on the objectives of our Reflect RAP and deepens our organisation's ongoing commitment towards reconciliation with a focus on increasing cultural awareness across our team, supporting National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week events, and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As our organisation evolves, we will ensure that changes positively impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and consumers.

We will continue to strengthen and grow our community networks and partnerships to cement our status as an ally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our Reflect RAP was well received both internally and externally and we hope to strengthen the relationships it generated to continue to build awareness of our service and what we can do for Queenslanders who have issues with their energy or water provider with our Innovate RAP.

We believe in our responsibility to be part of the national reconciliation movement and are committed to implementing the actions detailed in our Innovate RAP. I am excited about the next part of this journey and look forward to the progress we will make during the next two years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Pires', written over a faint, light blue grid pattern.

Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman

A message from Reconciliation Australia



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I am delighted to see the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland continue its reconciliation journey and to formally endorse its first Innovate RAP.

Through the development of an Innovate RAP, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland continues to play an important part in a community of more than 1000 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 Innovate RAP provides the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland with the key steps to establish its own unique approach to reconciliation. Through implementing an Innovate RAP, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland will strengthen its approach to driving reconciliation through its business activities, services and programs, and develop mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

We wish the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland well as it embeds and expands its own unique approach to reconciliation. We encourage the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges and to build on its 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 the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland on its second RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Mundine'.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

About the artwork

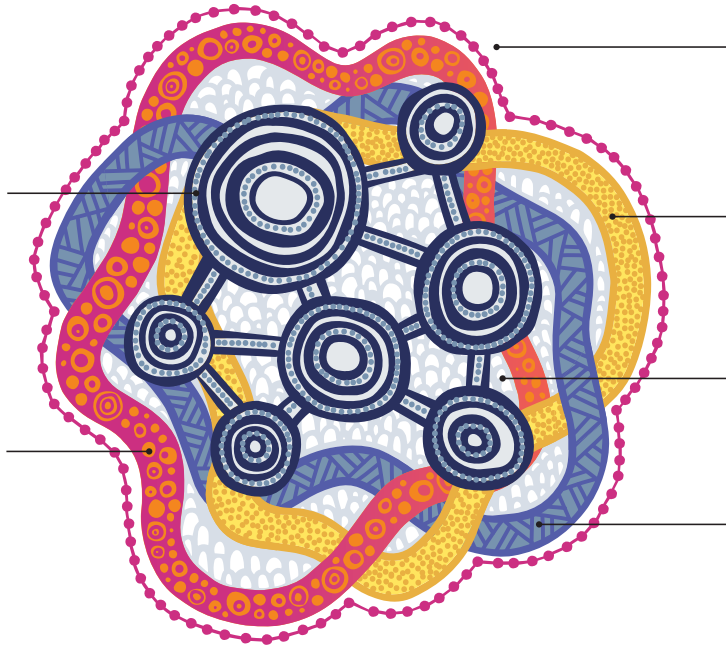
The artwork tells the story of connected empowered communities across Queensland. This story is the idea of a positive future and how communities and lives thrive when they are connected.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland ensure the balance of power and empathy to empower communities, creating better systems. By reconnecting systems and communities, power flows, positively connecting people and powering the life of the country.

Artwork symbolism

Connected communities
The different communities thriving within the connection of the pathways, connecting people and communities.

Diversity
Showing the range of diversity in communities and people across Queensland. Creating equitable solutions.



Connection

Connection is the outcome of all the pathways and thriving communities coming together.

Empower

Power and empathy, and the relationship of balance. Utilising the colour of 'power'.

People's stories

People's stories and lives coming together as the foundations to build better solutions and connections.

Unity

Working together and creating strong relationships through the five pillars.

Our business

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for those who have unresolved complaints with their electricity, gas or water supplier.

We take complaints by phone, email, mail, fax, online, or in person at our offices in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Cairns.

For electricity and gas complaints, our service is available to residents and small businesses across Queensland. For water complaints, we can help those in South East Queensland who are customers of Queensland Urban Utilities, Unitywater, Gold Coast City Council, Redland City Council and Logan City Council.

We have 47 employees, including an Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer, which is an identified role.

Each year, we attend community events across the state as part of our outreach program, meeting with consumers and financial counsellors to spread the word about our service.

Our upcoming community outreach activities are listed on our website. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts for photos from our reconciliation journey.

Our RAP Journey

Why are we developing a RAP?

We believe it is our responsibility to support the national reconciliation movement. Together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, we aim to make practical contributions towards positive change for Australia's First Peoples.

In October 2018, we launched our Reflect RAP and it provided us with opportunities to turn our good intentions into real action and for our team members to celebrate the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions, as well as foster a shared sense of unity and identity.

We are committed to our reconciliation journey and we will continue to create meaningful opportunities to promote mutually respectful and genuinely reciprocal relationships of shared significance.

Our RAP champions

Our Innovate RAP is championed by the Energy and Water Ombudsman, Jane Pires, and the RAP working group, which is led by our Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer.

Our RAP working group

The RAP working group includes team members from every office and business unit of our organisation. The working group meets quarterly to review the progress of the deliverables of our Innovate RAP and is led by our Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer.

They also encourage the broader team to undertake initiatives that enhance our reconciliation journey, foster a learning ethos about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and continue to build awareness of our service.

'Reconciliation matters to everyone. We all play a part in acknowledging the past, present and future. I am proud to work for an organisation that has embraced reconciliation and taken the lead in our industry to acknowledge the importance of reconciliation.'

– Francine, Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer

"I believe that the development of a RAP positively reflects our commitment to bridging inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It also demonstrates the stronger presence we're developing within the wider community, which is being recognised by our stakeholders.

However, we are just beginning the conversation. From here, EWOQ must continue putting words into action, reinforcing community partnerships and learning about issues impacting our Indigenous communities – it's an ongoing journey."

– Lucy, Investigation and Conciliation Officer

EWOQ team members Simon and Francine enjoying 2019 National Reconciliation Week activities in Cairns thanks to My Pathway.



Our reconciliation journey to date

We began our journey towards reconciliation in January 2014 with the appointment of a dedicated Indigenous officer and this journey continues through our community outreach program. Since launching our Reflect RAP in October 2018, we have been invited to speak with communities in Kuranda, North Stradbroke Island, Woorabinda and Yarrabah.

We were warmly welcomed in Woorabinda in November 2018 and congratulated on our Reflect RAP. We were then invited by Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews to present it at a Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council meeting in February 2019, where we yarned with councillors about how we can help the community and provide advice on energy issues.

Our Reflect RAP was well received both internally and externally, and we thank Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Logan City Council, My Pathway, Hutchinson Builders and Multhana Property Services for providing invaluable feedback and sharing our information with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

The development of our Reflect RAP (October 2018 – September 2019) laid the foundations for our internal reconciliation initiatives. It has positively influenced our organisation by providing team members with the opportunity to participate in National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week events, and other celebrations.

Our team members have had the opportunity to develop professionally through the RAP, which we will continue with the introduction of regular cultural awareness training. To increase our awareness and understanding of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and tribal groups across the geographical area of our customer base and our nation, we purchased maps of Indigenous Australia (created by David Horton) from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to display in our offices.

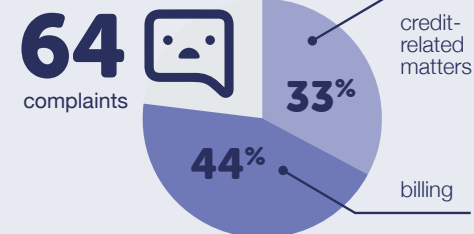
How many customers identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

While we have not historically collected information about the cultural background of our customers, we do record the number of callers who ask to speak with an Indigenous officer. For the 2018-19 financial year, there were 86 occasions where a customer asked to speak with an Indigenous officer, which represents one per cent of complaints during that period.

Closed cases

19 
general enquiries

03 
referrals



Billing complaints include high or disputed bills, account openings or closures, metering faults, billing errors, rebates and concessions, and meters. Payment difficulties, hardship and disconnections were commonly raised credit-related matters.

By comparison, for complaints where an Indigenous officer was not requested 50 per cent were for billing and 17 per cent were about credit-related matters in 2018-19.

Since 1 July 2019, we have asked our customers whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to provide us with a more accurate insight of the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who use our service. This will allow us to monitor for trends affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and engage with industry regarding the challenges they face. Between July and December 2019, there were 178 cases (4.4% of cases closed) where the customer identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and 41 cases where the customer asked to speak with the Indigenous officer.

Customer case studies

Helping to confirm a customer's identity

A customer contacted her retailer to close an electricity account for a previous address, however, the retailer refused to do so because the customer was unable to confirm the account number or the phone number she had provided when setting up the account.

The customer told us that she tried explaining to the retailer that she couldn't remember the phone number she had used when setting up the account because she had a few different numbers since then. She had also left her home in a hurry and taken minimal belongings with her. The customer offered to confirm her identity by other means. This was declined by the retailer.

As the customer had already contacted her retailer and attempted to resolve the problem herself, we offered to refer her case to a higher level and asked the retailer to consider alternative identification to close the account. The retailer accepted this offer and was then able to close the account, which greatly pleased the customer and avoided any further stress for her.

"... it was good from my personal perspective that EWOQ recognises our Indigenous people. I think the RAP and the training it provided has led to a lot of new insights for our team members."

– Colleen, Senior Business Support Officer

Mistaken default listing

A customer approached us with concerns about being mistakenly default-listed by an electricity retailer.

The customer advised us that he and his family had moved from Western Australia three years earlier and had lived in the same house since their move. The customer said he had only had two electricity retailers in that time and the retailer who had sold the debt causing the default listing was not one of them. The customer was adamant he had never had an account with the retailer and said he became aware of the debt when he undertook a credit reference check.

The customer told us he had attempted to resolve the matter with the retailer. It was during the initial contact with the retailer that he discovered that the meter number for the account did not match the meter for his property. The customer said the retailer had told him that he would still have to pay the debt and to take it up with the collection agency.

We confirmed that the customer's preferred retailer had been the retailer for his property for some time. The customer sought our assistance to have the default listing removed. During our investigation, we asked the retailer to substantiate the account and determined that the retailer had been billing the customer for the property next door. The retailer confirmed that the issue related to the customer's neighbour using our customer's information to obtain an account. This resulted in the retailer removing the debt from the collection agency. The customer was incredibly grateful for our assistance to resolve this matter which meant avoiding further financial impacts to the family.



Energy and Water Ombudsman Jane Pires with award-winning Australian writer and Indigenous rights champion Dr Anita Heiss at the 2019 NAIDOC Corporate Breakfast hosted by Queensland Tourism Industry Council.

Community outreach

As part of our community outreach program, we have taken part in NAIDOC Week celebrations in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Cairns for the past eight years.

During 2019, our Indigenous Investigation and Conciliation Officer also attended events across Queensland, meeting with community members and spreading the word about how we can help them, including:

- My Pathway, Australia's largest community development program contractor
- Ngonbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation in Kuranda
- Mayor Ross Andrews and the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council to talk about working together in order to provide better opportunities and outcomes for the community.

In October 2019, we hosted a Bring Your Bills event in Mount Isa, in partnership with Centacare NQ and the Office of Fair Trading. During National Reconciliation Week 2019, we partnered with My Pathway, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Accor and CQUniversity to host a forum about forming a Cairns Area Local Reconciliation Group. The Reconciliation Action Group will play a role in supporting existing reconciliation initiatives and encourage further partnerships between First Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians toward reconciliation.

In November 2018, we travelled to Woorabinda to meet community members and representatives from Yoonthalla Services, Department of Housing, Cathy Freeman Foundation, Red Cross, Queensland Police Service and Australia Post.

We have taken part in the School Savvy program every year since it was launched by Centacare in Far North Queensland during Anti-Poverty Week 2016. The School Savvy program is a pop-up shop selling low-cost new and pre-loved uniforms and school supplies to the public in response to demand from the 46 per cent of parents and carers who experience financial stress.

Our partnerships

Our partnerships and current activities

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, EWOQ is fostering professional and community partnerships, and undertaking initiatives that progress our reconciliation journey. With our Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer based in Cairns for the past six years, we have fostered strong connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in North Queensland. We strive to strengthen and nurture our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders across Queensland as part of the Innovate RAP.

Community

Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association

The Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) is the peak body for Ombudsman schemes across Australia and New Zealand. Through our association with ANZOA, EWOQ is part of their Indigenous Engagement Interest Group, which meets quarterly and focuses on improving complaint handling practices and procedures for Indigenous consumers in Australia and New Zealand.

Financial Counselling Australia

We have a strong alliance with Financial Counselling Australia (FCA), with our Ombudsman attending their annual conference each May and taking part in the conference's Yarnin' Circle in Hobart (2018) and Melbourne (2019).

Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland

We support the Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland (FCAQ) and attend the state conference each year.

In 2019, our General Manager of Assessment, Intake and Resolution, John Jones, was a guest speaker during a panel discussion about energy affordability, with our Ombudsman and several of our team members also attending.

Thriving Communities Partnership

The Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP) is a cross-sector collaboration with the goal of everybody having fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia, including utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport. The partnership aims to build more resilient communities and stronger businesses throughout Australia.

TCP recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are far more likely to experience financial hardship and a lower general standard of living than non-Indigenous Australians.

EWOQ is a member of the Queensland chapter – and the Ombudsman Jane Pires is the interim chair. Through this association, we are aiming to better respond to issues of vulnerability and inclusion, and enhance customer trust. We share accountability for issues through transparent conversation with business, government, regulators and the community.

The TCP is working towards providing Australia's first centralised platform for collaboration, learning, research and projects that advance organisational contributions to combatting customer vulnerability and hardship.

North Queensland Indigenous Consumer Taskforce

Since 2013, we have been part of the North Queensland Indigenous Consumer Taskforce in partnership with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Queensland Office of Fair Trading. Other taskforce members include Shelter Housing Action Cairns, the Cairns Community Legal Centre and Save the Children.

Developed as a coordinated approach to tackling Indigenous consumer disadvantage in the region caused by traders and telemarketers, the taskforce has a regional action plan to coordinate joint consumer outreach and investigation activities, share educational resources and information about current consumer issues in Indigenous communities throughout North Queensland.

Family Support Workers Network

The Family Support Workers Network is a professional network for frontline workers who provide direct services to families or agencies that deliver improved outcomes to families in the Far North Queensland region, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

The client-focused network was created by the Department of Communities in response to an identified gap in the service system. The network members explore ways of improving links between workers across the Cairns region, including sharing wisdom and resources.

The network is committed to building a more sustainable service system that meets families' needs. It understands that some families need extra support to create a nurturing family environment and recognises that healthy, happy families thrive in well-connected communities that have appropriate support and accessible services.

The network consists of community workers including financial counsellors and family wellbeing counsellors, and EWOQ assists families and individuals referred to us by fellow network participants.

Maintaining and Sustaining Tenancies Group

The Maintaining and Sustaining Tenancies Working Group (MAST) was created by the Rent Connect team in Cairns, who are part of the Queensland Government Department of Housing. The group was established to support individuals, families and communities in the Cairns area to obtain, maintain and sustain tenancies.

Given electricity is a common problem for tenants, EWOQ was invited to join the group along with real estate agents, Anglicare Homestay, Ozcare Homestay, Salvation Army, women's centres, Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service, Shelter Housing Action Cairns, and Centrelink.

MAST is a platform to share resources and information regarding support, barriers, trends and identification and allocation of the most appropriate referral pathway for tenants. The network provides a consistent and coordinated service response to tenants of the Cairns region, 80 per cent of clients assisted by the network identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Cairns Alliance of Social Services

The Cairns Alliance of Social Services (CASS) group exists to be a voice for social change. CASS operates to identify community priorities and activities, and plan Anti-Poverty Week activities for the community.

Members of the working group include Centacare FNQ, Cairns Regional Council, Youth Empowered Towards Independence, Access Housing, Worklink, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Act for Kids, Tamilyn Brennan Employment, ARC Disability Services Incorporated, Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Lifeline, Mission Australia and the Cairns Community Legal Centre.

"I think the RAP has started a conversation for us, not only in relation to the plan itself but our interaction with Indigenous people. It's opened up an opportunity for in-depth discussion and accountability for the organisation."

– Tammy, Investigation and Conciliation Officer



Relationships

One of our functions is to promote our scheme to those who may need our assistance. We are committed to developing and maintaining the relationships within the communities we serve to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people become confident and informed consumers, and ensure they are aware of their right to assistance with issues relating to their energy services, and water services for customers in South East Queensland.

Focus area

We create impact through our connections, raising awareness of our service among communities who may need us and providing value to our members and industry.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. 	Sep 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	Sep 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
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 team members. 	May 2020 May 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May–3 Jun 2020 27 May–3 Jun 2021	Executive Management Group Regional Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support team members and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May–3 Jun 2020 27 May–3 Jun 2021	Energy and Water Ombudsman
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one NRW event each year 	27 May–3 Jun 2020 27 May–3 Jun 2021	RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. 	May 2020 May 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Manager, Communications and Engagement
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement strategies to engage our team members in reconciliation. 	May 2021	Leadership team

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. 	Feb 2020 May 2020 Aug 2020 Nov 2020	Feb 2021 May 2021 Aug 2021 Nov 2021 Manager, Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. 	Mar 2020 Jun 2020 Sep 2020 Dec 2020	Mar 2021 Jun 2021 Sep 2021 Dec 2021 Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation, including our scheme participants. 	Mar 2020 Jun 2020 Sep 2020 Dec 2020	Mar 2021 Jun 2021 Sep 2021 Dec 2021 Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Advisory Council and Executive Management Group on Reconciliation Action Plan outcomes and any challenges facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. 	Feb 2020 May 2020 Aug 2020 Nov 2020	Feb 2021 May 2021 Aug 2021 Nov 2021 General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	Nov 2020	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. 	Feb 2020	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. 	Feb 2020	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism. 	Jun 2020	
5. Share our Innovate RAP with a view of influencing energy and water retailers and distributors to develop their own a RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute our published Innovate RAP to our scheme participants and industry stakeholders to promote the concept of RAPs within their own organisations. 	Feb 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer



Respect

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the importance of the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge history and understand the act of making a complaint can be distressful and challenging. That is why we value and are committed to providing a service with manners, respect and courtesy.

Focus area

We act and interact with honesty and integrity – manners, respect and courtesy are a given.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. 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"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	Mar 2020	Principal Learning and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy. 	May 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer RAP working group Principal Learning and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our team members. 	Jun 2020	Principal Learning and Development Officer Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members and other key leadership team members to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. 	Jul 2020	Principal Learning and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all team members have the opportunity to participate and attend an external Reconciliation Week events 	May 2020 May 2021	General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase team members understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	Monitor and review monthly	RAP working group Principal Learning and Development Officer Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. 	May 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. 	Monitor and review monthly	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. 	Every meeting	Energy and Water Ombudsman Leadership team
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP working group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	Jul 2020 Jul 2021	RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to team members participating in NAIDOC Week. 	May 2020 May 2021	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all team members. 	Jul 2020 Jul 2021	Energy and Water Ombudsman General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution Manager, Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all team members have the opportunity to participate and attend an external NAIDOC Week event 	Jul 2020 Jul 2021	General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution



Opportunities

We tailor the approach we have towards outreach and stakeholder engagement to achieve meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities. Promoting our service in communities is essential in providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers the opportunity to complain and we will focus on strengthening our connections throughout Queensland. We have sourced services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and run businesses, which in turn has enabled us to achieve business activities.

Focus area

We encourage each other and seek opportunities to learn as well as share our knowledge and ideas to continuously improve ourselves and our service.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Feb 2020	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Jul 2020	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Nov 2020	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	• Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Monitor and review monthly	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Mar 2020	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	• Maintain and seek to increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members employed in our workforce.	Monitor and review monthly	Manager, People, Culture and Capability
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Apr 2020	Manager, Finance
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Mar 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Manager, Finance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to team members 	May 2020	Manager, Finance	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	Jun 2020	Manager, Finance	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	Monitor and review quarterly	Manager, Finance	
11. Support better access to assistance by raising awareness of EWOQ's services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities for team members to participate in activities in remote communities. 	Jul 2020 Jul 2021	General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members to attend events and activities in various remote communities across Queensland as part of the Community Outreach Strategy. 	Jul 2020 Jul 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Manager, Communications and Engagement	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks in Central and South Queensland. We will use the list of contacts established as part of the Reflect RAP to grow and nurture new relationships and report who we have met with and when. 	Mar 2020 Jun 2020 Sep 2020 Dec 2020	Mar 2021 Jun 2021 Sep 2021 Dec 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Regional Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a tailored brochure for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. 	Feb 2020		Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Manager, Communications and Engagement



Governance

This is how we ensure our RAP commitments are successfully implemented and embedded into our internal culture and external presence. By tracking and reporting our achievements, challenges and learnings we can continue to build our reconciliation journey into the future.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline		Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group.	Jan 2020 Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020	Jan 2021 Apr 2021 Jul 2021 Oct 2021	Energy and Water Ombudsman
	• Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	Feb 2020		Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	• Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Jan 2020 Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020	Jan 2021 Apr 2021 Jul 2021 Oct 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jan 2020		Indigenous Investigation, Conciliation and Outreach Officer RAP working group
	• Engage our senior leaders and other team members in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jan 2020 Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020	Jan 2021 Apr 2021 Jul 2021 Oct 2021	RAP working group led by Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	• Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Jan 2020		Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	• Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Feb 2020		Energy and Water Ombudsman

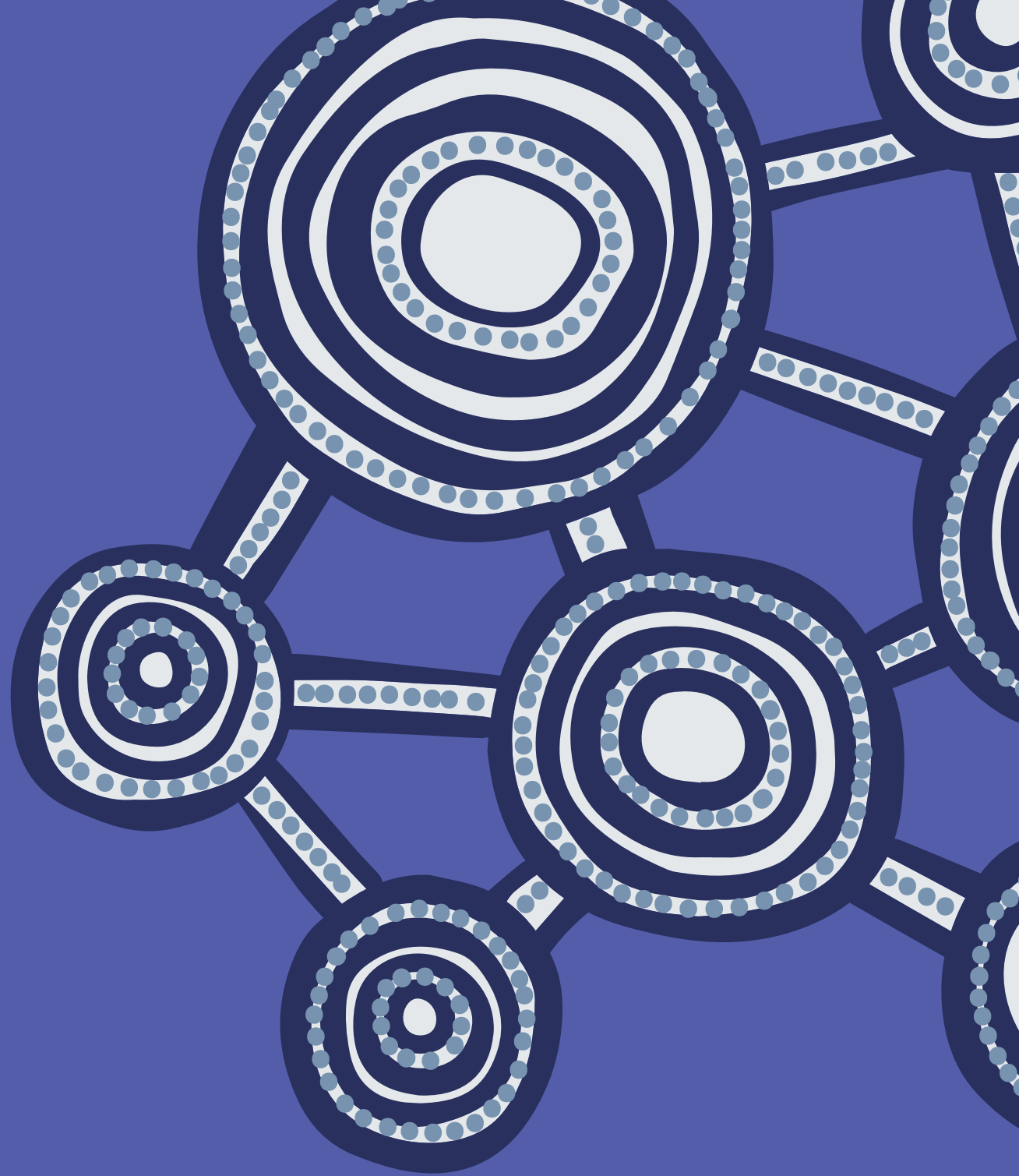
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 Sep 2020 30 Sep 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP progress to all team members and senior leaders quarterly. 	Jan 2020 Jan 2021 Apr 2020 Apr 2021 Jul 2020 Jul 2021 Oct 2020 Oct 2021	RAP working group Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings every year in our Annual Report. 	Oct 2020 Oct 2021	Manager, Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. 	May 2020	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer Manager, People, Culture and Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide insights into the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accessing our service using data collected during initial contact with customers and their voluntary response to a question about their cultural background, as well as the number of customers who ask to speak with an Indigenous officer. 	Mar 2020 Mar 2021 Jun 2020 Jun 2021 Sep 2020 Sep 2021 Dec 2020 Dec 2021	General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	June 2021	Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer



"The RAP ensures our processes are culturally sensitive. I have found it useful for my own self-awareness of cultural differences when engaging with stakeholders who are members of the stolen generation, and the implications that may be apparent when I am representing what could be seen as a government agency."

– Andrew, Regional Manager







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Keep in touch

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