



ACARA RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2023–2025

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Foreword

As a proud Yorta-Yorta man and Chair of ACARA’s First Nations Australians Advisory Group (FNAAG), I take great pleasure in presenting ACARA’s third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). FNAAG has worked with ACARA to develop this RAP and ensure that all actions are embedded across the organisation to affect meaningful and sustained change with clear accountabilities for each ACARA work area.

True reconciliation takes a strengths-based approach. It uplifts First Nations people and places the onus on organisations to embed self-determination, equity, and voice at the core of its work. Woven amongst the actions of this RAP is an emphasis on building strong relationships between First Nations people and non-Indigenous Australians. Relationships are at the heart of reconciliation and will enable ACARA to achieve its vision of inspiring improvement in the learning of all young Australians.

FNAAG look forward to continuing to work with ACARA over the next two years to implement and monitor these actions. This RAP promises to guide sustainable cultural change across the whole organisation, which will be for the benefit of all Australian learners.

Zack Haddock

Chair, First Nations Australians Advisory Group

Executive Director, Koorie Outcomes Division, Victorian Department of Education



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What will we do?	Why are we doing it? Relationships, Respect, Opportunities	Who will do this?	When will this be done?	How will we know if we've achieved our aim?
1. Ensure that the ACARA First Nations Australians Advisory Group (FNAAG) is actively involved in the development and monitoring of this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).	Respect, Relationships, Opportunities: ACARA's FNAAG embodies decades of wisdom, experience and expertise about the engagement of First Nations Australians with the education system. Their insights will be invaluable in supporting ACARA's reconciliation efforts.	CEO	FNAAG will be consulted in the development of the RAP, in early 2023.	FNAAG will receive reports from the ACARA CEO on progress towards meeting the goals and intended outcomes of the RAP, and provide feedback and advice.
2. Establish processes to ensure Acknowledgements of Country/Place are given at the commencement of all external meetings (with stakeholders, contractors, etc.) and major internal meetings (e.g. Board, ELT, all-staff).	Respect: Demonstrate respect for local Traditional Owners and knowledge holders.	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	August 2023	Protocols are endorsed by ELT, staff receive training and implementation is reviewed to ensure opportunities for improvement.
3. Develop a framework for evaluating resources to be included in an online library containing resources (books, articles, documentaries, films, etc.) to promote an understanding of First Nations Australian Peoples, histories and cultures.	Respect and Opportunities: Having an online RAP resources page available to staff will facilitate access to information and enhance understanding.	Office of the CEO to coordinate	Ongoing, with all current resources reviewed by September 2023.	The online library will be a progressive task, but a review will be undertaken every 6 months.

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4. Document and make available the Acknowledgment of Country/Place created by team members for the weekly meetings, demonstrating personal learnings about the local First Nations Australian Peoples and Country/Place.	Respect: Share new understanding of different First Nations Australian stories and understanding of Country/Place at team meetings.	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	The weekly Acknowledgement of Country/Place is placed in a shared folder.	Each team meeting begins with Acknowledgement of Country/Place, drawing on and contributing to a growing bank of material.
5. Identify and include at least one personal goal related to developing their understanding of RAP actions in the next cycle for performance plans.	Opportunities: It is important that our commitment to reconciliation at the organisational level flows through to, and is concretely expressed in, efforts by individual staff members.	All	Introduced for the 2023/24 Performance Review Cycle.	More staff are participating in activities identified in this RAP to support ACARA's reconciliation efforts.
6. Facilitate a "Connecting to Country" experience for each 2-day meeting of-the ACARA Board.	Relationships and Respect: Deepen ACARA Board members' and executives' understanding of First Nations Australian histories and cultures.	Office of the CEO	Minimum of 2 times a year.	Board member and ELT feedback provides evidence that the "Connecting to Country" experience has led to a greater appreciation of First Nations Australian histories and cultures.

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<p>7. Support pre-professional First Nations Australian university students, both pre- and post-graduate, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering an internship with ACARA • offering practical placement opportunities, such as Practical Legal Training (PLT). 	<p>Relationships and Opportunities: Develop and deepen ACARA's relationship with First Nations Australian organisations.</p>	<p>Office of the CEO</p>	<p>From July 2023</p>	<p>At least one internship a year is successfully completed, with positive feedback from the intern and the internship provider.</p> <p>At least one practical placement or PLT placement is completed a year, with positive feedback from the individual and the university.</p> <p>Interns are given the opportunity to meet with FNAAG and share their experiences.</p>
<p>8. Introduce a "First Nations Australian Impact" section into relevant Board papers and policy and procedure documents in consultation with FNAAG on key issues.</p>	<p>Respect: Enhance First Nations Australians' participation in ACARA governance and decision-making, ensuring Board decisions are cognisant of potential benefits for and/or impacts on First Nations Australians.</p>	<p>Office of the CEO</p>	<p>From second Board meeting of 2023 onward.</p>	<p>Relevant Board papers and policy and procedure documents include this advice.</p> <p>Positive feedback received from FNAAG Chair, on behalf of FNAAG, on the quality of engagement.</p>
<p>9. Prepare a 12-month calendar.</p>	<p>Relationships and Respect: Participation in these events will deepen mutual understanding.</p>	<p>Communications & Strategic Relations</p>	<p>From July 2023</p>	<p>Increased number of ACARA staff presenting at, attending and/or supporting special First Nations Australian events as identified in the calendar.</p>

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<p>10. Engage First Nations Australian spokespeople, representative and commentators who can widen channels for 2-way communication and embed these channels within template communication and engagement plans to support business as usual approach.</p>	<p>Relationships: Developing relationships with First Nations Australians so communications and engagement can reflect issues of interest.</p>	<p>Communications & Strategic Relations</p>	<p>Identification of possible stakeholders and commentators in media and communications by end of October 2023.</p> <p>Embedding of approach in communication templates by end of June 2023.</p>	<p>ACARA communications and information releases reflect perspectives of First Nations Australian Peoples where possible.</p> <p>Information releases are disseminated through channels targeted to First Nations Australian audiences.</p> <p>Information releases (assessment, reporting and curriculum) throughout the year reflecting First Nations Australian knowledges and perspectives.</p> <p>Social media communication plan highlights significant aspects and achievements from First Nations Australian histories and cultures.</p>
<p>11. Identify and invite First Nations Australian representatives to stakeholder group meetings convened by Communications and Strategic Relations team.</p>	<p>Respect: Ensuring First Nations Australian Peoples' perspectives are considered in assessment, reporting and curriculum information releases by ACARA.</p>	<p>Communications & Strategic Relations</p>	<p>By August 2023</p>	<p>All stakeholder groups include First Nations Australians, and their voices and contributions are actively encouraged and recorded.</p>

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<p>12. Building stronger relationships with First Nations Australians, using the curriculum as a means of connecting and building partnerships, through the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite First Nations Australian Peoples and organisations to be part of the regular stakeholder network meetings coordinated by curriculum specialists, and ensure the agenda for these meetings enables meaningful partnerships to be developed. • Once a term, invite a First Nations Australian to meet with the curriculum team and share their experiences and perspectives, and explore with them how teachers and schools can build partnerships when delivering the curriculum. • Seek out First Nations Australian teachers and principals to act as critical friends when developing new resources for publication or professional learning sessions. 	<p>Relationships: Proactively and continuously identifying ways to work together with First Nations Australian Peoples, to build strong relationships through the curriculum.</p>	<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>Once a term for the first 2 activities.</p> <p>As required as new resources are developed.</p>	<p>More First Nations Australian teachers, principals and organisations are participating in ACARA's processes for developing and promoting curriculum support materials.</p>

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<p>13. Promote the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority (CCP) organising ideas in internal and external meetings and events, and in the materials developed and shared through the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the development of learning area work samples that incorporate content related to the CCP organising ideas. • Engage experts in First Nations Australian languages to support the review of the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages framework. • Coordinate meetings to gather information and advice about First Nations Australian users of English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D). 	<p>Respect: The Australian Curriculum provides unique opportunities to work with First Nations Australian Peoples to refine existing and develop new materials that deepen understanding of culture and histories, to be used in schools.</p>	<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>A new work sample schedule will be developed for 2023–24.</p> <p>A request for curriculum reference group members to support Languages framework review will be made in Term 2 2023 and meetings will begin after that time.</p> <p>EAL/D working group will be formed in Term 2 2023.</p>	<p>More work samples incorporate content related to the CCP.</p> <p>The Review of the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework is informed by input from First Nations Australian experts.</p> <p>First Nations Australian Peoples are represented on the ACARA EAL/D working group.</p>
<p>14. Develop, promote and deliver materials and professional learning opportunities with a specific focus on the First Nations Australian content in the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0.</p>	<p>Opportunities: Developing and delivering professional learning and materials that support schools and teachers to build stronger community partnerships and cover the curriculum content in every classroom.</p>	<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>Deliver online professional learning throughout the year. Prepare the 12-month calendar covering July 2023 – June 2024.</p>	<p>Online professional learning opportunities have been developed in partnership with First Nations Australians and focus on relevant content included in the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0.</p>

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<p>15. Increase and deepen employee knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures through opportunities to meet with First Nations Australians through training.</p>	<p>Relationships: ACARA's employees have the opportunity to reflect on unconscious bias and privilege, through training.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>Establish training and information sessions Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>Ongoing training & development 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p>	<p>All new ACARA staff participate in culturally responsive training.</p> <p>All staff participate in further opportunities to deepen their understanding of cultural responsiveness.</p> <p>Biannual survey to confirm participation and impact.</p>
<p>16. Ensure cultural safety (responsive) principles are embedded into ACARA's people strategy and supported by professional development that continues to build a culturally safe (responsive) workplace.</p>	<p>Respect: ACARA recognises that meaningful, sustainable and culturally safe (responsive) employment is a key component of reconciliation.</p> <p>A culturally safe organisation is imperative to be able to provide pathways and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in future years.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>People strategy review (to include this action) by end of Q1 23/24; and Employment pathway by Q3 23/24.</p>	<p>First Nations Australian staff (including interns and temporary staff) provide positive feedback on whether ACARA is a culturally safe (responsive) workplace.</p> <p>Staff survey results and feedback on training show high levels of commitment to and understanding of cultural safety (responsiveness).</p>

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17. Provide social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, business and communities.	Opportunities: A key indicator of the success of our reconciliation efforts is the extent to which the historic marginalisation of First Nations Australian Peoples from economic opportunities is overcome through the expansion of economic opportunity.	Corporate Services	Implemented by Q2 2023–2024. Aim to have 4 First Nations Australian employees at ACARA by start of 2025.	ACARA has developed a supplier procurement strategy as a component of ACARA's overarching procurement practices. Increased proportion of ACARA purchasing that is procured from First Nations Australian owned or managed businesses. A documented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathway has been developed and implemented successfully. More First Nations Australian staff working at ACARA.
18. Implement Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols.	Relationships: Collaborate with knowledge owners to increase representation of First Nations Australian knowledges and experiences in National Assessment Program (NAP) tests and build ongoing relationships that respect and benefit communities.	Assessment & Reporting	2023–2024	Protocols are endorsed by ELT, staff receive training and implementation is reviewed to ensure opportunities for improvement.

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<p>19. Incorporate more items relating to First Nations Australian histories and cultures into NAP assessments, noting the need to ensure overall psychometric validity of the assessments.</p>	<p>Opportunities: Greater focus on First Nations Australian histories and cultures in assessments will promote engagement and ensure representation of First Nations Australian Peoples, cultures and histories (as taught in the Australian curriculum) in the NAP assessments.</p>	<p>Assessment & Reporting</p>	<p>For NAPLAN 2025 and NAP-CC 2024</p>	<p>An increased number of test items in NAP item banks relate to First Nations Australian histories and cultures and are prioritised for inclusion in main study and readiness tests once test specifications are met.</p>
<p>20. Conduct site visits to schools with high proportions of First Nations Australian students during the NAP tests to observe test administration and student interactions.</p>	<p>Opportunities: Gain a deeper understanding of First Nations Australian students' interactions with NAPLAN tests to inform test construction, item development and creation of guidance materials.</p>	<p>Assessment & Reporting</p>	<p>2024–25 item trial and main study test events.</p>	<p>Summary of observations will be completed following each site visit.</p> <p>Implications discussed within and across testing domains.</p>