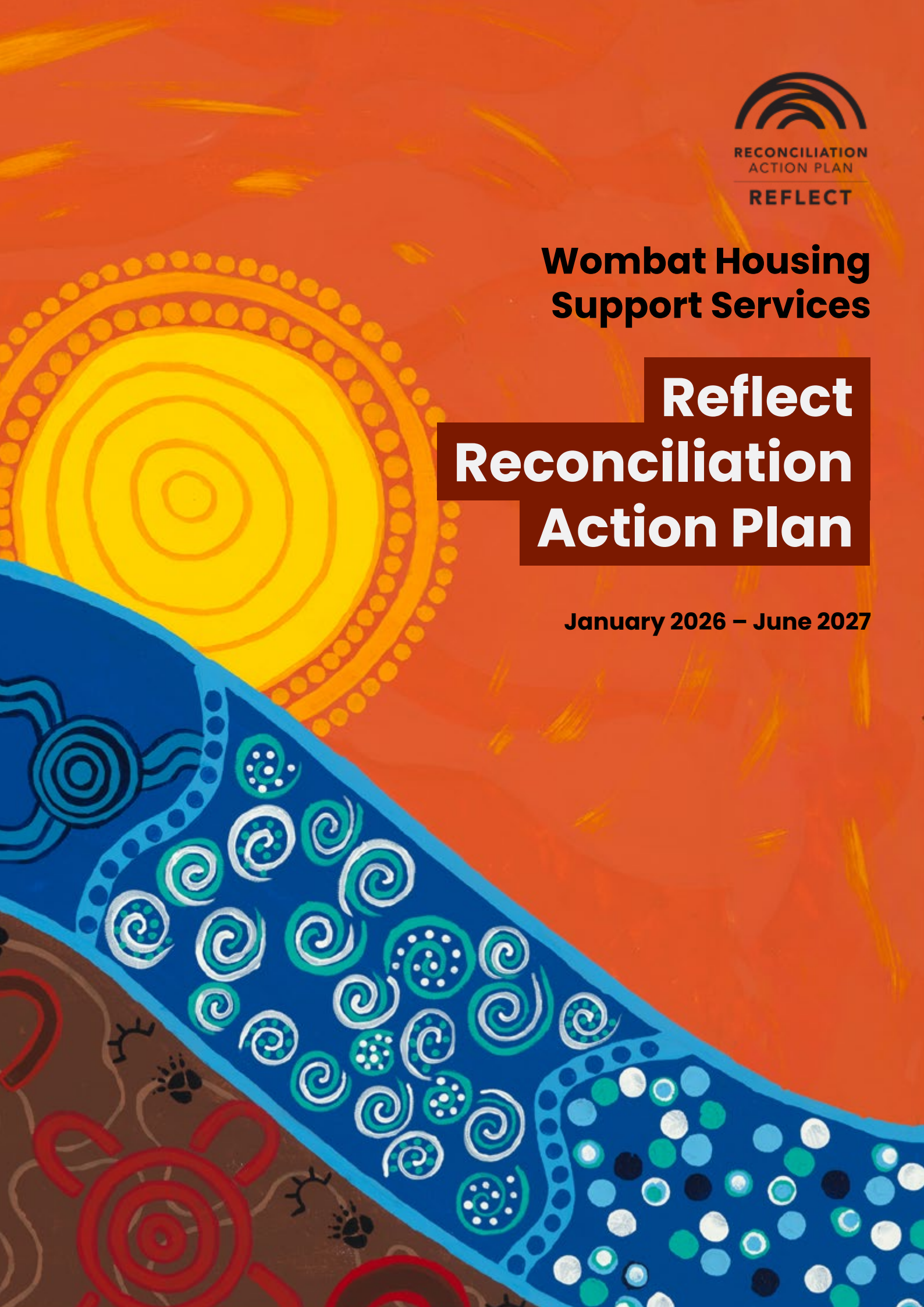


**Wombat Housing
Support Services**

**Reflect
Reconciliation
Action Plan**

January 2026 – June 2027





Acknowledgement of Country

Wombat Housing acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first people of now-called Australia. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Woi-Wurrung language group of the Kulin Nation where we work, advocate, and support the wider community who are experiencing barriers to access housing. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders—those who came before us and those who guide us today.

Wombat Housing acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonisation. We recognise that housing provides a place of belonging and cultural identity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and this has been disrupted by colonisation and systemic inequalities.

Wombat Housing recognises that the current housing system does not reflect the cultural needs or practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which results in further discrimination, criminalisation, and disadvantage in accessing support.

Through this, Wombat Housing will continue to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; advocating for culturally appropriate solutions and ensuring that housing policies are inclusive and equitable. Wombat Housing will continue to develop meaningful connections with the community to ensure we address systemic barriers that impact the access to safe and sustainable housing.

We will strive for justice, equity, and respect for all, ensuring that the stories and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld in our collective journey forward to reconciliation and truth-telling.

All artwork used within is adapted from **Visitors**, 2024, Maddison Dunkley, Gomeroi and Kevyn Manning, Larrakia.

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About the Artists



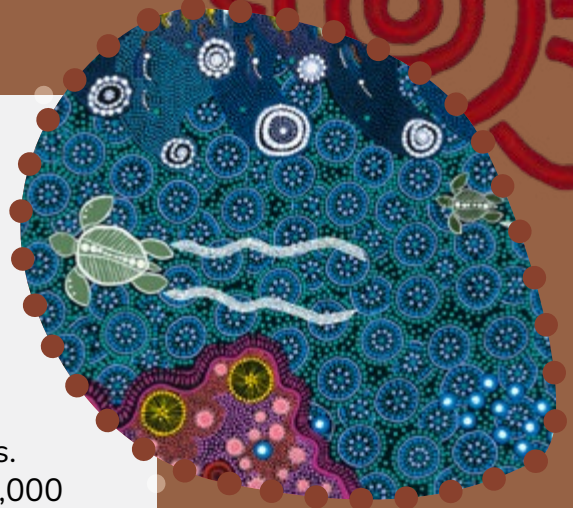
Maddison Dunkley, Gomeroi and Kevyn Manning, Larrakia
Visitors, 2024. Acrylic on canvas

A collaborative artwork by two artists, *Visitors* represents a transformative journey of community. Rooted in the artist's shared experiences at Wombat Housing Support Services, the artwork depicts the Spirit Creator and the profound journey of walking alongside clients; offering support, understanding, and hope.

About the Artists

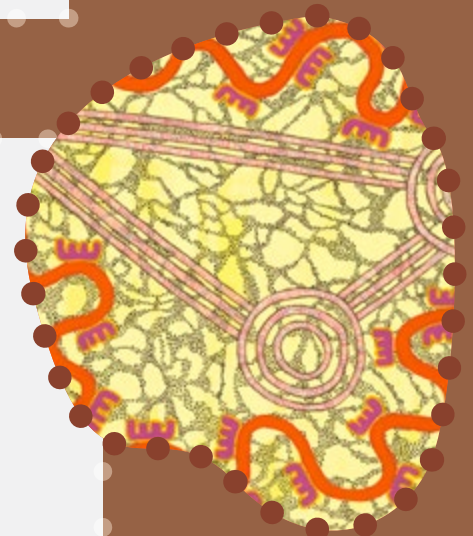
Kevyn Manning

I was born on the lands of the Gunaikurnai Nation in Moe Victoria. I am a proud Larakia man, My traditional ancestry is from the lands of the now called Darwin. I have always been drawn to different art forms and the stories behind their creation. I find myself always being pulled towards traditional artwork and creations and love to channel the knowledge my traditional art brings with it. I love to play with all mediums of art forms from mosaic, sculpture, charcoal drawing and acrylic on canvas. I have art in my blood and a history dating back over 600,000 years. I am proud to carry on the traditions through art forms past down from my ancestors and the ancestors and elders that have guided me to where I am today.



Maddison Dunkley

Born and raised on Wurundjeri Country, Maddison's ancestral roots belong to Gomeroi Country, where Gamilaraay is spoken. A creative working across multiple mediums, she uses painting to connect with her culture and to share stories of home, connection, and belonging. Her practice is guided by a strong sense of cultural responsibility and respect, honouring the knowledge passed down through generations, through yarning with mob about lived experiences, art, and culture. She continues to grow as an artist by immersing herself in learning, community, and cultural practice, with the intention of continuing to acknowledge the strength, resilience, and the forever connection to Country and Ancestors.



**Always was, always will be,
Aboriginal Land.**



*Wombat Housing -
Maddison Dunkley and
Kevyn Manning.*

Wombat General Manager Statement

Wombat is proud to formally embark on our journey towards reconciliation through the launch of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This important initiative has been driven by the passion and leadership of Wombat staff, which began a couple of years ago with a request to work on January 26th in solidarity with First Nations people, and has now developed into a formal commitment to take an active role in meaningful reconciliation.

As a housing support service, we acknowledge the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in homelessness services, and the systemic barriers that have led to unsatisfactory outcomes. We believe it is our collective responsibility to foster positive change.

Wombat is located opposite Royal Park in North Melbourne, a significant living, cultural and meeting place for the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation for thousands of years. With the generous assistance of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation we recently renamed our primary meeting space to Ngerren Biik (“meeting place”) and our reception area to Djak-Gurrin (“the burrow”, a nod to our Wombat name), reconnecting Wombat to the rich cultural heritage of the lands upon which we work.

Hearing the language of the Woi-Wurrung around the office has been an incredibly powerful experience. We are excited by the opportunity provided by this RAP to align with Wombat’s values through this RAP to learning, respect, and reconciliation—placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at the heart of everything we do. We look forward to continuing to learn, grow and share throughout this process.

We extend our thanks to our staff, board, and clients, as well as to Reconciliation Australia and our First Nations partners for their guidance and support as we undertake this significant journey of Reconciliation together.



Wombat Housing - Smoking Ceremony - Maddison Dunkley, Wurundjeri Elder Bill Nicholson and Kevyn Manning.



Vision for Reconciliation

Wombat Housing Support Service (Wombat) envisions reconciliation as a collective commitment to acknowledging and accepting our shared history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This commitment includes recognising and celebrating the diverse history, knowledge, and experiences of First Nations' people, whilst also advocating for meaningful systemic change. We recognise the rich and diverse cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that have existed for thousands of years, and the devastating impact of colonisation, including the dispossession of land and forced removal of children. This, alongside countless other unjust policies, and practices, has led to significant intergenerational trauma, and entrenched social disadvantage. Wombat acknowledges that the detrimental consequences of colonisation extend beyond historical events; they are persistent and deeply entrenched in our society, impacting political, economic, and social dimensions.

Wombat acknowledges that First Nations' perspectives on 'home' are diverse and deeply rooted in Country, community, and cultural identity. As a mainstream organisation, Wombat recognises that we must actively work to combat the ongoing displacement resulting from colonisation. Wombat will strive to learn and grow as an organisation, consulting with Community to continuously improve our organisation's cultural competency.

Wombat is committed to being a safe and welcoming organisation for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who works with us or uses our services. We are committed to placing truth-telling, self-determination, and cultural safety at the centre of our approach. Our values of authenticity, responsiveness, connection, accountability, and innovation will guide our approach to reconciliation.

Wombat's experience has shown that the current western models, which inform our housing system, do not align with the cultures and practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We recognise that Wombat works within a wider housing system that has and continues to cause harm towards First Nations people. Wombat maintains that we all have a responsibility to reconcile and challenge the western notions on which this continent's housing model is based. We commit to always working to do better.

Wombat is committed to strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations. We will amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the homelessness sector while advocating for better outcomes and housing justice. We will continue to foster an inclusive and diverse workplace that is not just culturally safe, but culturally rich and proud.

Wombat Housing Support Services acknowledges the strength, resilience, endurance, wisdom, and ongoing connection to the lands and waters of the world's oldest continuous cultures. Sovereignty has never been ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia


Reconciliation Australia welcomes Wombat Housing Support Services to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Wombat Housing Support Services joins a network of more than 3,000 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 Wombat Housing Support Services 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 Wombat Housing Support Services, 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 RAP

Wombat acknowledges that reconciliation demands proactive engagement from all community members. As an organisation, we recognise our role in acknowledging and addressing the ongoing impacts and enduring consequences of colonisation in Australia.

Wombat is dedicated to actively uplifting and amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing support from, and working within, specialist homelessness services. We are committed to nurturing, enduring and mutually beneficial partnerships with First Nations people and organisations, to improve cultural understanding and increase access to safe affordable housing.

To strengthen this commitment, we vow to:

- Heighten our involvement in community events such as NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week, expanding our advocacy efforts to champion the cause of reconciliation actively,
- Establish robust accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency and responsibility in our actions, fostering a culture of trust and openness,
- Foster a culturally safe, enriched, and proud workplace environment that celebrates diversity and acknowledges the unique contributions of First Nations people.

By undertaking these initiatives, Wombat aims to contribute meaningfully to the journey of reconciliation, recognising the importance of addressing injustices and working collaboratively towards a more just and inclusive future.

Senior Leaders who are RAP working group Champions:

- Mark Rayner – General Manager

Internal and External members of the RAP working group:

- Caitlin Benson – Case Manager (Pathways to Independence)
- Sophronia Armatolos - Case Manager (Youth)
- Kevyn Manning – Case Manager (Youth)
- Maddison Dunkley – Case Manager (Tenancy Plus)
- Miguel Aravena – Case Manager (Tenancy Plus)
- Nick Stassinakis – Case Manager (Tenancy Plus)
- Linda Gomes – Case Manager (Support to Families at Risk)
- Mark Rayner – General Manager

Two staff members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander are members of our RAP working group.

Our Business

Wombat is a community-based, not for profit organisation providing a range of homelessness support services across the Western Metropolitan region. Wombat was formed by an amalgamation of two similar agencies (Wombat and Lanigiro) in 1998 and is situated on Wurundjeri land of the Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation in North Melbourne. Wombat has grown and continues to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in and around Melbourne's West. Wombat has 34 staff, including 2 staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. More than 1,000 individuals are supported each year through Wombat's diverse range of case management services which include support to those in public and community housing, transitional housing support, adult and family outreach, youth support, youth justice, and leaving care.

Wombat's programs receive funding from the Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing (DFFH). Wombat auspices the coordinator role for the Western Local Area Service Network (LASN) and actively

participates in the LASN, contributing our perspective among a collective of service providers. Our involvement also extends beyond the Western LASN, allowing us to influence broader State LASNs through collaborative projects. Wombat collaborates closely with various entities, including Youth Justice, Home Stretch, Homes Victoria, Unison, Salvation Army, Child Protection, The Orange Door, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Victorian Legal Aid, Justice Connect, and other key stakeholders and programs, ensuring comprehensive support for our clients.

We strive to respond to the needs of our community by delivering innovative programs and engaging in impactful advocacy efforts. We acknowledge the importance of amplifying the voices of First Nations people in the local communities of which we work and expanding our sphere of influence. We endeavour to build on our relationships with community to ensure that Wombat is best placed to be able to provide a safe, accessible, and quality service for all First Nations people.

Our Partnerships and Current Activities

- In late 2022, Wombat staff expressed a collective desire to recognise January 26th as a day of mourning and reflection. Following a unanimous response from a staff survey, we decided to work on January 26th, demonstrating our solidarity with First Nations Australians and acknowledging this day as one of reflection and action. This prompted us to recognise the need for stronger ties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, assess our practices for improvement, and formulate an action-focused plan, leading to the establishment of a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.



Wombat Housing - Smoking Ceremony - Wurundjeri Elder Bill Nicholson and Wombat Staff.



Relationships

Wombat Housing advocates for self-determination and acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies are best positioned to exercise choice, control, authority, and responsibility in determining optimal outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Wombat Housing recognises the necessity of fostering stronger connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is committed to evaluating our practices to enhance engagement, knowledge, and overall improvement.



Wombat Housing - Reconciliation Week in-house event - Wombat Staff.





Relationships

-Continued

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. | August 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | September 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| 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 our staff. | November 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May - 3 June 2026, 2027 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May - 3 June 2026, 2027 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. | March 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | October 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | September 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | February 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: Management Team |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | January 2027 | Lead: General Manager Support: Management Team |



Respect

Wombat proudly acknowledges the rich cultural heritage of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Wombat's office is based. We pay our deepest respects to the Elders past and present, recognising their enduring connection to the lands, waters, animals, and communities.

The history of this area, known as Quor-nóng to the Wurundjeri and Eastern Kulin people (and later named Royal Park by colonisers), holds significant importance as an ancient meeting and camping site for the Eastern Kulin nations. It served as a gathering place, where diverse language groups converged to share knowledge, stories, and traditions.

Quor-nóng, our immediate neighbour, carries the imprints of its past as a vital Eastern Kulin living area. The park, which was once thinly timbered with gum, wattle, and she-oak, was witness to the cultural vibrancy of the Aboriginal people who met here.

A scar tree near the Melbourne Zoo stands as a poignant reminder of our history and the enduring culture of the Wurundjeri and Eastern Kulin people. This red gum, adorned with scars from bark removal, speaks of a heritage rooted in sustainable practices. Bark, extracted with care, served various essential purposes, from crafting canoes and containers to fashioning shields and temporary shelters. We acknowledge the resilience and resourcefulness of the Aboriginal people who cultivated a profound understanding of the land and its purpose.

In the 19th century, colonisers provide several accounts of observing large gatherings of Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, and Gunaikurnai people in Quor-nóng. Later, communities were forcefully relocated to reserves such as Corranderk in the 1860s, under the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines. We recognise the importance of confronting the past, and committing to a future built on mutual understanding, respect, and reconciliation. We honour the history of this place and the enduring connection the Wurundjeri and broader Eastern Kulin nations have to this land.



Wombat Housing -
NAIDOC Week event
- Wombat Staff.



Respect

–Continued

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| 5. 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"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation. | August 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. | May 2027 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| 6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area. | April 2027 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols | March 2027 | Lead: Youth Case Manager - Kevyn Support: RAP Working Group |
| 7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. | December 2027 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. | January 2027 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July 2026 | Lead: RAP Convenor Support: RAP Working Group |



Wombat Housing - NAIDOC Week event - Wombat Staff.





Opportunities

At Wombat, we are committed to fostering meaningful partnerships and actively participating in initiatives that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In Victoria, “Aboriginal people represent 13% of all Victorians accessing homelessness service, despite only making up 1% of the overall population. 17% of all Aboriginal people in Victoria accessed homelessness services across 2021-22.” (Focus Areas – VAHMF) We recognise the need to do more to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and we support the development of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework, Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort, and its call for the creation of an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria and the strengthening of relationships between mainstream homelessness services (such as Wombat and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations.)



Wombat Housing -
Homelessness event
- Wombat Staff.



Opportunities

-Continued

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|------------|--|
| 8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. | March 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: Management Team |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | May 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: Management Team |
| 9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. Investigate Supply Nation membership. | April 2027 | Lead: General Manager Support: Admin & Management Team |
| | | March 2027 | Lead: Administration Support Officer Support: Management Team |



Wombat Housing - Survival Day March.



Governance

Wombat recognises the importance of strong governance in driving our commitment to reconciliation. Our governance has been designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in our reconciliation efforts. We are dedicated to embedding reconciliation into the core of our organisational practices, policies, and decision-making processes.

Our governance structure includes a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation and progress of our RAP. This group comprises representatives from various levels of our organisation, including senior leadership, to ensure that reconciliation is championed at all levels.

Through robust governance, we aim to build a culture of respect, understanding, and collaboration, ensuring that our reconciliation initiatives are sustainable and impactful. We will regularly monitor, review, and report on our progress, holding ourselves accountable to the commitments outlined in our RAP.



Wombat Housing -
Smoking Ceremony
- Wombat Staff.



Governance

-Continued

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form RWG to govern RAP implementation. | January 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP working group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. | January 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP working group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | February 2026 | Lead: General Manager Support: Program Manager |
| 11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | March 2027 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | June 2026 | Lead: General Manager |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. | January 2026 | Lead: General Manager |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | April 2026 | Lead: RAP Convener Support: General Manager |
| 12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | November 2026, then annually | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP Convener |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. | July 2026 | Lead: RAP Convener Support: General Manager |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. | September 2026, then annually | Lead: RAP Convener Support: RAP working group |
| 13. 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. | February 2027 | Lead: General Manager Support: RAP working group |



Contact details

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