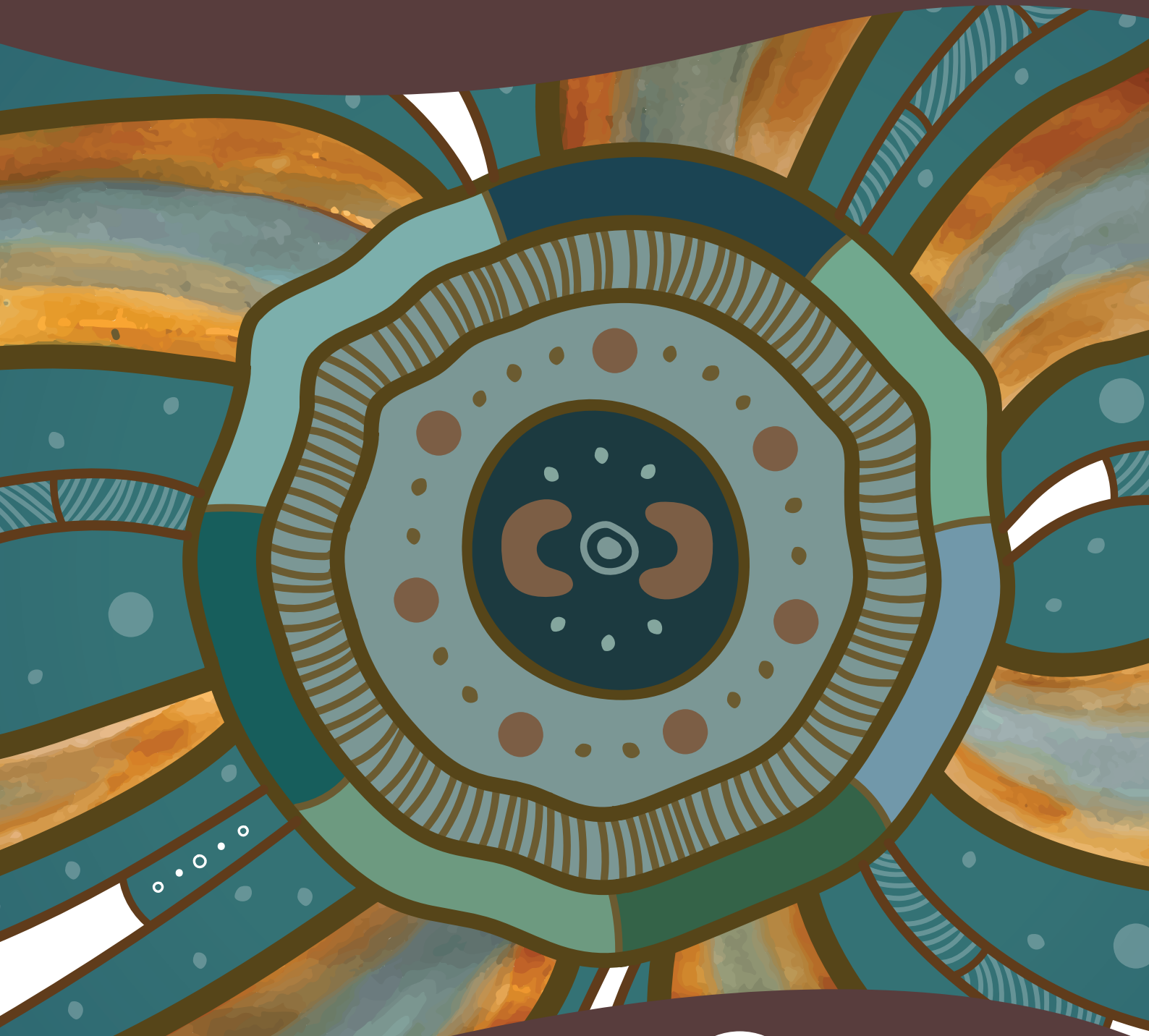


Galkangu, 'we build together'

(Dja Dja Wurrung language)

North Central CMA Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
November 2022 – November 2025



Acknowledgment of Country

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country and the valuable contributions they have made to the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan. The North Central CMA also recognises and acknowledges the contributions and interests of all First Nations People and organisations in land and natural resource management.

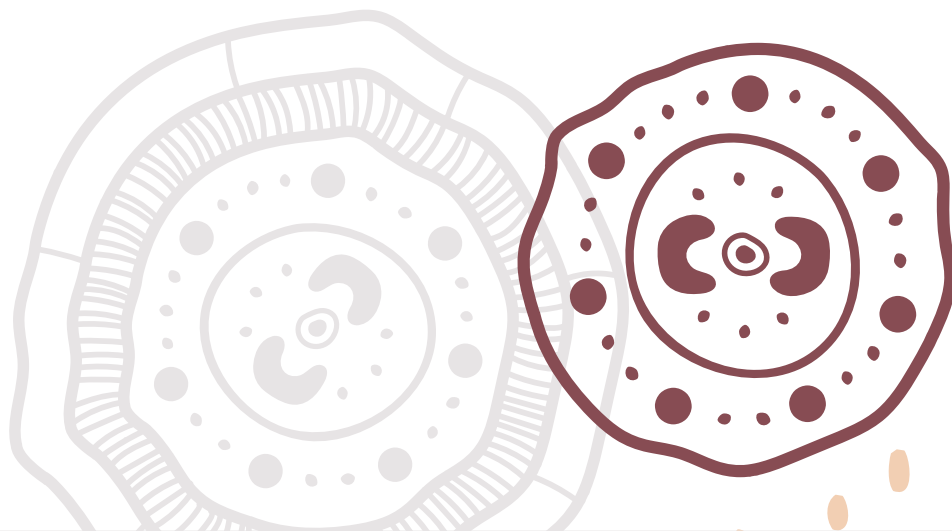
Terminology

This document uses the term First Nations People to be inclusive of Traditional Owners, who have connection to an identified area of Country, as well as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons who may have connection with and/or outside of Victoria. When appropriate, this document also uses the term Traditional Owner when describing or referring to a specific Traditional Owner group. Here, the term Traditional Owners acknowledges the distinct custodial rights of peoples who, over countless generations, have a unique spiritual, social, and cultural connection with certain Country, and respects the principles of 'Right people for Country'.

The North Central CMA uses the term Wamba Wemba to refer to Traditional Owners from the Wamba Wemba First Nation Peoples. This term is used following guidance from Wamba Wemba Elders and members of the North Central CMA's Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country Steering Committee. However, we also acknowledge that there exist different variations of the term which is used by different groups in Victoria and New South Wales e.g. Wamba Wamba / Wemba Wemba / Wamba Wemba.

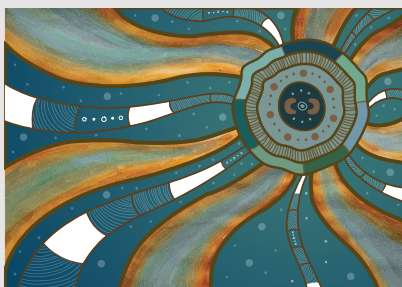
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Artwork and artist - Maddi Moser

Maddi Moser is a Taungurung designer, photographer, artist and teacher. She is passionate about visual story-telling and capturing moments in time.



The artwork (front cover) reflects coming together, connecting and working together to create impact. The waves represent connection as well as the good outcomes that we create and put back into the world together. The two people sitting in the middle of the icon represents the North Central CMA working with the Traditional Owners Groups and the seven Traditional Owner Groups are represented by the seven colours on the outside of the circle. The repeated lines and dots are all the little conversations and actions that happen every day to help create these positive outcomes.

Stretch CEO Statement - Reconciliation Australia



On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise. Through the creation of this Stretch RAP, North Central CMA continues to contribute to the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have taken this goodwill and transformed it into action.

North Central CMA has made significant strides on its reconciliation journey so far. In its previous RAP, it focussed its attention on building a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate in and contribute to its work. This has included the creation of the 'Deadly Team!' to provide mentoring and assistance to First Nations staff, as well as advise on engagement with Traditional Owners.

North Central CMA has also grown Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation into its Board and Sub-Committees, and has invested in its internal cultural competency, with conversation and reflection circles. These initiatives show North Central CMA building strong and well-integrated foundations from which to evolve and develop its contributions to reconciliation.

This Stretch RAP sees North Central CMA continue this impressive trajectory, with a particular focus on giving primacy to First Nations knowledge of caring for Country into its operations. It plans to increase the pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share in its governance and decision-making, via Expression of Interest processes, engagement meetings and removing barriers to participation. It will also facilitate opportunities for two-way learning between staff and Traditional Owners through field visits, events on Country, and collaboration on project committees and working groups. These initiatives show North Central CMA's commitment to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and viewpoints an integral and primary part of its work.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend North Central CMA on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Foreword from the Chair



On behalf of the North Central CMA Board and staff, I am pleased and very proud to affirm our renewed and ongoing commitment to reconciliation through this new Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2025, Galkangu recognises the role that we, as an organisation and as individuals, have in driving meaningful outcomes in reconciliation and in supporting First Nations self-determination in caring for and healing Country.

This RAP commits us to our vision of walking and working together with First Nations People to promote healthy communities and healthy Country for the benefit of our entire catchment area. It seeks to strengthen First Nations voices in natural resource management, to promote partnerships that maintain and protect cultural heritage, knowledge and promote connection to Country, and to also ensuring self-determination is a guiding principle for all of our work.

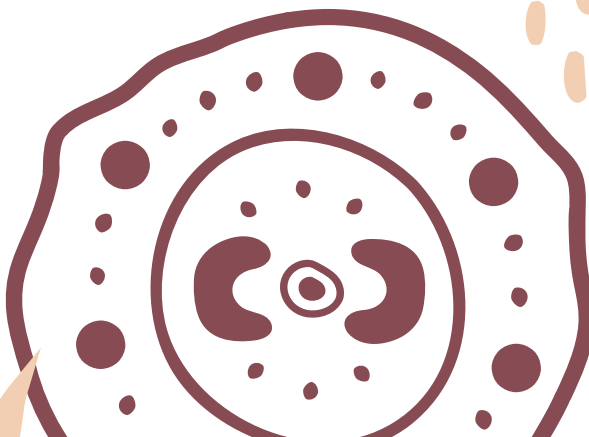
Developing this new Plan has been an important opportunity to reflect on our achievements to date, as well as the learnings and challenges in delivering our first RAP. We use these learnings to continue strengthening our relationships and partnerships, to improving two-way learning, trust and knowledge-sharing, and to ensuring that reconciliation becomes 'business as usual' across our organisation. We are particularly proud to be stepping up in our reconciliation journey to the Stretch level and to be able to commit to more ambitious targets, such as those around employment and procurement.

We know that reconciliation is underpinned by strong relationships based on mutual trust, respect and dialogue, as well as a commitment to having open and honest conversations about truth-telling, equality and reconciliation.

While we have made progress through the RAP, we also recognise that our organisation still has work to do. Our renewed North Central Regional Catchment Strategy includes Traditional Owners' aspirations for Country and, together with this RAP, we have a clear pathway to keep pushing us in the right direction to collectively protect and enhance our natural resources.

Congratulations and thank you to those who put the Plan together, including the RAP Working Group, CMA Deadly Team staff members as well as members of the First Nations and wider community. I look forward to seeing the Stretch RAP Galkangu implemented and to progressing North Central CMA's work in reconciliation.

Julie Miller Markoff
North Central CMA Board
Australia





Our vision for reconciliation

The North Central CMA will walk and work together on Country with First Nations People and organisations as equals to promote healthy communities and healthy Country to enable our whole community to prosper.



To achieve this vision, the North Central CMA will:

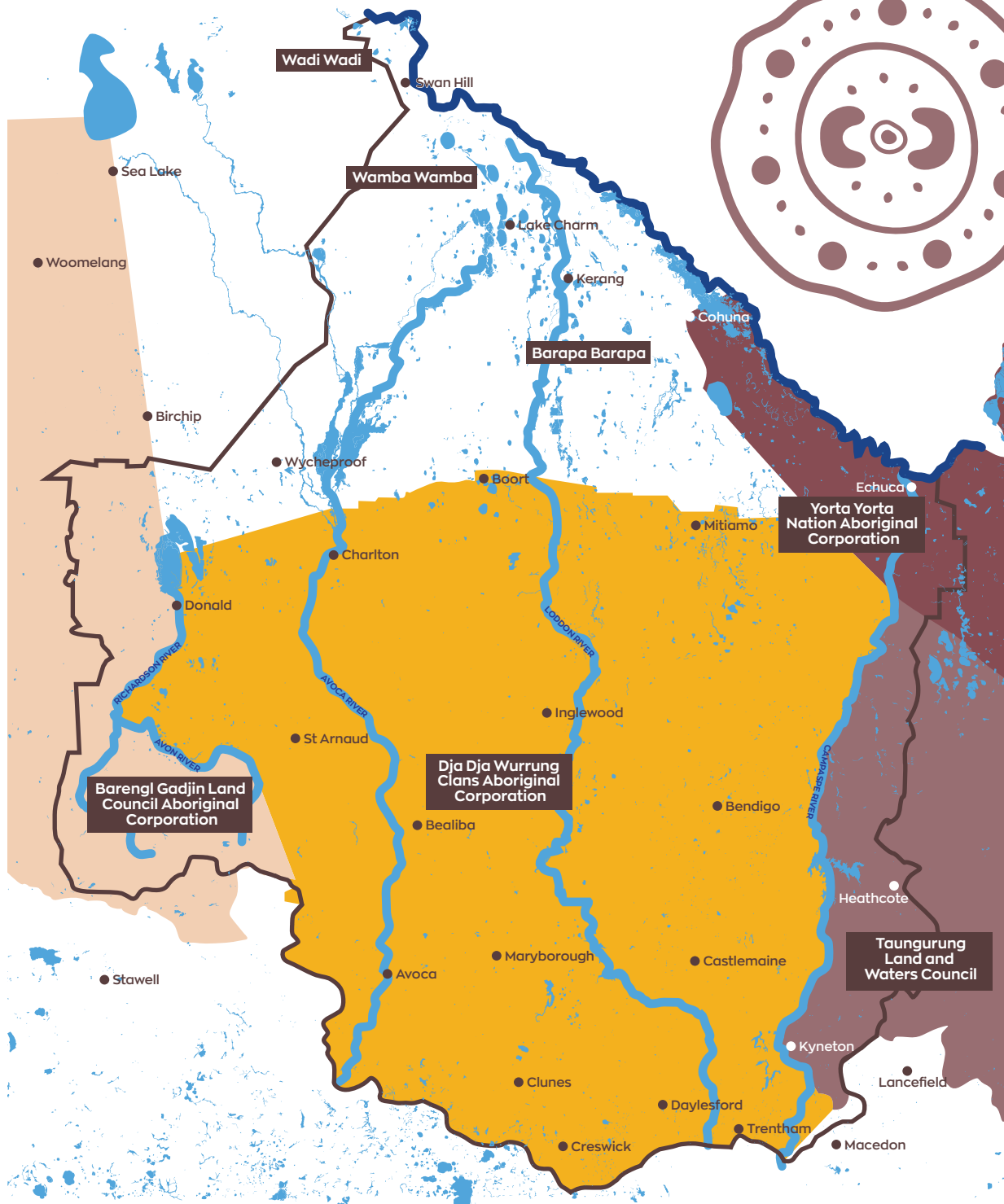
- Strive to be an organisation that has traditional knowledge, self-determination and participation at the heart of natural resource management planning, governance and delivery.
- Commit to learning and understanding Traditional Owner Custodian perspectives, and to developing a new and shared approach to caring for Country, in collaboration with Traditional Owners across our region.
- Lead and drive reconciliation initiatives across the North Central CMA region.
- Promote and build stronger connections to Country through employment, training, education and recognition.



Paying our respects to seven Nations

The North Central region includes the traditional lands of the Barapa Barapa, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadi Wadi, Wamba Wamba, Wotjobaluk (represented by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council) and Yorta Yorta.

Areas covered by Traditional Owner Groups with Registered Aboriginal Party status under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006* are shown on the map (below).



Barapa Barapa

The Murray River is not a boundary for the Barapa Barapa people whose territory stretches south to Boort, north beyond Deniliquin in NSW, and along the Murray including the tributaries of the Murrumbidgee and Loddon Rivers.

Dja Dja Wurrung

Dja Dja Wurrung Country embraces the Upper Loddon and Avoca rivers, running east, through Maldon and Bendigo to around Castlemaine and west as far as St. Arnaud. It takes in the area close to Lake Buloke. The northern reaches touch Boort and, northwest, Donald, while Creswick and Daylesford mark its southern frontier, and to the southwest, Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca, Stuart Mill, Natte Yallock and Emu and the eastern headwaters of the Wimmera River.

Taungurung

Taungurung Country encompasses the area between the upper reaches of the Goulburn River and its tributaries north of the Great Dividing Range, from the Campaspe River in the west, eastwards to the Great Dividing Range, the Ovens River in the north and south to the top of the range.

Wadi Wadi

The Wadi Wadi Nation straddles the Murray River near Swan Hill, extending west towards Ouyen and south of Robinvale. Wadi Wadi traditional Country includes the major river red gum stand in Nyah Vernifera Forest.

Wamba Wemba

The Wamba Wemba Nation straddles both sides of the Murray River and takes in Deniliquin, Moulamein and Swan Hill. As well as part of the Murray, Wamba Wemba Country also includes the major tributaries of the Edward River and Wakool River.

Barengi Gadjin Land Council

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) represents Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples (collectively referred to today as the Wotjobaluk Nations or Wotjobaluk Peoples). The Wotjobaluk Nations include Lake Hindmarsh, Lake Albacutya, Pine Plains Lake, Lake Werringrin, Lake Coorong, Warracknabeal, Beulah, Hopetoun, Dimboola, Ouyen, Yanac, Hattah Lakes and the Wimmera River (Barrenggi Gadyin).

Yorta Yorta

Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River from approximately Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga, including Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extends north to south of Deniliquin.





Our Business

The North Central CMA is one of nine Catchment Management Authorities in Victoria which are responsible for the integrated planning and coordination of land, water and biodiversity management in their respective regions.

Our region is an area of diverse landscapes and land-use that covers 13% of the state. It is bordered by the Murray River to the north, the Great Dividing Range and Wombat State Forest to the south and Mt Camel Range to the east. The region's main waterways are the Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and Avon-Richardson rivers, which form part of the Murray-Darling Basin. The natural environment also features box-ironbark forest, threatened riverine grasslands, internationally-significant wetlands and other unique biodiversity.

The North Central CMA was established in 1997 under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, and also has powers and functions under the *Water Act 1989*. One of our key business functions is delivering the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-2027; our overarching strategy for managing land, water and biodiversity across the region. In managing our region's nature resources, we work in close partnership with the Traditional Owner Groups, Trust For Nature, local governments, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, water corporations, educational institutions, research institutions, the private sector, and local communities in our catchment region. This work is also complemented by our close working relationships with our neighbouring CMAs and other State government agencies including Parks Victoria and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

All these relationships and partnerships allow the North Central CMA to deliver a range of projects relating to:

- waterways and wetlands
- water quality
- biodiversity
- environmental water reserves
- Landcare support and funding coordination
- Regional responses to climate change
- Salinity
- Pest plants and pest animals
- floodplain management
- soil health
- threatened species recovery
- vegetation enhancement and restoration
- cultural heritage.

Engaging and working in close partnership with Traditional Owner Groups to deliver natural resource management projects is integral to our work. For too long, information sharing has been one-way; from First Nations People to agencies. The North Central CMA will continue to improve its practice of two-way knowledge sharing that will ensure First Nations cultural values and perspectives are embedded in natural resource management. We will also help build the capacity of First Nations People and organisations to care for Country and to navigate government processes.

Based in Huntly, Victoria, the North Central CMA employs 67 individuals, of which 4 staff (6%) identify as Aboriginal People. The organisation is also hosting two First Nations young people who are completing a School-based trainee program and the Victorian Apprenticeship Recovery program. Four Traditional Owners were also employed on a casual basis over the course of the North Central CMA's first Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The North Central CMA has been on a long journey of reconciliation. This Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2025, *Galkangu* follows on from our first Reconciliation Action Plan which was developed in 2018 and implemented over 2019-2021. It articulated our commitment to working in partnership with the seven Traditional Owners Groups, and other local First Nations People across the region, to embed First Nations cultural values and perspectives in natural resource management. Our first RAP provided a clear framework for the organisation to implement our reconciliation vision and series of actions.

This RAP is our organisation's first three-year Stretch RAP and the first for a Catchment Management Authority in Victoria. The North Central CMA is proud to have progressed from an Innovate to a Stretch RAP, demonstrating our success in driving meaningful change and outcomes to advance reconciliation. *Galkangu* means 'build together, we make together, make things happen together, more connected to country' in Dja Dja Wurrung language. Through the actions under *Galkangu*, we aim to build on the achievements and learnings of our first RAP while delivering greater outcomes and change.

Our RAP Working Group guided and oversaw the development of our new RAP. Working Group members included First Nations People, Executive staff and other North Central CMA

staff. In total, seven members (either community members or employees at the North Central CMA) represented perspectives of First Nations People and communities on the Working Group.

The RAP was developed through input from North Central CMA staff, Board members and community representatives, as well as community engagement activities with First Nations People and communities in our region. This included:

- Recruited Dja Dja Wurrung/Yorta Yorta/Kamilaroi/Bigamore man Damien Saunders to assist in the review and development of our second RAP
- An internal RAP planning workshop was held in June 2021 with members of the RAP Working Group
- Seona James, Indigenous Cultural Connections, facilitated two community engagement workshops in January 2021 (Kerang) and February 2021 (Bendigo) to review our first Innovate RAP and to seek staff and community input into development of the new Plan. Attendees included North Central CMA staff, representatives of Traditional Owners Groups and other local First Nations communities
- An online survey sent to North Central CMA staff and Board members, as well as 33 Traditional Owner entities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations across the region

RAP Champion

The Executive Manager – Strategy and Partnerships is our organisation’s RAP Champion. The RAP Champion is also supported by members of the RAP Working Group, the Executive Management Team, and staff from the North Central CMA’s Deadly Team who help drive reconciliation outcomes and to ensure the Plan is delivered across the organisation.



RAP Working Group members

Uncle Graham Atkinson

North Central CMA Board Member and Dja Dja Wurrung representative

Aunty Gabby Gamble

Community Leaders Group representative

Aunty Lynn Warren

Community member

Dawn McBride

Community member

Patrick Fagan*

Aboriginal Facilitator

Nick Stewart*

Aboriginal Facilitator

Annalise Varker*

Victorian Apprenticeship Recovery (VARP)

Rohan Hogan

Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships

Rachel Murphy

Executive Manager, Program Delivery

Robyn McKay*

Project Manager, Aboriginal Projects and Partnerships

Fiona Machin*

Project Manager, Aboriginal Projects and Partnerships

Cass Davis

Manager, Community and Relationships

Tammy Herne

Sustainable Agriculture Team

Laura Chant

Project Manager

Anthony Sloan

Catchment Restoration Officer

* No longer members of the North Central CMA RAP working group, however the North Central CMA recognises their valuable contributions to Reconciliation.

Our Reconciliation Journey

The North Central CMA has been on its journey of reconciliation since 2010. Over the past decade, the organisation has continued to develop and enhance our partnerships and positive relationships with First Nations Peoples across the region. Working in partnership, we have delivered the following key reconciliation initiatives over the years:

- Employment outcomes through increasing the direct employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including Indigenous Facilitators, an Aboriginal Water Officer and The Living Murray - Indigenous Partnership Projects Officer.
- Formation of the North Central CMA's internal Deadly Team in 2017 to provide mentoring and peer support to Aboriginal staff, as well as offer guidance and support across the organisation regarding Traditional Owner partnerships and engagement and to help support the CMA's reconciliation activities. The Deadly Team has grown from two staff in 2018 to five staff members in 2022, comprised of 5 Aboriginal and 2 non-Aboriginal staff.
- Increasing our support for First Nations businesses and suppliers through our procurement processes, including the procurement of Traditional Owner work crews for on ground works on Country, including Djandak Enterprises, Woka Walla, Barapa Land & Water, and Taungurung works crews.
- Delivered key partnership projects such as the Yung Balug Djaara Dja Dja Wurrung, Healthy Country Planning - Djandak, Gatjin and Wi (Land, Water and Fire) at Boort
- Formalised the strategic partnership between the North Central CMA and DJAARA (trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) in protecting and managing the region's natural resources through signing a Partnership Statement in 2015.



- Supporting the Barapa Wamba Water For Country partnership project since 2014 which involves the collection of information and knowledge of cultural and spiritual values of the area and is allowing Traditional Owners voice to be heard in the management of environmental water and forest management.
- Through North Central CMA's Indigenous Facilitator roles, we ensure Aboriginal Cultural Heritage compliance processes are followed and provide advice to staff, consultants and contractors on Aboriginal cultural values and heritage issues.
- Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies delivered at key events and meetings
- Increasing our support and participation in local celebrations for National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, artworks and Acknowledgement of Country signage

In 2018, the North Central CMA successfully developed its first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021 in consultation with our internal RAP Working Group, members of our Board, Community Consultative Committee and other CMA staff, and representatives of the Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owner Groups.

Endorsed by our Board in October 2018, our first RAP aimed to embed reconciliation across our organisation and corporate structures, further enhance our partnerships with Traditional Owner Groups, and ensure First Nations cultural values and perspectives were embedded in natural resource management across the region.



Key learnings and achievements:

In early 2020, Djandak Enterprises were engaged to assess the achievements and outcomes of our Innovate RAP 2018-2021 as well as the changes to cultural competency of the organisation and staff. Forming the basis for our NCCMA Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021 Performance Report (2021), key achievements identified through our first RAP included:

- Increased recruitment, employment and retention of First Nations staff, including employment of two designated First Nations positions and five casual positions.
- Supported and employed two First Nation's Mentee positions. The Aboriginal Mentee's were mentored by the Project Manager - Aboriginal Projects and Partnerships and their role was to assist in the development of our first RAP as well as assist in the planning for delivery of environmental water in Reed Bed Swamp, Guttrum Forest. One Mentee was employed in a designated First Nations project officer role (ongoing) in December 2021.
- Increased support for skill development and employment opportunities for First Nations young peoples, with four school-based traineeships supported over the life of the RAP.



- Improved cultural competency across the organisation, through delivery of cultural awareness training for 90% of North Central CMA staff and holding five Conversation or Reflection Circles focused on White Privilege, two-way learning and trust building.
- Improved policies and procedures aimed at increasing First Nations employment, cultural safety, procurement, and cultural competency within the organisation (9 policies and procedures were either developed or updated).
- Ceremonial and Cultural Leave established for First Nations staff.
- Increased participation of First Nations People on organisational working and reference groups, including the North Central CMA Board and Board sub-committees, Campaspe and Gunbower Community Reference Groups, Regional Catchment Strategy Working Group and the Community Leaders Group.
- North Central CMA communication materials incorporated Acknowledgement of Country and Aboriginal artwork in rebranding materials.
- Increased sponsorship and internal celebrations for National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week across Bendigo and the region.

In developing and implementing our first RAP, we have learnt that greater trust and understanding, two-way learning, and strong relationships are critical for developing more meaningful and genuine engagement with First Nations People and communities. Reconciliation is inclusive of both expressions of respect and practical actions and is progressed through shifting attitudes and behaviours within the organisation and networks. Reconciliation requires the North Central CMA to engage in a process of critical and honest reflection to lead the change required to create more respectful and equal communities.



Some of the key learnings and challenges identified through our first RAP were:

- At times, the North Central CMA's partnership projects and work are focused on certain Traditional Owner Groups and communities more than others. Our efforts are often shaped and influenced by legislative requirements and obligations under the *Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreements*, available funding, and our asset areas in natural resource management.
- Participation of First Nations People in projects may still vary depending on the commitment of individual project staff to go 'above and beyond' the usual project delivery approaches.
- Delays in engaging Traditional Owner-specific businesses and individuals, and ongoing challenges to work through within the organisation's existing systems, policies and procedures.
- Challenges remain in moving to a 'business as usual' where cultural activities and integration of First Nations perspectives is embedded in project planning and events.





Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony, Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Relationships, Respect and Opportunities

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) provide organisations with a clear framework to create meaningful relationships, enhanced respect and promote opportunities with First Nations People and communities. By progressing to a Stretch RAP, the North Central CMA is committing to building on the successes achieved through our first Innovate RAP 2019-2021, while also demonstrating our commitment to driving reconciliation internally and across our catchment area with our broader partners and communities.

North Central CMA's Stretch RAP 2022-2025, *Galkangu* commits to delivering the following actions over the next 3 years under the themes of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. This will ensure we are embedding programs and initiatives so they become 'business as usual' for our organisation and that we are setting targets to deliver real change.

Relationships



Enduring relationships are critical for the North Central CMA to build a foundation of respect and trust that facilitates broader engagement and diversity across the whole CMA region. Increased knowledge sharing, mutual learning and capacity building with First Nations People establishes better relationships and therefore stronger project outcomes.

Focus area Natural resource management partnerships, strategy and delivery on Country, community engagement

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations People, stakeholders and organisations.		
Hold two Reconciliation Forums for North Central CMA staff, RAP Working Group members and representatives of local First Nations People and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	November 2023, November 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group
Review, update and implement an Engagement Plan to work with First Nations stakeholders.	December 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group
Establish and maintain three formal two-way partnerships with First Nations communities or organisations, including with DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation), Djandak Enterprises, Taungurung Land & Waters Council, and the Barapa Wamba Water for Country Steering Committee.	July 2023, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships
Establish and promote a designated North Central CMA contact person for First Nations programs and partnerships, and share details with communities regarding best contact for CMA opportunities, programs and other issues on Country.	December 2022	Lead: Manager Aboriginal Projects Support: Communications Team

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).		
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2023, May 2024, May 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
RAP Working Group members to participate in two external NRW events, either online or in person.	27 May-3 June 2023, 27 May-3 June 2024, 27 May-3 June 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least two external events to recognise and celebrate NRW	27 May-3 June 2023, 27 May-3 June 2024, 27 May-3 June 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Organise two internal NRW events, including at least one organisation-wide NRW event, each year.	27 May-3 June 2023, 27 May-3 June 2024, 27 May-3 June 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group
Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	27 May-3 June 2023, 27 May-3 June 2024, 27 May-3 June 2025	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.		
Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	August 2023, August 2024, August 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	27 May-3 June 2023, 27 May-3 June 2024, 27 May-3 June 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver two short films to communicate to staff, community and other stakeholders about reconciliation and telling the stories of North Central CMA's work with local First Nations People Develop and deliver a social media campaign to communicate our work in reconciliation Develop two media releases each year communicating achievements of our partnership projects with the Traditional Owner Groups in our region 	Deliverable 1 November 2023, November 2025 Deliverable 2 July 2023 Deliverable 3 November 2023, November 2024, November 2025	Lead: Communications Coordinator Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Collaborate with two RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement ways to advance reconciliation, including City of Greater Bendigo, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP)	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Ensure at least one representative from NCCMA attends a minimum of two RAP Leadership Gatherings annually	Review July 2023, review July 2024, review July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Communicate the outcomes and learnings of our key CMA – Traditional Owner partnership projects in natural resource management, including the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project, the Barapa Wamba Water For Country project, and Caring for the Campaspe Project.	August 2023, August 2024, August 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Deliver two opportunities annually to educate the broader public, local schools and community organisations to raise understanding and knowledge of the Traditional Owner and Aboriginal culture, heritage and Peoples across the region, such as school-based River Detectives programs and North Central Landcare activities.	August 2023, August 2024, August 2025	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager Support: RAP Working Group

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: HR Manager
Engage with First Nations staff and/or advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: HR Manager
Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	October 2023, October 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Senior leaders, including Executive and Leadership Team and the North Central CMA Board, to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	May 2023, May 2024, May 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer

Respect



North Central CMA strives to show respect for First Nations People and their cultures by working together to best protect cultural heritage values and restore them to better health. Respect for intellectual property and the right to self-determination enables meaningful partnerships and participation on projects and natural resource management outcomes.

Focus area Building a strong staff culture, Executive, senior management and leadership culture that respects and celebrates First Nations People and cultures

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations People, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.		
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Consult local Traditional Owners and/or other First Nations People and advisors on the implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	September 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	March 2024	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Commit all RAP Working Group members, senior management and corporate services staff, CMA staff, Board members, and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning.	November 2023, November 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
100% of CMA staff and Board members to undertake formal and structured cultural learning, with the following targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of staff and Board members to complete online cultural awareness training 60% of staff (including senior management, RAP Working Group members and Board members) to complete face-to-face training opportunities 	November 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>In partnership with external stakeholders, deliver at least three events or cultural awareness training sessions to CMA staff and Board members that promote truth-telling and the exploration of racism, such as Conversation Circles and White Privilege Self-Reflections Sessions.</p>	<p>December 2023, December 2024</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations People by observing cultural protocols and languages.</p>		
<p>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate key information via the CMA staff intranet Ngarrwiring, including the North Central CMA Cultural Safety Guide, and the Cultural Protocols documents • Ensure the induction process for new staff includes information in the new starter kit and an induction presentation with Deadly Team staff 	<p>May 2023, May 2024, May 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at five significant events each year.</p>	<p>July 2023, July 2024, July 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.</p>	<p>July 2023, July 2024 July 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships</p>
<p>Staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events.</p>	<p>July 2023, July 2024, July 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Leadership Team</p>
<p>Display two Acknowledgment of Country plaques in the North Central CMA office.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>Display a map of the region in the North Central CMA office and on our website that acknowledges Country for all Traditional Owner Groups in the north central catchment region</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager Support: Communications Team</p>

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Consistently display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and banners recognising Traditional Owners in the main foyer and in key meeting rooms at the at the North Central CMA office and display flags at all CMA-led public events	March 2023	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager Support: Communications Team
Recognise First Nations People and Traditional Owners in CMA's publications, written material and online content	March 2023	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager Support: Communications Team
Support at least two language naming opportunities to highlight and raise broader public awareness of traditional languages across the catchment region, such as naming of North Central CMA strategies, supporting place naming opportunities for local waterways in partnership with the Registered Aboriginal Parties and local naming authorities, or the use of signage on CMA projects.	March 2023	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager Support: Communications Team

7. Engage with First Nations People, cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event. 	First week July 2023, first week July 2024, first week July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group
Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	February 2023, February 2024, February 2025	Lead: HR Manager
Support all staff to participate in at least one NAIDOC Week event in our local area, including Bendigo NAIDOC Week Civic Flag Raising Ceremony and Civic Reception and other events led by the Bendigo NAIDOC Week Committee.	First week July 2023, first week July 2024, first week July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group
In consultation with First Nations People and stakeholders, support one external NAIDOC Week event each year such as the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operate NAIDOC Children's Day	First week July 2023, first week July 2024, first week July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: RAP Working Group



Opportunities



North Central CMA is committed to the appointment, retention, development and support of First Nations People.

Creating opportunities and developing skills with First Nations People is central to creating stronger teams by increasing diversity, equality, cultural competency and knowledge. The North Central CMA recognises that opportunities must create long-term employment with flexible conditions. Diversity allows the CMA to be effective in project delivery and contributes to the goal of connecting people, rivers and landscapes. It also provides the opportunity to engage more local First Nations People and community members and encourages wider active management of natural resources by Traditional Owners in our catchment area.

Focus area Staff recruitment, Governance, management and leadership, Natural resource management partnerships, strategy and delivery on Country

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.		
Engage with First Nations staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: HR Manager
Review and update an First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: HR Manager
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: HR Manager
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to participation of First Nations People in our workplace.	March 2023, March 2025	Lead: HR Manager

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>First Nations employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 staff to receive formal mentoring through a relevant First Nations business offering employment and leadership support • All staff to undertake training courses related to their roles • At least 2 staff per year to shadow the CEO and Board Chair at key events and Board meetings 	<p>March 2023, March 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Support: HR Manager</p>
<p>North Central CMA will have 10%* First Nations People employment consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct employment (Staff directly employed by North Central CMA on a casual, part time or full time basis) • Indirect employment (consisting of staff, apprentices or school-based trainees housed at North Central CMA, under CMA daily management and/ or supervision but funded through a service provider or third party) <p>*8% as of July 2022</p>	<p>November 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>Provide cultural leave for First Nations employees and educate all NCCMA staff about why cultural leave is important.</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships</p> <p>Support: HR Manager</p>
<p>Offer support to First Nations Peoples to develop leadership skills that can apply to the environment and natural resource management sector. Support includes (but is not limited to) sponsoring positions in relevant regional or state-wide leadership programs, participation in The Living Murray Aboriginal Facilitator Network, and attending Aboriginal Water Officer Network meetings.</p>	<p>February 2023, February 2024, February 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Support: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships</p>
<p>Establish a mentoring support program for First Nations employees, engaging an appropriate First Nations business offering mentoring and employment support.</p>	<p>January 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships</p> <p>Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Promote work experience opportunities at the North Central CMA to First Nations secondary and tertiary students via local and regional channels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMA strategic meetings with the Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owner Groups • Relevant First Nations People networks, such as the Aboriginal Water Officer Network and the Aboriginal Facilitators • Central Victorian Indigenous Careers Expo • Wartatjarrang Local Aboriginal Network • North Central Catchment Partners Forum and other Victorian Government department networks 	<p>April 2023, April 2024, April 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Provide employment opportunities for 15 First Nations People to work on Country annually.</p>	<p>March 2023, March 2024, March 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>

9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

<p>Develop and implement an First Nations People procurement strategy.</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Services</p>
<p>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations People and businesses to staff.</p>	<p>May 2023, May 2024, May 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations People and businesses.</p>	<p>April 2023, April 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Services</p>
<p>Maintain commercial relationships with 10 First Nations businesses, including Djandak Enterprises, DJAARA, Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation (Woka Wolla), Biik Environmental, and Barengi Gadjin Land Council.</p>	<p>April 2023, April 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Services Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>
<p>Increase annual procurement from First Nations businesses to 4% annually (3% as of July 2022).</p>	<p>July 2023, July 2024, July 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager</p>

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Train all relevant staff in contracting First Nations businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	April 2023, April 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Services Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

10. Support two way learning and involvement of First Nations People during implementation of natural resource management

**Two-way learning encompasses the sharing of Traditional Ecological and western knowledge between Traditional Owners and non-Indigenous peoples*

Support Traditional Owners to connect and practise culture on Country during delivery of key events, such as providing project and other support to hold ceremonies and community days to mark delivery of water to local waterways, or to help the healing of Country post a blackwater (spiritually sick) event.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Facilitate opportunities for two-way learning between North Central CMA staff and Traditional Owners through: field visits, events on Country, and collaboration on project committees and working groups.	July 2023, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Review current process for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage compliance for on ground works delivered by North Central CMA and implement as part of our staff training strategy.	July 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Community and Relationships Team Manager
Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations People and businesses.	April 2023, April 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Services

11. Incorporate First Nations perspectives into natural resource management strategies and plans

Follow clear intellectual property processes with First Nations People to protect their cultural and intellectual property, and ensure process is communicated regularly with all staff via the staff intranet, team meetings and planning days. This will ensure the North Central CMA; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not share information unless permission is granted. Supports First Nations People and communities to understand intellectual property rules and regulations (two-way learning) Helps educate partners on First Nations cultural and intellectual property rights 	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
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Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure early and informed engagement with First Nations People during the project development life cycle by involving Traditional Owners in project initiation, scoping and goals setting, and through continued dialogue and review throughout the project development.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Familiarise staff with Country and Joint Management Plans where they exist through staff induction, team meetings and information accessible on the staff intranet, and encourage staff to consider these plans during program and strategy development.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Collaborate with relevant Traditional Owners in co-design approaches to strategy and project development, reviews and implementation to enable caring for Country.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Conduct a survey of North Central CMA programs as part of the review of the Reconciliation Action Plan to identify where First Nations People are not currently considered.	November 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

12. Advocate for cultural resources to support First Nations People and communities to care for Country

Advocate to state and federal government for resources and rights for First Nations People to support caring for Country and cultural practices.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Provide opportunities for Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Traditional Owner Groups to engage and speak with our key funding partners and investors on Country as part of ongoing advocacy and relationship building.	May 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

13. Enable and encourage First Nations People to have a wider role in governance and decision making

Encourage First Nations membership and participation in governance and consultation groups through Expression of Interest processes, dissemination of information via Traditional Owner-NCCMA engagement meetings, and removing any barriers to participation such as travel.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
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Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Offer one annual grant to regional First Nations People and communities to participate in a culturally appropriate leadership development opportunity.	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Establish an external First Nations People forum to provide cultural engagement, advice and guidance to North Central CMA staff and programs, such as through a Conversation Circle or annual forum.	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager



Cultural heritage monitoring, Lake Boort

Governance



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.		
Maintain First Nations representation on the RWG.	July 2023, July 2024, July 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	January 2023, January 2024, January 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March, May, July, September, November 2023, 2024, 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.		
Embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	October 2023, October 2024, October 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	October 2023, October 2024, October 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: HR Manager
Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	January 2023, January 2024, January 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships
Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	February, May, August, November 2023, 2024, 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
16. 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 2023, June 2024, June 2025	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2023, 1 August 2024, 1 August 2025	Lead: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	February, May, August, November 2023, 2024, 2025	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Publicly report against our RAP commitments in our Annual Report, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	September 2023, September 2024, September 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Communications Team
Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	April 2024	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.		
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2024	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager
Provide a Traffic Light Report against our RAP to Reconciliation Australia to support the strategic direction of our next RAP.	June 2024	Lead: Executive Manager Strategy and Partnerships Support: Aboriginal Projects Manager

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