



mode



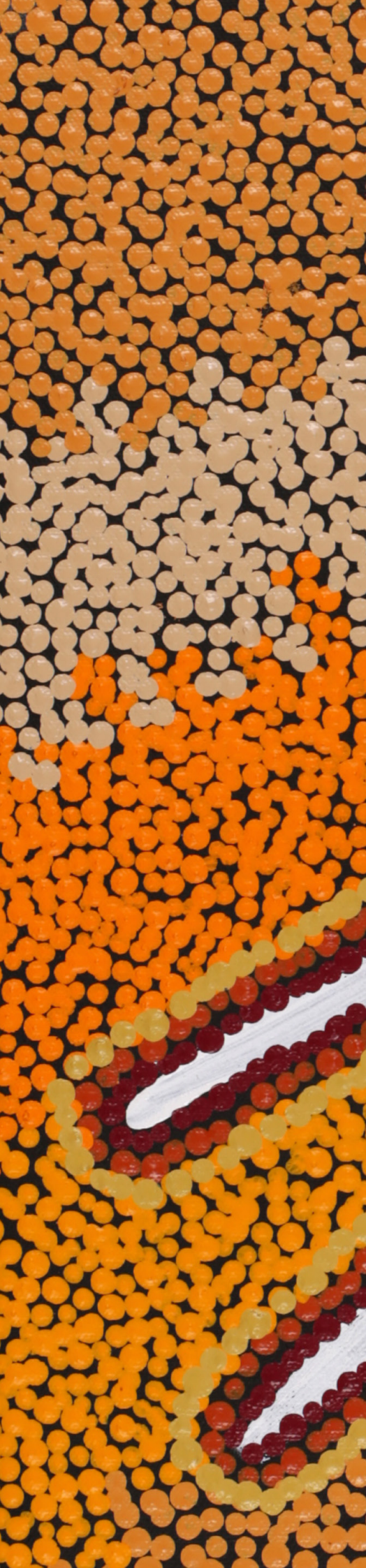
# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

APRIL 2020 — SEPTEMBER 2021



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



MODE recognises  
Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander peoples as  
the Traditional Custodians  
of this land and we pay  
our respects to Elders  
past, present and future.

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# Artwork



## STORY

This Jukurrpa belongs to women of the Nakamarra/Napurrurla subsections and to Jakamarra/Jupurrurla men. This Dreaming is associated with a place called Jaralypari, north of Yuendumu. Lukarrara (desert fringe-rush [*Fimbristylis oxystachya* & *Fimbristylis eremophila*]) is a grass with an edible seed. The seeds are traditionally ground on a large stone ('ngatinyanu') with a smaller stone ('ngalikirri') to make flour. This flour is mixed with water ('ngapa') to make damper cakes which are cooked and eaten.

In Warlpiri traditional paintings iconography is used to represent the Jukurrpa, particular sites and other elements. Large concentric circles often represent the site of Jaralypari and also the seed bearing grass Lukurrara. 'U' shapes can depict the Karnta (women) collecting 'lukarrara' and straight lines are frequently used to portray seeds that fall down to the ground and are also collected by women using their 'parrajas' (wooden food carriers) and 'karlangu' (digging sticks).

Artist	Valentine Nakamarra White	 <b>WARLUKURLANGU ARTISTS</b>
Skin Name	Nakamarra	
Jukurrpa	ukarrara Jukurrpa (Desert Fringe-rush Seed Dreaming)	
Catalogue #	1669/18	

*Copyright of all artworks and text remains with the artists and Aboriginal traditional owners and is administered on their behalf by Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation.*

# Message from the Managing Principal

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**RHONAN O'BRIEN**  
**MANAGING PRINCIPAL**  
**MODE**

We are incredibly proud to present MODE's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for April 2020 to September 2021. In developing our RAP, we are formalising and improving upon our existing commitment to integrating reconciliation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into our values, purpose and business strategy. Our vision for reconciliation is to create a diverse and inclusive environment for our employees, clients and suppliers, recognising that reconciliation forms part of our past and future. This will further enable us to contribute to the shaping of Australia's future. MODE has extensive experience working with Traditional Custodians on projects, and continuously fostering positive working relationships during the design of projects to ensure we appropriately manage cultural heritage sensitivities, as well as community involvement and investment, leaving a positive legacy.

Many of our present and future projects are in regional and remote locations where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities live and we ensure the policies, processes and design we provide demonstrate our commitment to delivering a diverse and inclusive environment. More importantly, we embrace the opportunity to experience these cultures and histories, experiences and knowledge they bring.

MODE's RAP will add greater momentum to the work we have already embarked on, such as raising the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols and investigating opportunities to increase pro bono activities related to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. MODE is committed to growing a culturally supportive workplace that builds strong relationships and develops projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating lasting community benefits. The pursuit of these commitments continues to provide focus areas for our studios to engage in meaningful participation in reconciliation activities and initiatives.

Our RAP will inform our staff, clients and delivery partners how we share and celebrate the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we continue this journey, we see our sustainability in the future will be shaped by all that has made us successful in the past.

# Message from Reconciliation Australia

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**KAREN MUNDINE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA**

Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome MODE to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program and to formally endorse its inaugural Reflect RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, MODE joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Reflect RAP provides MODE a roadmap to begin its reconciliation journey. Through implementing a Reflect RAP, MODE will lay the foundations for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

We wish MODE well as it takes these first critical steps in its reconciliation journey. We encourage the organisation to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on the successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

“Reconciliation is hard work—it’s a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.”

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend MODE on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

# Our Business

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MODE is an international design practice delivering exceptional multidisciplinary outcomes for our partners throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Asia operating for over 14 years. Our core business is delivering multidisciplinary design services, to include architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, and graphic design. Our vision is to create real value across Social, Environmental, Economic, and Educative metrics.

We are design leaders, delivering local and international perspectives, which embody the sensibilities of our Partners and users, while being responsive to both environmental, technical, and social change and cultural well being and health. We have urban, sub-urban, and remote projects that range across all sectors of construction and development and understand the complexity of the modern world and our societies and the need to partner to deliver the exceptional.



MODE has over 120 employees across eight Australian design studio locations including Brisbane, Darwin, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Employing staff that align with our Company Values is critical in maintaining a strong reputation and continuous growth. Our teams commit unconditionally to these values, shaping the company culture and continually creating rewarding opportunities for everyone to thrive.

While the number of employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our organisation is not precisely known, we are working to develop an onboarding system which captures this information. As an international practice, it is also important at MODE to represent all Indigenous employees and consider reconciliation on a global scale. We employ a number of staff who identify as being Indigenous to other parts of the world, including Maori and Native American. We are local at heart, international of mind.

Our mission is to professionally manage our suppliers and contractors to achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients, including aiding in the development of the local industry. We recognise the valuable contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make in the architecture, design and construction industries, and we see it as our obligation to demonstrate the benefits of Indigenous engagement and employment opportunities to our clients, suppliers and contractors. With projects spanning regional and remote areas in Australia, we see it as our responsibility to make a difference.

By successfully developing and implementing our RAP, MODE shares our reconciliation journey with our people, clients and the broader community. Our RAP also hopes to deepen our commitment to increasing cultural awareness, reducing inequality and creating tangible opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Australian Studio Locations



1. Brisbane *Yuggera*
2. Sunshine Coast *Gubbi Gubbi*
3. Gold Coast *Bundjilung*
4. Darwin *Larrakia*
5. Perth *Wajuk*
6. Melbourne *Woiworung*
7. Sydney *Eora*
8. Cairns *Yidinjdji*

*We recognise the language, tribal or nation groups of the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.*

*\*Traditional land names Referenced from the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia*

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

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After working on many projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we have realised it is imperative for the future of MODE to develop and maintain a RAP. We aim to be a leader in the design industry and recognise that this plan is important in contributing to a national movement of promoting better understanding around the past and participating in future improvement of all Australians. Indirectly, we will also be creating a more accepting and safe cross-cultural work environment.

Our RAP will create a framework for MODE, as an overarching company and as individual studios, to apply to each location of Australia with regards to Reconciliation. Our RAP will add to our business model and ensure our commitments to reconciliation are carried out via deliverables and actionable items that include and promote leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout all stages of design.

It is MODE's aim to provide our staff with the opportunity to access information and cross-cultural training. The motivation for providing support and cross-cultural training lies in our drive to create a better work environment that retains and allows for the growth of staff as individuals, who will gain the following:

- A better connection and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, and histories.
- Development of interpersonal cross cultural engagement skills by both Australian and International Employees.
- The opportunity to be part of activities and actionable items that give back in meaningful ways at each of our studios.

It also results in a company that is culturally aware, ensuring our teams are accepting and tolerant of the differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other cultures. This will provide more awareness to the requirements needed when designing projects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their communities and organisations, and will set MODE apart from the majority of design practices who do not place reconciliation at the forefront of its service methodologies. MODE will also respectfully engage and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on all projects where engaging First Peoples is best practice and appropriate.

Through the initial implementation of Cross-Cultural training, our employees will be able to directly apply their new skills to the delivery of design services. They will gain and further develop communication and emotional intelligence skills for conducting appropriate engagement, consultation, and project delivery strategies with all cultures and in all locations.

We have previously worked on single and group housing, health clinics, community and cultural facilities throughout the Pacific Region for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. MODE is committed to continuing delivering quality projects when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our aim is to be more appropriately involved in improving health, housing and community development outcomes within their communities.

MODE will continue to deliver climatically appropriate designs. Alongside this, MODE will ensure each design approach used for projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and/or end-users will engage with First Peoples early in the project and incorporate ideas within the design wherever possible. Company-wide, our goal is to understand the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we work with across Australia. We recognise through our design methodologies that there is no single design model, or solution, that can fully address cultural and aspirational differences of projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and thus each project requires a tailored solution that suits the project team and end users.

# RAP Committee

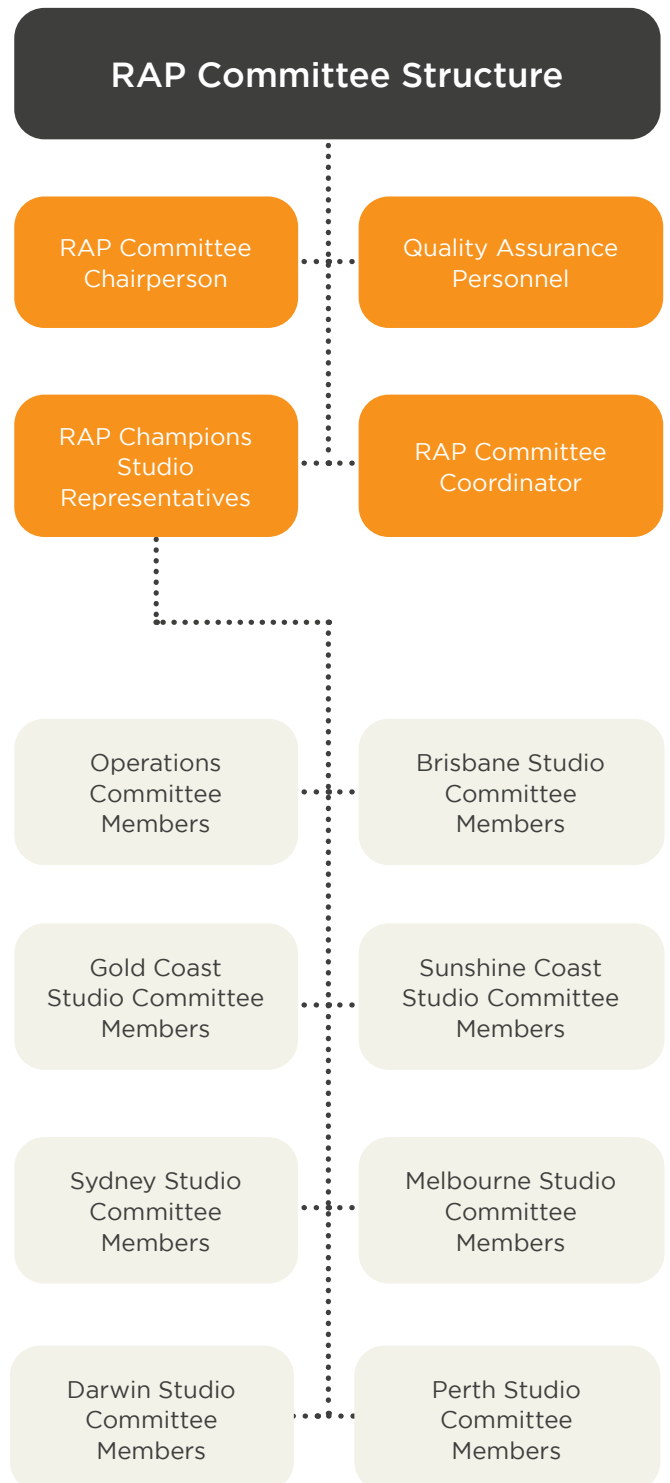
MODE commenced the development of its RAP in 2018 and, under the guidance of our Principals, a company-wide RAP Committee and development structure was established.

RAP Champions are headed by our Committee Chairperson, Jenny Culkan (Director), who is supported by the RAP Committee Coordinator Alyssa Hughes (Group Marketing Manager), with Quality Assurance support personnel nominated in our Committee Structure Diagram below.

The committee will play a pivotal role in the development of our RAP to ensure each studio's differences and ideas are represented. Selected studio representatives form the base of the RAP committee and will be responsible for implementation of actions and deliverables within their respective studio. They will also keep the committee up to date, comment and put forward ideas for the future development of the RAP at quarterly meetings.

## THE RAP BOARD AND OVERSIGHT PORTION OF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE:

- Managing Principal
- Principal
- MODE Advisory Director
- Director
- Associate Director
- Operations Team Lead
- Group Marketing Manager
- Group IT Manager
- HR Assistant
- Marketing and Administration Officer
- Studio Manager
- Assistant Studio Manager
- Senior Graphic Designer
- Senior Landscape Architect
- Architect
- Architectural Graduate



# MODE's Partnerships & Current Reconciliation Activities

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## Community Partnerships

### STARS FOUNDATION

Our Darwin Studio started a mentoring relationship with the Stars Foundation in 2017. The Stars Foundation focuses on supporting, enabling and improving the education and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and young women of the Northern Territory. MODE Darwin aims to provide mentorship to the young women and provide access to the design and construction industry as well as access to higher education pathways that in time will result in employment outcomes within our studio.

### MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL

Our Darwin Studio volunteered at the 2015 Midnight Basketball season. Midnight Basketball is a late night social basketball tournament with dinner and mentoring sessions and welcomes all teenagers aged 12-18. Running on Friday or Saturday nights from 7.30pm with a bus service to safely deliver participants home by Midnight, it provides high energy, fun and safe nights.

### NAWIC

Our studios across Australia have continuously aligned to the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC). Alongside our alignment to their organisation, one of our Associates in our Perth studio also holds a Chair role in their committee. NAWIC is an Australian, not-for-profit organisation formed in 1995. NAWIC is led by a team of passionate volunteers who all strive to help champion and empower women in the construction and related industries to reach their full potential. With Chapters in every state and territory, we are also part of a global network of NAWIC organisations, including those in the United States, New Zealand and Canada.

## Reconciliation Activities

### NAIDOC WEEK — FLAG RAISING CEREMONY ATTENDANCE

Our studios across Australia have attended several Flag Raising Ceremonies in both 2018 and 2019. The annual Flag Raising Ceremony officially marks the beginning of NAIDOC Week. It brings members of the community together to publicly commemorate the importance of NAIDOC week. The event honors the connection to culture, country, and language of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country and a moment of silence for our people who have gone before us.

### NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2018 AND 2019 — DARWIN AND SYDNEY

Our studios across Australia have attended events in key locations to celebrate National Reconciliation Week. NRW is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

### “DID YOU KNOW”

Our ‘Did You Know?’ segment is a tool which focuses on informing and promoting awareness to all staff across our various studios. Each month the segment includes information around the history and key calendar events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### EMPLOYMENT

MODE is developing further strategies for additional employment streams within the company for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people. We are in discussions with companies in construction, training and education to look at developing more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design professionals in drafting, consultation, construction management, architecture, interior design and landscape architecture.

# Relationships | Respect | Opportunities Governance and Tracking Progress

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# Relationships

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Maintain the MODE RAP Committee	Maintain the RAP working group/ committee for operation to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision making staff from across our company.	Sept 2020	Principal
			April 2021	Director
			Sept 2021	
		Report on deliverables outlined in RAP	Sept 2020 April 2021 Sept 2021	Principal Director
2	Build internal and external relationships, including local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations, Corporations, and Owned Businesses	Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	May 2020	MODE Advisory
			Aug 2020	Director Director
		Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	Nov 2020 Feb 2021	Marketing and Administration Officer Studio Manager
		Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	May 2020	Assistant Studio Manager Architect

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3	Participate, Support, and Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) in each of our ten studio locations	Committee member to advise all staff in their branch of National Reconciliation Week Activities and Schedule	Feb 2020 Feb 2021	Group Marketing Manager
		Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	May 2020 May 2021	Associate
		Each studio branch committee member is to promote activities that best align with potential future business relationships	May 2020 May 2021	Studio Manager Senior Landscape Architect
		Appoint shadow member to support committee member to encourage participation in NRW events	May 2020 May 2021	Group Marketing Manager
		MODE all staff email to be sent encouraging staff to attend an agreed upon number of events during the associated work week	May 2020 May 2021	RAP Committee Chairperson
		Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May 2020 May 2021	Group Marketing Manager Studio Manager
		RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event	27 May to 3 June 2020 27 May to 3 June 2021	Principal Director Group Marketing Manager Studio Manager Senior Landscape Architect



No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4	Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. Raise Company-wide and External Client and Consultant awareness of the implementation of our RAP.	Highlight RAP implementation in internal MODE newsletter, discussing actions achieved and deliverables for that quarter	April 2020	Group Marketing Manager
		Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey	May 2020	Marketing and Administration Officer HR Assistant
		Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	May 2020	Marketing and Administration Officer HR Assistant
		Announce recognition of RAP following approval on social media pages including LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter	May 2020	Group Marketing Manager
		Host launch party at our studios and invite key existing clients as well as potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, consultants, and contractors	May 2020	Group Marketing Manager Studio Manager
		Continuously recognise RAP outcomes by integrating content into the MODE Digital Strategy and Social Media Calendar	June 2020 Jan 2021 June 2021	Group Marketing Manager
5	Implement company-wide mentoring strategies to further support RAP actions	Develop mentoring strategies following the cross cultural workshops to support further RAP actions and develop new ideas around reconciliation	June 2020	Principal HR Assistant
6	Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination	June 2020	Principal HR Assistant
		Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs	Sept 2020 Sept 2021	Principal HR Assistant



# Respect

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation	Jun 2020	Principal Senior Landscape Architect Operations Team Lead
		Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	June 2020 June 2021	Group Marketing Manager HR Assistant
		Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation	Aug 2020 Aug 2021	Group Marketing Manager HR Assistant
2	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week via internal MODE newsletter	June 2020 June 2021	Group Marketing Manager HR Assistant
		Committee member to introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area	June 2020 June 2021	Group Marketing Manager
		Appoint shadow member to support committee member	June 2020 June 2021	Principal
		Committee members to ensure staff are supported in participating, volunteering, and attending NAIDOC week events. All staff to be advised of participation allowance during business hours	July 2020 July 2021	Principal Architect Operations Team Lead

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Include Acknowledgement of Country in all sector brochures and at the start of every management meeting	Jun 2020	Principal
		Release revised Marketing Brochures for all sectors and include on MODE website which includes Acknowledgement of Country	Jan 2021	Group Marketing Manager
4	Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence and communicate contact list internally to all studios to ensure relationships are developed with local Traditional Owners	Oct 2020	Studio Manager Architect
		Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols)	Jan 2021	Studio Manager Architect



# Opportunities

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Draft a studio specific business plan/case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation that is relevant to each studio's location and potential partnerships	May 2020	Principal HR Assistant
		Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities	Jun 2020	Director HR Assistant
		Review proposed cases and discussion amongst RAP Board on way forward, taking into consideration a bespoke employment strategy for each studio or company-wide strategy	Aug 2020	Principal Operations Team Lead
		Review financial impact of the strategy and propose timeline based on financial capacity	Aug 2021	Principal Operations Team Lead
2	Investigate opportunities to provide pro bono support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	Review current viability alongside future viability	Oct 2020	Principal Operational Team Lead
		Consider % of design fees to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities pro bono projects	Oct 2020	Principal Operational Team Lead
		Review marketing campaign to promote pro bono support, targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Oct 2020	Group Marketing Manager
		Review possible crowdfunding support	Oct 2020	Group Marketing Manager

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	Jun 2020	Studio Manager Associate
		Research and develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses by meeting one on one with local companies at each studio location to determine who may be potential alliance or client or specialist consultant	July 2020	Studio Manager Associate
		Maintain the business case for procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses by meeting one on one with local companies at each studio location to determine who may be potential alliance partners or client or specialist consultant	July 2020 April 2021 Sept 2021	Studio Manager Associate
4	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship	Develop scholarship summary	Aug 2020	Director
		Approach potential investors in writing initially	Aug 2020	Principal Director
		Approach potential sponsors for the scholarship	Nov 2020	Director HR Assistant
		Work with preferred provider to reach contractual agreement for yearly scholarship	Feb 2021	Principal Operations Team Lead
		Launch Scholarship for applications	May 2021	Principal
		Review applications and select award winning applicant	Aug 2021	Principal Director
		Announce scholarship winner	Sept 2021	Principal Group Marketing Manager



# Governance and Progress Tracking

No.	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation	May 2020	Director
		Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG	June 2020	Director
		Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG	June 2020	Director
2	Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation	May 2020	Director
		Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	May 2020	Director
		Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	May 2020	Director
3	Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia	Sept 2020 Sept 2021	Director
4	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	Jun 2021	Director Group Marketing Manager



**Contact Details**

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