

Reconciliation Action Plan

We are good corporate citizens and share our success with the community to make the world in which we work better than it was yesterday.

verizon^v



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Acknowledgement of country

Verizon acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present and emerging.



Artwork

By Bruce Shillingsworth Snr and Serika Shillingsworth



Artwork Details

Title: Thirra Yuruun

Artists: Mundagutta (Bruce Shillingsworth Snr) and Serika Shillingsworth

Nation of origin: Budjiti/Muruwarri

Artwork Story

This artwork is a representation of the lifestyle Budjiti Muruwarri Mob live, in particular the elements and methods of communication amongst clan groups and other Nations.

Artwork Meaning

This artwork was a commissioned piece for Verizon. As Verizon is a technology and data company with a focus on communication the artists wove the theme of communication throughout the artwork.

Artwork explanation

Budjiti Muruwarri Nations are just 2 of over 360+ Nations across this continent of Baluunba (Australia) which are 1,500kms inland from the east coast. The Budjiti Muruwarri people are river people, what we refer to as muddy water mob, residing along the Baaka (barwon darling) river system. The Budjiti people are of the Paroo river and Muruwarri are of the Culgoa river.

Budjiti Muruwarri being approximately 200km² each, we travelled camping across our nations. The reasons for this is to live healthy and sustainably. Not impacting the environment, staying physically active and eating seasonally.

In order to live our lifestyle and in vast areas and harsh conditions takes discipline with a certain knowledge, set of skills and expertise. One of those critical knowledges are communication. Firstly, communication within our Nations weren't an issue however, communication with other Clan groups and Nations took a bit of effort.

For Budjiti Muruwarri mob in order to communicate with other clan groups and Nations, here is just a few methods and are represented within the artwork:



1. Communication by seasonal indicators

Budjiti mob, we would gather at a place called Nocholeache which is on the borders of Budjiti and Barkindji. There would be a meeting amongst nations regarding environmental affairs. How did they know when to meet? The nations knew the precise time to gather at Nocholeache which was when environmental indicators aligned. Muruwarri would gather at Biame Ngunnhu a 60,000+ year old cultural and significant site on the borders of Ngemba and Muruwarri.

Artwork explanation



2. Communication by smoke signals

Smoke signals are an ancient form of communication and will always be effective. The type and amount of wood and bush burnt would send signals to the receiver giving a distinct message. These methods are still used in cultural practice today.



3. Communication by bull roarer

A bull roarer is a wooden paddle on the end of a string made from bark or animal leather. The paddle was spun to twist the string then spun around to make a sound in the wind. The sound was a deep sound with deep vibrations going throughout the environment. This method of communication was more effective in desert areas or along the river as it would echo.

These methods of communication are still practiced today and are effective. Western civilisation don't see benefit within these methods however, certain methods of communication within Nations are being taught to non-indigenous as a part of meeting their 'cultural milestones' in contributing to the culture and identity of this continent.

About the artists



Yaama, my name is Mundagutta (Bruce Shillingsworth Snr) I am a Budjiti Murwarri Man of the Budjiti and Muruwarri Nations. Growing up on my Budjiti Nation in a little town called Enngonia, art is a part of my culture. It encapsulates the stories/Lore that is passed on through generations. My Budjiti mother was a senior Lore woman, a significant figure in Budjiti culture born on the edge of the desert at a place called Yantabulla. My passion is to teach children and youth about the significance of culture.



Yaama, my name is Serika Shillingsworth and I am a Eulahlayi Weilwan woman of the Eulahayi Weilwan Nations. My father Mundagutta and Mother Cookama instilled from birth my culture and tradition which dictates who I am, how i think, act and make decisions. My art is who I am, how I pass on my stories and Lore. A place that inspires me is my grandmothers Budjiti Nation, a place of no time. My passion is to learn and acquire the knowledge in order for me to pass it on.



Executive sponsor

The Verizon team is defined by our values, including that of social responsibility. Our values inform who we are as a company, and how we serve the communities in which we operate.

As a responsible, respectful and culturally inclusive company, Verizon is immensely proud to present the Reflect phase of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Reflecting upon our actions, aims and achievements from an ethical standpoint is the first step in a three-staged approach (Reflect, Innovate and Stretch) to reconciling with Australia's First Nations peoples and communities.

But actions speak louder than words, and it is our goal to provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to expand their horizons, prosper and flourish – in line with Verizon's continued growth and achievements.

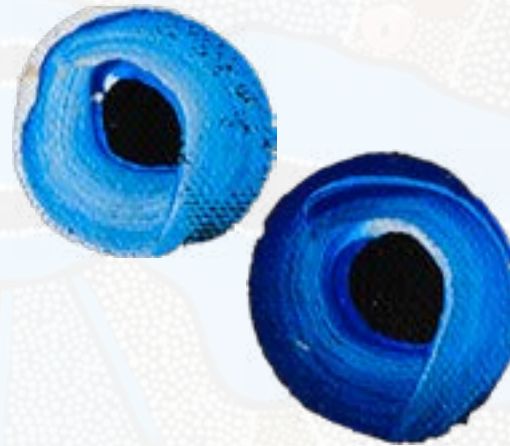
The richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia is something we should all take pride in.

As we reflect upon how to forge a more inclusive and developmental workplace, Verizon recognises that reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia – and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders, past and present.

Rob Le Busque

Vice-President, Asia-Pacific
Verizon Business



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Inaugural Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Verizon Enterprise to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Verizon Enterprise joins a network of more than 2,200 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 Verizon Enterprise 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 Verizon Enterprise, 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 business

Verizon is a leading global communications provider. We build the networks and create the connections that shape the future.

In Australia, digital accessibility is the biggest challenge to connectivity. 2.8 million Australians – including many vulnerable people in First Nations communities – remain highly excluded from internet access, meaning they're unable to fully participate in society or access the services designed to assist them.

Verizon Australia is committed to helping close this divide with digital and network transformation.

In Australia, Verizon employs approximately 400 staff, with offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

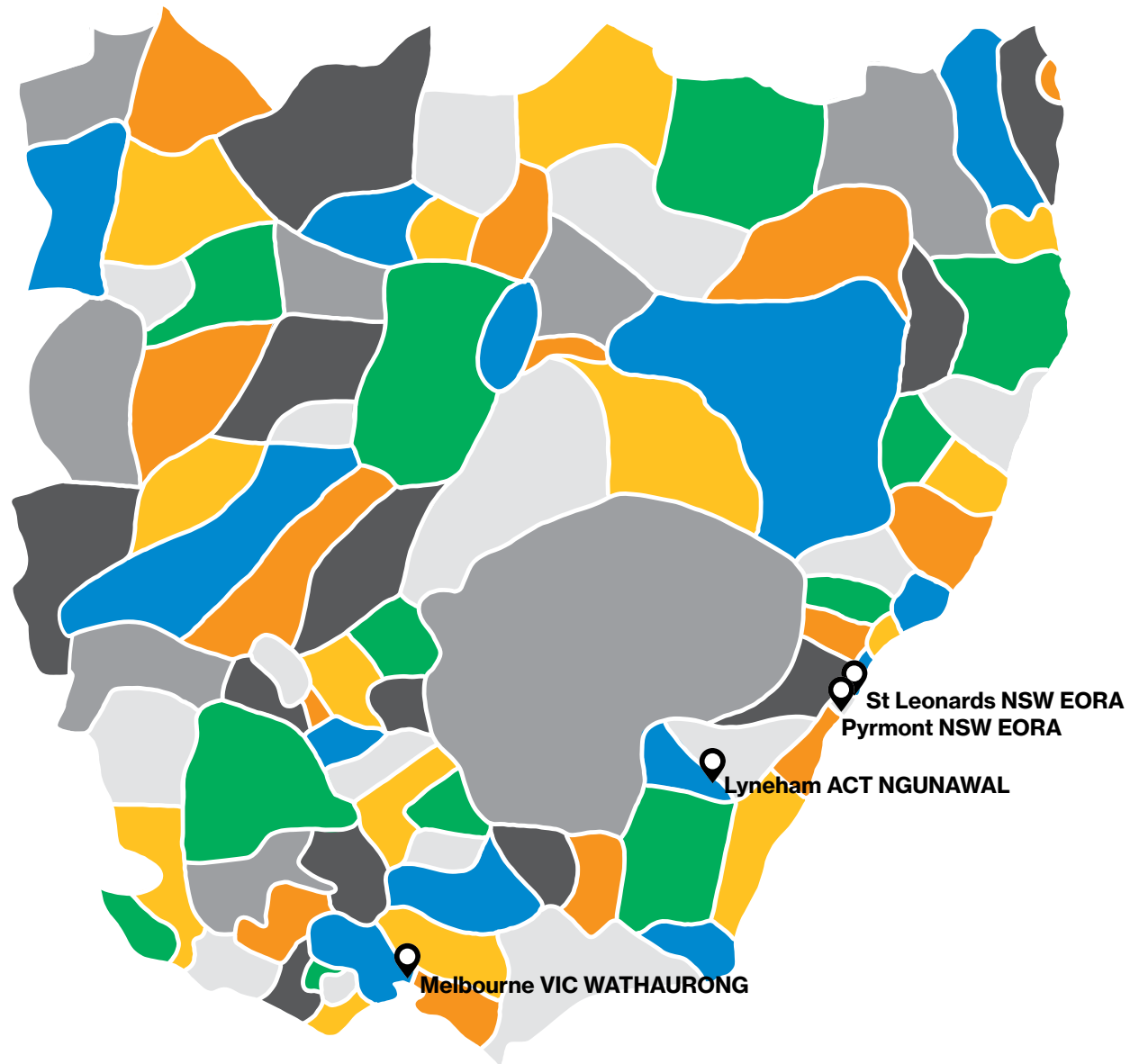
We have recently initiated changes that enable and encourage staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to take pride in their cultural heritage within the workplace.

Verizon is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive environment. We know our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders have unique and lived experiences, and we are dedicated to scoping and developing relationships with them as part of our vision for reconciliation.

By embedding the principles and purpose of reconciliation, we will become a more successful company with a stronger culture.



Our business locations



Our RAP actions

At Verizon, our mission is to create the networks that move the world forward. This extends to our commitment and pledge in the Reflect focus of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Beyond the physical network, what matters to Verizon is our network of customers, employees, shareholders and the communities in which we work, live and play.

Verizon has made notable headway over the past few years at raising awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and issues among our Australian workforce. Instrumental to this has been our creation of a Verizon Indigenous Participation Policy, and establishment of a Verizon Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

A list of recent awareness raising events include:

NAIDOC Week 2020 Always Was, Always Will Be theme – panel with external guest speakers including First Nations people, sharing of relevant movies, podcasts, books and other media.

NAIDOC Week 2022 Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up! – theme-based competitions, promotion of external events, and sharing relevant personal narratives.

NAIDOC Week 2023 For Our Elders theme – promotion of external events, internal events in each key location, including BBQ gatherings with trivia competitions.

National Reconciliation Week 2023 – promotion and attendance at external events, lunchtime video viewing parties in key locations.

Indigenous Participation Policy – developed in December 2022, our Indigenous Participation Policy was established to promote engagement of First Nations businesses and increase the representation of First Nations peoples in our workforce. Verizon is committed to developing productive relationships with First Nations businesses and helping them gain access to new markets.

RAP Working Group – our call for volunteers across our Australian workforce in early April 2023 attracted 17 participants (about four per cent of our local employee population). In addition, our first briefing call in May 2023 was the impetus for drafting our inaugural 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan for submission.



Our pillars



Relationships:

We seek to establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. We do this by identifying local areas or spheres of influence and researching best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Respect:

We show respect and build meaningful relationships by celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). This is achieved by circulating Reconciliation Australia's resources and materials to our staff; encouraging our RAP Working Group members to participate in external NRW events; and promotion of NRW events among Verizon staff.

Opportunities:

We actively promote reconciliation within our sphere of influence. We communicate our reconciliation commitment to all staff. Externally, we identify key stakeholders that our organisation can work with on our reconciliation journey. We also identify with the Reconciliation Action Plan and approach like-minded organisations to collaborate with us on our reconciliation pathway.

Governance:

We promote positive race relations through our anti-discrimination strategies. We seek to achieve best practice and policies in all areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.



Relationship pillar actions

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	30th November, 2024	RAP Chair
		Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	30th November, 2024	RAP Chair
2	Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Actively encourage collaboration and discussion of Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials among our staff.	1 April, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead
		Maintain encouragement and support of staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	3 June, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead
		RAP Working Group members to participate in one or more external NRW events.	3 June, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead
3	Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff	24 February, 2024	RAP Exec. Sponsor
		Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	1 March, 2024	RAP Exec. Sponsor
		Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	1 August, 2024	Manager, Employee Experience & Engagement
4	Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	1st April, 2024	Associate Director - HR
		Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	1st April, 2024	Associate Director - HR

Respect pillar actions

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5	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 understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within Verizon.	1 October, 2023	RAP WG Lead - Education, Awareness, Events & Communication
		Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	1 April, 2024	RAP WG Lead - Education, Awareness, Events & Communication
6	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	30 November, 2024	RAP WG Lead - Governance, Procurement, Supplier, Employment & Community
		Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	30 November, 2024	RAP WG Lead - Education, Awareness, Events & Communication
7	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst Verizon staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	1 June, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead
		Introduce Verizon staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	1 June, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead
		RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	1st week July, 2024	ANZ Geo Culture Lead

Opportunities pillar actions

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8	Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	30 November, 2024	Associate Director, Talent Acquisition
		Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	30 November, 2024	Associate Director - HR
9	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.	30 September, 2024	RAP WG Lead - Governance, Procurement, Supplier, Employment & Community
		Continue to leverage Supply Nation membership to develop procurement policies that modify and redirect spend to include the Indigenous business sector.	31 December, 2024	RAP WG Lead - Governance, Procurement, Supplier, Employment & Community

Governance pillar actions

	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10	Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation and continue to review participation and involvement.	1 February, 2024	RAP Program Lead
		Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG and review as part of the monthly RAP governance process	1 March, 2024	RAP Program Lead
		Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG for regular input and/or guidance on the execution	1 March, 2024	RAP Program Lead
11	Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define and continuously review resource needs for RAP implementation.	1 December, 2024	RAP Chair
		Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	1 December, 2024	RAP Chair
		Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	1 December, 2024	RAP Chair
		Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	1 December, 2024	RAP Program Lead
12	Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia annually to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	30 June, 2024	RAP Program Lead
		Contact Reconciliation Australia annually to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	30 June, 2024	RAP Program Lead
		Complete and submit the RAP Impact Survey on an annual basis to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2024	RAP Chair
13	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	30 November, 2024	RAP Chair



Send RAP enquiries to:

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