



Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-16

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, travel and live.

We pay our respects to their Elders, their ancestors and future generations.



Message from the Australian Statistician

I am pleased to present the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2013-2016.

2012 marked the 45th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum where more than 90 per cent of Australians were in favour of including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in official estimates of the Australian population. It is significant that the Referendum included a statistical issue, as the availability of high quality statistical information is essential for improving the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ABS RAP 2013-16 continues to build on the ABS' commitment to ensuring recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, increasing the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ABS and continuing to build positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

I would like to thank all the people who have contributed to the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan. We all have a fundamental role to play in following through the actions set out in this Plan, to contribute to cultural change and achieve our objectives for reconciliation. I am confident that the ABS will make an important contribution to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

Brian Pink
Australian Statistician
March 2013



Building Relationships, Respect and Opportunities



Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Vision

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) vision for reconciliation is one where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the same employment and development opportunities as other Australians, and have the ability to utilise statistics to make informed decisions about their families and communities.

Our Business

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's national statistical agency. The ABS provides key statistics on a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues. The ABS also plays an important leadership and coordination role in relation to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both within Australia and internationally.

The ABS mission is to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

Our Approach to Reconciliation

The ABS is committed to reconciliation. In line with the ABS mission, the ABS assists and encourages informed decision making, research and discussion among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their communities and organisations, and within governments and the wider community. It does this by leading and coordinating statistical activity involving and relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) sets out actions the ABS will take to:

- increase the recruitment, retention* and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ABS;
- build the capability of ABS employees to engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture;
- ensure that ABS policies, programs and services effectively respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities; and
- develop the statistical literacy skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to enable them to make informed decisions about themselves, their families and their communities.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

This RAP was developed to build on the achievements of the ABS RAP 2008-2011. It shows the ABS' continuing commitment to reconciliation by focusing on the following key areas: building local connections; building cultural competency; and increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and statistical literacy.

The ABS RAP 2013-2016 was developed by the Workforce Strategies Section in consultation with ABS staff (including Indigenous Engagement Managers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, senior management and specific directors accountable for actions), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), local Consultative Forums, Reconciliation Australia and various Australian Public Service (APS) agencies.

Consideration of APS diversity initiatives and targets and strong feedback during consultations resulted in the inclusion of some targets (e.g. the Commonwealth target of 2.7 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation) that may be difficult to achieve in the current tight financial environment, when recruitment levels are expected to be very low.

To support continuous improvement and monitoring of the RAP, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group (RG) has been established. The RG contributed to the development of the RAP and will continue to provide periodic reviews and feedback on the progress of the RAP during the life of this Plan. The RG will also assist with the continued development and positive promotion of the RAP into the future.

* As at the 30th June 2012 the ABS employed 2,937 ongoing office based staff, 448 non-ongoing office based staff and 716 field based interviewers, across Australia. The ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation rate at the 30th June 2012 was 0.7%.





Many of the actions included in this RAP are further articulated in more detail in supporting policies, programs and strategies. These include:

- the ABS Workplace Diversity Action Plan (WDAP) 2013-2017;
- Cultural Protocols and standard procedure for community engagement activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Protocols for the Appropriate Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; and
- the ABS Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (ICES).

In addition to the actions identified in this RAP, current and future forward work program activities that contribute to achieving the ABS RAP 2013-2016 outcomes are listed in Appendix 1. Tracking and reporting on the progress of these activities will be conducted as part of the ABS RAP 2013-2016 internal and external reporting.

The actions and forward work program activities in this RAP will be reviewed annually in consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, key accountability areas and Consultative Forums. The RAP will be modified where necessary to ensure actions and targets remain relevant over the life of the Plan. Progress and achievements will be monitored and reported each year to Reconciliation Australia, ABS' Senior Management and in the ABS' Annual Report.



Seven Sisters Dreaming artwork

Acknowledgement of Artwork

The concept and artwork for the 2013-16 Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was produced in consultation with Ivan Copley (OAM). Ivan is one of the ABS Indigenous Engagement Managers and is an Aboriginal descendent of the Peramangk people of the Mount Lofty Ranges and of the Kaurma people of the Adelaide plains.

The artwork signifies that the ABS is acknowledging and has taken consideration the Aboriginal Peoples (the brown dots) and the Torres Strait Islander Peoples (the blue dots) when developing the RAP. The Lizard represents the creatures on Earth. The Seven Sisters Dreaming artwork is the Aboriginal artists impression of the Seven Sisters Dreaming of the Stars of the Seven Sisters, and represents the Sky and the Heavens-Stars ("Pleiades" group of stars) and the power of the spirits. The sky and stars are seen as an extension of the earth, reflecting an mirror image of the earth with its rivers, creeks, creatures and ancestral beings that formed these traditional places and hunting grounds.





Relationships

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians working together for positive outcomes

Focus area: Building local connections

Objectives	Action	Measure	Timeline	Accountability
1. Provide the opportunity for ABS employees to provide ongoing input into the development, ongoing review and progress of the RAP.	1.1 Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group by November 2012.	1.1.1 Reference Group meets as agreed in Terms of Reference.	Inaugural meeting held November 2012	Director Workforce Strategies Section
	1.2 From 2013 Consultative Forums and Population Survey Operations Working Group (PSOWG) forums include an annual agenda item on Workplace Diversity (including the WDAP and the RAP).	1.2.1 Feedback from Consultative Forums and the PSOWG Forum is provided to Workforce Strategies.	Consultative Forums and the PSOWG Forum provide feedback annually (August)	Consultative Forum and PSOWG Chairs
2. ABS employees appropriately engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	2.1 Prior to undertaking external engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ABS employees are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake cultural competency training; be familiar with the ABS engagement cultural protocols; consult with their local Indigenous Engagement Manager (IEM) and State and Territory Statistical Services (STSS) team to inform them of proposed engagement and seek assistance where appropriate; and make contact with relevant community stakeholders (assisted by their local IEM and STSS team) and gain appropriate consent to proceed with engagement. 	2.1.1 Each section/area undertaking external engagement to review these activities.	Feedback sought annually (June)	Line management of ABS employees engaging externally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
		2.1.2 Feedback sought from PSO, IEMs and STSS sections as to the success of engagement activities.		
3. Provide opportunities for ABS staff to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	3.1 Each July, ABS Central Office and Regional Office staff attend an event in their respective locations for NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) week. Central Office event/s will be co-ordinated by Workforce Strategies with support from Central Office Resource Centres. NAIDOC week celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in various fields.	3.1.1 Consultative Forum Chairs report to their Consultative Forum on NAIDOC week events that have occurred.	Consultative Forums provide feedback annually (August)	Resource Centre Heads/ CF Chairs
	3.2 Each May/ June, ABS Central Office and Regional Office staff attend an event in their respective locations for Reconciliation week. Central Office event/s will be co-ordinated by Workforce Strategies with support from Central Office Resource Centres. National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements and to explore how each of us can join the national reconciliation effort.	3.2.1 Consultative Forum Chairs report to their Consultative Forum on Reconciliation week events that have occurred.	Consultative Forums provide feedback annually (August)	Resource Centre Heads/ CF Chairs
	3.3 Elder or notable Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person invited to speak at appropriate events.	3.3.1 Consultative Forum Chairs report on the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait guest speaker and nature of talk.	Consultative Forums provide feedback annually (August)	Resource Centre Heads/ CF Chairs





Respect

Valuing the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Focus area: Building cultural competency

Cultural competency is an ongoing journey in recognising and understanding different cultures, and using that knowledge to harness different perspectives that are beneficial in the workplace and for our business.

Objectives	Action	Measure	Timeline	Accountability
4. ABS employees develop appropriate cultural competency skills.	4.1 Trial and evaluate a range of cultural awareness courses, including at least one short online and one face to face cultural awareness course to determine appropriateness (with the intention of being rolled out to ABS staff at a broader level).	4.1.1 Staff involved in trials complete the courses and evaluations.	By June 2013	Director Workforce Strategies Section
		4.1.2 Review of online and face to face cultural awareness courses identifies appropriateness of courses to be recommended as cultural awareness foundation course/s.		
	4.2 Trial and evaluate the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia (CCCA) online cultural competency course to determine appropriateness as a foundation cultural competency course.	4.2.1 Staff from the NT Office, Workforce Strategies, selected business areas and at least three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff complete course and evaluation.	By April 2013	Directors Northern Territory Regional Office and Workforce Strategies Section
		4.2.2 Review of CCCA's online cultural competency course identifies appropriateness of course to be recommended as a cultural competency foundation course.		
4.3 Selected NT participants of online cultural competence trial will undertake a trial of locality based competency training (participants will visit local communities to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).	4.3.1 Results of locality based training trial to inform recommendations for developing future locality cultural competency training.	By March 2013	Northern Territory Regional Director	
4.4 From August 2013 Resource Centres are expected to arrange appropriate cultural awareness or competency training for staff. Staff are expected to undertake cultural awareness training where:	4.4.1 Resource Centres report on number of staff that have completed cultural awareness or competency training and delivery mode (e.g. face-to-face or online).	Report sought June 2014 and then annually	Resource Centre Heads	





Objectives	Action	Measure	Timeline	Accountability
4. ABS employees develop appropriate cultural competency skills.	4.5 From October 2013 SES appointees (new to level or to the ABS) to undertake cultural awareness training as part of the SES induction program.	4.5.1 Number of SES officers completing cultural awareness training and delivery mode (e.g. face to face or online) is reported.	Report sought June 2014 and then annually	Director National Training and Development Section
	4.6 Conduct evaluation of cultural awareness/ competency training through an evaluation survey and consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group and Resource Centre Heads.	4.6.1 Recommendations from review of cultural training program are implemented in next iteration of cultural competence training program.	By March 2014	Director Workforce Strategies Section
	4.7 The <i>Closing the Gap: It's Everyone's Business - A Toolkit</i> is made available to staff through appropriate resources (such as the New Starters toolkit and Services@ABS), by May 2013.	4.7.1 Feedback is sought from staff on the usefulness of the toolkit in improving the understanding of <i>Closing the Gap</i> and other key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reforms.	Feedback sought from Consultative Forums August 2013	Director Workforce Strategies Section
5. ABS culture is one where reconciliation is actively supported by ABS employees.	5.1 Appointment of a Reconciliation Senior Champion by March 2013.	5.1.1 Reconciliation Senior Champion is active in role.	Announce Reconciliation Senior Champion in March 2013	SES
	5.2 From May 2013 SES officers deliver Acknowledgement of Country at appropriate events, as per <i>ABS Protocols for Appropriate Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</i> .	5.2.1 Resource Centres report on known occasions where an SES member has delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.	Reports sought each June	SES
	5.3 From May 2013 Welcome to Country is delivered at appropriate events as per <i>ABS Protocols for Appropriate Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</i> .	5.3.1 Resource Centres report on known occasions where a Welcome to Country has been performed.	Reports sought each June	Resource Centre Heads
	5.4 Prior to NAIDOC week, managers informed that office based staff can utilise miscellaneous leave to participate in NAIDOC week activities as per ABS Enterprise Agreement and ABS Interviewers Enterprise Agreement.	5.4.1 ABS promotional material for NAIDOC week contains reference to use of miscellaneous leave.	Annually (June)	Director Workforce Strategies Section





Opportunities

Initiatives supporting the employment and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Focus area: Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment/statistical literacy capacity building

Objectives	Action	Measure	Timeline	Accountability
<p>6. ABS achieves the Commonwealth Public Sector employment representation target of 2.7 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 2015. Refer to Strategy 2 of the Workplace Diversity Action Plan (WDAP).</p>	<p>6.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention actions (within the ABS Workplace Diversity Action Plan) are implemented.</p>	<p>6.1.1 Strategies are reviewed for effectiveness annually and modified as appropriate.</p>	<p>Annually (June)</p>	<p>SMG</p>
	<p>6.2 APS Diversity Council project recommendations (job readiness and retention) are considered and implemented as appropriate in the RAP or WDAP.</p>	<p>6.2.1 APS Diversity Council recommendations promoting the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are implemented and supported.</p>	<p>Subject to project completion</p>	<p>Director Workforce Strategies Section</p>
<p>7. Develop statistical literacy skills within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.</p>	<p>7.1 Seek to expand the Footy Stats initiative with the National Rugby League (NRL).</p>	<p>7.1.1 Footy Stats version for NRL is available for utilisation by Indigenous Engagement Managers by May 2013.</p>	<p>May 2013</p>	<p>Director National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics</p>
	<p>7.2 From June 2013 Footy Stats (NRL and AFL versions) are utilised by IEMs as appropriate.</p>	<p>7.2.1 STSS units report on utilisation and effectiveness of Footy Stats (both the NRL and AFL versions).</p>	<p>Reported June 2014 and then annually</p>	<p>Directors of State and Territory Statistical Services</p>
<p>8. The ABS tender assessment process takes into account potential suppliers who have made positive contributions in the area of the Indigenous Opportunity Policy (IOP).</p>	<p>8.1 From July 2013, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) criteria, where suppliers can indicate their contributions to Closing the Gap, is incorporated into Request for Tender and assessment processes.</p>	<p>8.1.1 Rate of potential suppliers that report Closing the Gap CSRs is recorded.</p>	<p>Reported June 2014 and then annually</p>	<p>Director Procurement Services and Contract Support Section</p>





Tracking and progress

Objectives	Action	Timeline	Accountability
9. ABS fulfils its RAP reporting obligations internally and externally.	9.1 RAP progress report is provided to Reconciliation Australia.	Annually (July)	Director Workforce Strategies Section
	9.2 Achievements against the RAP are reported in the ABS Annual Report.	Annually (June/ July)	Director Workforce Strategies Section
10. ABS staff are informed of activity and achievements against the RAP.	10.1 RAP progress and achievements are reported to ELG/ SMG.	Annually (July)	Director Workforce Strategies Section
	10.2 Details of the RAP progress and achievements are made publicly available within the ABS.	Annually (August)	Director Workforce Strategies Section
	10.3 National Forum includes annual agenda item on Workplace Diversity (including the WDAP and the RAP).	Annually (September)	Consultative Forums Secretariat
11. ABS develops the next iteration of the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan.	11.1 RAP progress, achievements and consultation with employees will inform the development of the new RAP.	June 2016	Director Workforce Strategies Section





Appendix 1

Business area activities supporting the RAP

Workforce Strategies Section

- Protocols and guidelines relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be available corporately and regularly promoted, specifically:
 - i. Protocols for the appropriate recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be available in ABS Corporate Manuals and Services@ABS; and
 - ii. Protocols for handling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material and the intellectual property and cultural knowledge rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, to be available in ABS Corporate Manuals.
- The following programs for ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be promoted through weekly Learning@ABS Newspoint as appropriate:
 - iii. APSC Career Trek;
 - iv. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee conferences;
 - v. Certificate II in Indigenous Leadership; and
 - vi. Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership programs available through FaHCSIA and other government organisations (funded programs).

National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

- The local ABS Indigenous Engagement Manager (IEM) to attend the ABS Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (AGATSIS) as an observer. Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ABS staff may attend as appropriate and in consultation with the Directors of National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terminology document to be developed and released; and
- Agreed recommendations from the review of the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (ICES) to be implemented.

STSS sections

- STSS develops and utilises, through the ICES, statistical awareness and literacy training packages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- IEMs are supported in developing the cultural awareness of staff in their offices as appropriate; and
- Agreed recommendations from the review of the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (ICES) to be implemented.

Resource Centre Heads

- Contribute to meeting the 2.7 per cent commonwealth representation target by actively recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Resource Centres to be aware of the protocols for appropriate recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to ensure Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are conducted as appropriate; and
- IEM positions to be classified as “Identified positions” when advertising vacancies.

ABS author areas and service providers

- New statistical products and services to be checked to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples have access to culturally appropriate ABS products and services.

Director Statistical Capability Development Branch

- Footy Stats (AFL) to be used by IEMs and teachers and positive feedback is received; and
- Other statistical capability initiatives are rolled out as appropriate.





Appendix 2

ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 Governance and Review

Responsibilities under the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016

The success of the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 relies on a commitment from all employees to support the Plan and its objectives.

ABS Leaders and Managers: are responsible for actively promoting reconciliation and cultural change within the organisation by:

- actively engaging in implementing the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 objectives in local work areas and demonstrating individual commitment to reconciliation initiatives throughout the organisation;
- integrating reconciliation initiatives with organisational planning and strategies; and
- integrating reconciliation initiatives within the community focused operations of the organisation.

ABS Employees: are responsible for contributing to cultural change and supporting the implementation of local and broader organisational reconciliation initiatives by:

- applying principles of reconciliation to their day to day work practices;
- undertaking diversity and cultural awareness training as required; and
- actively participating in workplace and broader organisational reconciliation initiatives such as diversity events (e.g. Reconciliation Week events) and information sessions.

Resource Centre Heads and Directors of Accountable Business areas: are responsible for implementing and reporting on their specific action items within the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016.

ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group: is responsible for providing input and feedback on the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 and associated Workplace Diversity Action Plan 2013-2017 strategies.

ABS RAP Senior Champion: is responsible for demonstrating a strong commitment to reconciliation initiatives by actively promoting and supporting the implementation of the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 and associated ABS Workplace Diversity Action Plan 2013-2017.

Strategies Services and Technology Group (SST): are responsible for overseeing and evaluating the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 and supporting its objectives through integration of reconciliation initiatives with ABS policy, processes and strategic planning.

Governance

Oversight: ABS Senior Management (ELG and SMG)

Sponsor: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Reconciliation Senior Champion: Dr Paul Jelfs, First Assistant Statistician - Social, Health and Labour Division

Evaluation and review: Assistant Statistician, Human Resources Branch

Program Manager: Director Workforce Strategies Section

Project Managers: See deliverables under each strategy

Review

- Measures and targets have been established for each deliverable under the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016.
- Regular review of the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 and assessment of progress against each action in the Plan will be undertaken with accountable program work areas and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group.
- Resource Centre and employee feedback will be sought to establish priorities for consideration.
- An annual report on progress against the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 will be presented to ELG/SMG.
- Annual progress reports will be provided in the ABS Annual Report and to Reconciliation Australia.
- Feedback on the ABS Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-2016 is invited at any time by emailing Services@ABS.

