



### **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan**

Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven November 2025 – November 2027

#### Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision is to continue and further our connections with First Nations staff, students, people and organisations within our local community, celebrating First Nations' cultures, knowledge and people, and incorporating this into all strategic and operational aspects of our organisation. We believe in providing opportunities for education, connection, belonging and growth for all students, as well as to progress the national goals for reconciliation through partnership and collaboration. We recognise the importance of reconciliation for all Australians, and through our RAP our contribution to this will be realised.



#### Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.



Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia

#### **Our Business**

Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven (CUCSS) is located on Yuin Country. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the space where we reside and conduct our operations. Our core business provides wrap-around support services to university students located in the Southern Shoalhaven.

Our Centre, based in Ulladulla, is primarily focused on servicing our local Ulladulla community, however our catchment area extends to include students residing within a radius of approximately 60kms.

Our networks include local community members and community groups, universities, government, industry, workplaces and students. Our one location is connected to a network of other Centres located in regional QLD, NSW and VIC, supported by a Country Universities Centre central team providing additional support nationwide. We have a team of 5 staff members that provide support to students, with 1 staff member full-time, 1 part-time and 3 casuals. We currently have 1 staff member who identifies as Aboriginal, is a full-time staff member, and is the Centre Manager.

Our organisation is supported and governed by a board of passionate, local, skilled representatives, ensuring that the community is provided services that are unique to its needs and goals.

Creating a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is aligned with our goals of improving opportunities for the Southern Shoalhaven community through grassroots led initiatives, and we hope to inspire other Centres to formulate their own RAPs.

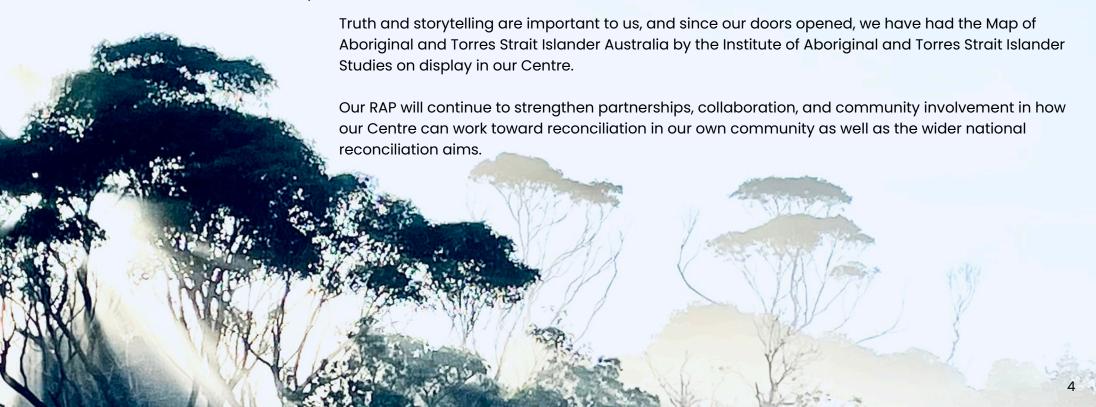


#### **Our RAP**

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) recognises that learning and education are pillars on which self-determination for First Nation's peoples can be supported. These are also essential elements for all our society in understanding our shared history and working together for a better future. We believe a RAP is essential for our Centre to express our commitment to, and solidarity with, First Nation's peoples and their cultures, and to inspire our wider community and student cohort towards the same.

Our organisation has already begun its journey toward celebrating the First Nation's community of our home in Yuin Country through partnering with local Murramarang Yuin Artist Leanne Brook for design of the logo for The Hive Spaces and the logos for each of the four goals outlined in the Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven Strategic Plan. Additionally, an Acknowledgement of Country artwork is commissioned and on permanent display in the main entry to our Centre.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council for a language immersion project of naming rooms at the Centre in Dhurga language, which is an ongoing education and celebration of First Nation's cultures for all Centre users and community.



### Our RAP Working Group aim to consist of Board Members, Staff, and Students as members.

Our current membership is listed here:

- Paul Goodwin (RAP Champion, Non-Executive Board Director)
- Libby Davies AM (Board Chair)
- Leanne Brook, Murramarang Yuin (Non-Executive Board Director)
- Adam Gowen, Wiradjuri (Staff: Centre Manager)

The Senior Leader Championing our RAP is **Paul Goodwin – Director** 

Paul has an extensive background in Vocational Education and Training and Tertiary Education in both the Government and Private sector. Paul has been a Senior Manager in TAFE NSW, a former Committee member for Regional Development Australia, Group Training Manager in the GTO sector and senior project management roles in Business, Community and Regional Development. Paul has worked closely with First Nation's peoples to build collaboration, networks and opportunities that work toward reconciliation, social equity, and inspiring young people.

Initial development of this RAP was also contributed to by Aunty Violet Green (Yuin – Walbunga) who was previously a Non-Executive director of our organisation, Wayne Dedden (previous Board Director and inaugural chair), and Sophie Linehan (former staff member: Community Engagement Coordinator).



#### A message from our RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin:

"WE ARE PROUD TO IMPLEMENT OUR INAUGURAL INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN. I BELIEVE IT SPEAKS TO OUR HOPE IN BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH A SHARED JOURNEY WITH FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND BROADER COMMUNITY. WE RECOGNISE THE VALUE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BRINGS TO OUR COMMUNITY. IN OUR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION, WE EMBRACE THE LEARNING TO COME IN LISTENING TO FIRST NATION'S PEOPLES, COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THEIR EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND OUTCOMES NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE, WORKING TOWARDS MORE MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION WITH OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY."

## RELATIONSHIPS



#### Relationships

Our strategic goals, Belong and Connect, express our commitment to creating an inclusive place of learning and community creation.



#### Belong

'Reaching out and inviting in'



#### Connect

'Learning integrated in the community'

community creation.			,
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain     mutually beneficial     relationships with Aboriginal     and Torres Strait Islander	<ul> <li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. These organisations will include Wandarma AECG and Ulladulla LALC.</li> </ul>	December 2025	Centre Manager
stakeholders and organisations.	<ul> <li>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	December 2025	Centre Manager
celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff annually.</li> </ul>	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
	<ul> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in external NRW events yearly.</li> </ul>	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
	<ul> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW annually.</li> </ul>	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
	<ul> <li>Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <u>NRW</u> website.</li> </ul>	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator

Promote reconciliation     through our sphere of	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	December 2025	Centre Manager
influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through social media, website, student communications etc.	November 2025	Community Engagement Coordinator
••••••	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2026	Community Engagement Coordinator
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	November 2025	Community Engagement Coordinator
	<ul> <li>Partner with Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Ulladulla High School, Wandarma Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, and Connexions to scope the feasibility of the development and implementation of a program that will increase pathway opportunities for First Nations high school students, into aviation roles at the RAAF.</li> </ul>	January 2026	Centre Manager
Promote positive race relations through antidiscrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2025	Denise Lofts, Non-Executive Director
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism and unconscious bias.	January 2026	Centre Manager
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	February 2026	Centre Manager

		Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or	November	Chair, Board
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	2025	
5.	Improving opportunities for collaboration and education that reflect the journey of the local community.	<ul> <li>HR committee to research and develop a proposal inclusive of the securing of funding for the hiring of a First Nations support officer in our organisation. This position would offer targeted support to improve opportunities for all First Nations students and coordinate events related to reconciliation and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives.</li> </ul>	November 2026	Centre Manager
		<ul> <li>Collaborate with Ulladulla High School to develop an understanding of the unique educational pathways into higher education within the local Aboriginal community.</li> </ul>	March 2026	Widening Participation Officer
		<ul> <li>Inform and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to link directly with First Nations educational and wellbeing support contacts at their institution, with particular focus on students who will travel and be off Country whilst undertaking their studies.</li> </ul>	February 2026	Operations Assistant
6.	Maintain current, and create new partnerships, seek investment opportunities, and collaborate with community on how to	<ul> <li>Organise a quarterly meeting schedule with the Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council (ULALC) to discuss progress of current projects, prospective future projects, review of the MOU partnership, and any other topics the ULALC and the Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven wishes to raise and discuss.</li> </ul>	January 2026	Centre Manager
	support professional and educational growth.	<ul> <li>Seek new partnerships through organisation-initiated research and continual active participation in local Aboriginal events, and networking opportunities.</li> </ul>	July 2026	Community Engagement Coordinator

# Respect



#### Respect

At CUCSS respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledges and rights, is foundational to our core business activities. It reflects our commitment to equity, inclusivity and community building, as encapsulated in our values of *Belong*, *Illuminate*, *Connect*, *Grow*. We are dedicated to creating an educational environment where every student feels valued, respected and empowered to succeed and further the cause of reconciliation.



#### Illuminate

'Everyone is supported to succeed'

Action.	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<ol> <li>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres</li> </ol>	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	January 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres     Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	March 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
oditarariodiriirigi	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	December 2025	Centre Manager
*	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	February 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
***	Collaborate with TAFE NSW for Centre access to students studying Certificate II Course in Dhurga Language.	November 2025	Centre Manager
<b>*</b>	Encourage immersive learning and education for all visitors to the Centre, on cultural connections, stories and identities tied to the local Aboriginal community, through Centre rooms named in Dhurga Language.	December 2025	Centre Manager

		•	Partner with TAFE NSW for Certificate II/III/IV Dhurga Language, a traditional language spoken on the South Coast of NSW. Access to students studying this course is provided as a community engagement initiative.	November 2025	Centre Manager
8.	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural	•	Increase understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols through training sessions and onboarding information.	November 2025	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
	protocols.	•	Develop non-Indigenous student aimed communications on educational materials, opportunities, and ways to participate and learn in cultural protocols, reconciliation, and selfeducation.	November 2025	Community Engagement Coordinator
		•	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	January 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
		•	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	December 2025	Centre Manager, Community Engagement Coordinator
		•	Incorporate a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	December 2025	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
		•	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	March 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
		•	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	November 2025	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin

Build respect for     Aboriginal and Torres     Strait Islander cultures	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	May 2026	Community Engagement Coordinator
and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	March 2026	Denise Lofts, Non-Executive Director
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
<ol> <li>Seek inclusion through purposeful projects, partnerships, and objectives.</li> </ol>	Nominate our organisation to participate and engage with the locally run Ngulla NAIDOC Festival Planning Committee, in liaison with Walking Together and the Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council.	May 2026 - 2027	Community Engagement Coordinator
	Operate a stall at the Ngulla NAIDOC Festival with meaningful and targeted activities to engage with the local Aboriginal community, to engage with their unique needs and interests in higher education.	July 2026 - July 2027	Centre Manager



# Opportunities



#### **Opportunities**

Engaging in opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples, organisations and communities is important to
our business and its core business activities, as we aim to Grow
with our community, so we can sustain connections and thrive
together. This can be done through creating partnerships,
scholarship and bursary opportunities, professional
development, employment, and retention.



#### **Grow**

'Evolve and thrive together'

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing	Advertise job vacancies to effect Torres Strait Islander stakeholder		June 2026	Centre Manage
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Conduct a review of HR policies existing anti-discrimination pro		November 2025	Centre Manage
recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current A     Islander staffing to inform future     development opportunities.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait e employment and professional	January 2026	Centre Manage
	Engage with Aboriginal and Tork staff to consult on our recruitment development strategy.		November 2025	Centre Manage
		original and Torres Strait Islander essional development strategy.	November 2025	Centre Manage
	to the Royal Australian Air Force	•	February 2026	Centre Manage
	HR practices are inclusive and attraction, retention, and developments.	accessible contributing to opment of Aboriginal and Torres	January 2026	Centre Manage

	Strait Islander staff. Ensure any advertisements for recruitment encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants.		
	<ul> <li>Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.</li> </ul>	November 2025	Denise Lofts, Non-Executive Director
12. Ensure sustainable financial support for education programs.	Design a scholarship/bursary model suitable for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to receive funding to support them to complete their studies.	November 2025	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin
	<ul> <li>Engage with current and ongoing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to link them with their own educational institution First Nations support services and link them to scholarship opportunities for their personal requirements.</li> </ul>	July 2026	Operations Assistant
<ol> <li>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.</li> </ul>	February 2026	Centre Manager
supplier diversity to support improved	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2025	Centre Manager
economic and social outcomes.	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	February 2026	Centre Manager
	<ul> <li>Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	November 2025	Centre Manager
	<ul> <li>Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	March 2026	Centre Manager
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	November 2025	Centre Manager
	Design a scholarship/bursary model suitable for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to receive funding to support them to complete their studies.	February 2026	Centre Manager

## Governance



Governance				
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
14. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2025	RAP Champion - Paul Goodwin	
governance of the RAP.	Review and Update Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2026	RAP Champion - Paul Goodwin	
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	November 2026	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin	
15. Provide appropriate support for effective	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	November 2026	Chair, Board	
implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation annually.	November 2025 – 2027	Centre Manager	
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments annually.	November 2025 – 2027	RAP Champion – Paul Goodwin	
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments annually	December 2025 – 2027	RAP Champion - Paul Goodwin	
16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP	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.	October 2026	Community Engagement Coordinator	

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achievements,	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to	August 2026	Community
challenges, and	access the online RAP Impact Survey		Engagement
learnings both internally			Coordinator
and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to	November	Community
	Reconciliation Australia.	2026	Engagement
			Coordinator
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	November	Centre Manager
		2026	
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial	December	Centre Manager
	Workplace RAP Barometer.	2026	
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings,	November	Centre Manager
	annually.	2026	
	Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	August 2026	Centre Manager
	Celebrate the RAP at our AGM and presenting living stories of	November	Chair, Board
	achievement.	2025	
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	October 2027	Centre Manager
17. Continue our	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <u>website</u> to begin	November	Centre Manager
reconciliation journey by	developing our next RAP.	2027	
developing our next RAP.			

#### **Contact details:**

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