



Embed, Enable and Strive

A Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan for Early Childhood Australia
January 2018–December 2020

The story behind the artworks

The two untitled artworks featured in this Reconciliation Action Plan were co-created by children attending Wiradjuri Preschool and Child Care at the University of Canberra, and Adam Duncan, Biripi artist and early childhood teacher, while they all lived on beautiful Ngunnawal Country in the Australian Capital Territory. The artworks speak of the relationships built between children and educators on Country, encompassing all Australian lands and waterways.

The children first laid the foundation from which to work, and more work was then added over this foundation by Adam. The concept of children laying down the foundation speaks of the nature of child-based curriculum and represents the thoughts, ideas, heritages and dreams of the children with whom we work. Adam's work represents the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in early childhood education and care, particularly in regards to reconciliation work with children and young people.

The symbolic sharing of space also encapsulates the complex interrelations between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Anglo-Australian and migrant-Australian peoples, who all cohabit what always has been, and always will be, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands, waters and air.



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Message from the ECA National President

Reconciliation is a journey. The further we go, the more we understand and the more we realise how far there is to travel. I believe that Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) commitment to reconciliation has deepened over recent years. We now have a greater understanding of the challenge of reconciliation, and our role in its achievement has strengthened; it has become a priority, both for our organisation and for our national network of branches and members.

On behalf of the ECA National Board, I would like to thank the members of the National Reconciliation Advisory Group for their role in assisting the development and implementation of both action plans. We are very grateful for their expertise and time commitment.

I look forward to working with the National Board, the Reconciliation Advisory Group and the CEO to progress and monitor ECA's work in reconciliation over the next three years, and encourage all of our members, supporters and stakeholders to be involved.

To be part of a reconciled nation would be an extraordinarily valuable legacy for future generations of Australians.



Ros Cornish
ECA National President



'Reconciliation is a journey. The further we go, the more we understand and the more we realise how far there is to travel.'

Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia congratulates Early Childhood Australia (ECA) on its continued commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its second Reconciliation Action Plan.

ECA was one of the first organisations in the early childhood sector to embark on the reconciliation journey. By implementing a Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, ECA is applying its passion for inclusivity and accountability to the key pillars of reconciliation: building relationships, practising respect and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Making a positive social and economic impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities is at the core of ECA's Reconciliation Action Plan commitments, and it understands that for this to be achieved, meaningful relationships are key.

We see this through ECA's actionable goal to develop and implement an engagement plan to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that deliver early childhood services, in its work.

By championing reconciliation across the early childhood sector, ECA is displaying its dedication to conducting business in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and applying it across all levels of the organisation. This is displayed through ECA's aim to develop an understanding and broader use of Aboriginal ways of teaching, learning and knowledge in the early childhood sector. It aims to achieve this by actively supporting and promoting Aboriginal pedagogies, storytelling, spending time on Country and more.



ECA is striving to support employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, as illustrated by its goal to develop a position statement on supporting the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the early childhood sector, in consultation with Aboriginal employment services, recruitment agencies, registered training providers and universities.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend ECA on this Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, and look forward to the next phase of its ongoing reconciliation journey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Mundine'.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



About us

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is a national, non-profit, advocacy organisation committed to the vision: every young child is thriving and learning.

Children are 'thriving' and reach their potential in safe and loving relationships with parents, carers and educators; they are 'learning' when they are engaging in rich interactive experiences at home, in early learning services and at school. We define young children as those from birth to eight years of age.

To achieve this vision we champion the rights of young children to thrive and learn at home, in the community, within early learning settings and through the early years of school.

ECA is a federated network with local branches across Australia. Collectively, our branches have more than 5000 members.

Our work is guided by the ECA *Code of Ethics* and is based on the shared values of integrity, collaboration, leadership, inclusiveness and quality.

Our people

The national organisation of ECA, based in Canberra, employs approximately 65 people and engages at least another 50 people each year as content experts, authors and project consultants. Several of our branches also have employees and contractors.

In 2017, when this plan was being developed, ECA did not have any employees who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. However, we have three Aboriginal people currently engaged as contractors to produce or deliver professional development resources.

Our National Reconciliation Advisory Group includes a staff member representative who works with ECA's CEO to champion the Reconciliation Action Plan internally, and coordinates staff team activities such as celebrating National Reconciliation Week.

As well as being an employer, ECA has networks supported by volunteers, particularly in governance and advisory roles. Our National Board is appointed by branches that also have voluntary management committees. We also have a range of advisory and reference groups overseeing key elements of our work and projects. There are close to 100 people in voluntary governance roles across the ECA network; of these, we estimate that 5 per cent are people from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, and they are primarily engaged with ECA's Reconciliation Advisory Group. We will work to expand opportunities over the next three years.



Our reconciliation journey

ECA's first Reconciliation Action Plan 2012–2016 took nearly two years to develop; we were one of the first organisations in the early childhood sector to engage in this process. Some of the key achievements that came from this plan are highlighted below:

- The ECA National Board signed a statement of support for the **Recognise Campaign** for constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples.
- ECA worked closely with Reconciliation Australia to **promote Narragunnawali** reconciliation resources for schools and early childhood services to our members and the children's services sector more broadly.
- A new national event was initiated—the **ECA Reconciliation Symposium**, held in May 2015 (Adelaide), May 2016 (Sydney) and May 2017 (Gold Coast)—to advance reconciliation in the early childhood sector by bringing educators together to learn, engage and take action. This event is held in partnership with Reconciliation Australia.
- ECA **worked closely with SNAICC—National Voice for our Children** to support ongoing funding for Aboriginal child and family services; we also continue to support the *Family Matters: Kids safe in culture, not in care* campaign.
- Delegates to the ECA National Council meeting in 2015 participated in a **cultural awareness workshop** to strengthen our shared understanding as a national network and to inform our decision making.
- ECA employees participated in **cultural awareness training** in 2013 and 2016, and took a walking tour of local Aboriginal sites in June 2015 in Canberra. They also participated in events such as Healing Foundation seminars on the ongoing impact of the Stolen Generations, and NAIDOC week celebrations. Ongoing cultural awareness training is now part of our staff training policy.
- ECA's **Protocol on Acknowledgement of Country** was developed after a process of consultation, and disseminated across ECA networks to encourage its use.
- KidsMatter Early Childhood undertook a 12-month project to engage Aboriginal community leaders in adapting materials and mentoring services, with the development of an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Portal**.
- ECA developed **two online learning modules** (courses) on reconciliation and why cultural awareness training is so important for early childhood educators and teachers. These courses are available on the ECA Learning Hub platform, which also has a list of other resources on reconciliation.



- **Regular content** was published, and continues to be published, on reconciliation in editions of *Every Child* magazine, *Voice* newsletter; and the fortnightly e-newsletter, *WebWatch*; editions of *Every Child* in 2013 and 2017 had an overall theme of reconciliation.
- The ECA *Code of Ethics* was updated and now has a **stronger recognition** of Aboriginal ways of knowing and being, with a statement on reconciliation.
- ECA now celebrates **National Reconciliation Week** and promotes events and activities through *WebWatch*, *Voice*, *Every Child* and social media channels.
- ECA also supports **NAIDOC week** and **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**.
- ECA **National Conferences** (2014 and 2016) included keynotes, workshops and study tours relevant to reconciliation and Indigenous education. There was also a focus on research to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early education at the 2016 AJEC Research Symposium.
- **ECA's reconciliation journey has been promoted** through regular articles in our publications (see previous dot points) and through the launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan at the 2012 National Conference. Our branches and other networks are also developing, or have developed, Reconciliation Action Plans.
- ECA has responded to national data and research highlighting the disadvantage and unique challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and referred to this in all major **advocacy statements, campaigns and submissions** (available on the ECA website).
- ECA is currently supporting the involvement of two Aboriginal women in the **Global Leaders for Young Children program**.
- ECA introduced **travel subsidies** that support people to attend ECA National Conferences and other events—prioritising early childhood educators who identify as, or work primarily with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- ECA worked with HESTA and ME Bank to **recognise good practice** in cultural inclusion as part of the Early Childhood Education and Care Awards.
- ECA identified and engaged Aboriginal companies and individuals to **supply conference merchandise** for both the 2014 and 2016 National Conferences.
- Aboriginal artwork is now featured at ECA's National Office in Canberra, where we also display a **plaque acknowledging the Traditional Owners** of the Land, and a copy of the **Apology to Stolen Generations**.

Perhaps one of the most important outcomes from ECA's reconciliation work is that it has raised the profile of reconciliation across the early childhood sector. We have inspired many other early childhood organisations to start their own reconciliation journey and have seen a significant increase in the amount of interest in reconciliation resources in recent years.

Areas of difficulty in our reconciliation work tend to be where we would like to make an impact on practice across the early childhood sector, but this is challenging and long term. For example, we would like to see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals taking up leadership roles across the sector, and we want all early childhood educators to learn about the importance of cultural awareness and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, but it is a large sector and this will take time to achieve.



Developing this Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2014, the ECA National Board appointed a National Reconciliation Advisory Group to support the development and implementation of ECA's Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Reconciliation Advisory Group monitors and reports on progress against the plan; provides advice to the ECA Board and leadership teams on priorities and opportunities for effective action on reconciliation; and identifies any risks or challenges to ECA's work in this area.

At least half the members of the Reconciliation Advisory Group are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and all members bring expertise in early childhood education and care. The group also includes a staff representative and ECA's CEO as an ex officio member to ensure strong internal support and accountability for progress against the Reconciliation Action Plan. The Reconciliation Advisory Group meets four times each year and provides reports to the Board at least every six months.

This second Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed over a period of nine months by a working group of the Reconciliation Advisory Group, with input from the ECA Board and branch delegates who participated in discussions on the plan at the 2016 ECA National Council meeting, and subsequently provided feedback on the first draft of the plan. ECA members were also invited to provide input through an online survey, and the ECA staff team engaged in a workshop as part of the Staff Planning Day in December 2016.



Our vision for reconciliation

For ECA, reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community is about a journey of continuous transformation—transformation that moves from ignorance and racism, to respect; from inequity and prejudice, to justice; and from inaction and fear, to hope. It is in this transformation, both personal and organisational, that the promise of a strong future for every Australian child is realised.

Early Childhood Australia's vision for reconciliation begins with our acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of Australia. We recognise that this culture and heritage shapes our shared cultural heritage as Australians. We also celebrate the fact that Aboriginal culture can claim to be the oldest, continuous living culture on the planet, with archaeological evidence dating back over 40 000 years.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we regret the loss of family, cultural identity, lands and waters, languages and communities by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a result of colonisation. This shared history affects us all and has deep consequences that continue to impact current and future generations.

At the same time, we acknowledge that reconciliation is about moving beyond regret to respectful action. It is also about valuing and

celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and strengths. There is so much to gain from teaching young children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritages, which we can do through respectful engagement with local communities, their stories, histories, artefacts, languages, art and music. It is also important to celebrate the achievements of individuals and communities, promoting positive contemporary examples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities.

This leads us to challenge ourselves and each other. What are we doing individually and collectively on a daily basis to support practical reconciliation and to build positive futures for every child in Australia? Are we doing enough to reject racism and challenge unethical practice? These questions are pivotal to this action plan and will remain a feature of our reconciliation work. They are grounded in ethical practice: the rights

of children and our commitment to becoming respectful citizens as articulated in ECA's *Code of Ethics*, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

ECA recognises that reconciliation is more than a single act or list of actions. In the 2016 report, *The State of Reconciliation in Australia: Our History, Our Story, Our Future*, Reconciliation Australia identified five interrelated dimensions of reconciliation: Race Relations; Equality and Equity; Unity; Institutional Integrity; and Historical Acceptance. ECA commits to actions that reflect these five dimensions, and to progressing systematic and lasting change in the best interest of children and their families, and the wellbeing of our Australian community.



Message from the ECA National Reconciliation Advisory Group

This Reconciliation Action Plan, rather than capturing a point of arrival, signifies a commitment to continued reflection and understanding.

In formalising this second plan, we declare once again to ECA members, the broader early childhood sector and the Australian community, that reconciliation is the business of early childhood and that children, and those who care and work for them, can make a contribution to a more equitable future for everyone.

Over recent years, this Advisory Group has guided the work of ECA in responding to the challenge of reconciliation; sometimes in gestures of friendship and at other times in more public declarations of solidarity and respect. We urge ECA to be more courageous, more vigilant and more uncompromising in its commitment to ensuring a reconciled Australia for our children, now and into the future.

In support of this planning work, our members and friends guided our deliberations, reflecting on their own work and life experiences to highlight the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and to promote the need for action. We are indebted to all those who have shared their perspectives with us, challenged our assumptions and urged us to do more.

ECA will join many others in the quest for reconciliation and will continue to take the time to talk and think about how we, as ECA representatives, executives, members and staff, can best turn our words of commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families into actions.

Current members of the Reconciliation Advisory Group include:

- Geraldine Atkinson (Co-chair)
- Catharine Hydon (Co-chair)
- Denise Proud
- Gisella Wilson
- Rhonda Livingstone
- Adam Duncan
- Sara Richardson (ECA Staff Reconciliation Champion)
- Samantha Page (ECA CEO, Ex Officio member).



Actions and targets

1. Relationships



ECA recognises that connections with place and people are central to the wellbeing of young children and their families, and that building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will bring about a positive change, not only for children but also for whole communities.

Focus area: ECA is an advocacy organisation that seeks to influence decision-makers to achieve positive outcomes for children. Our focus here is to continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to inform this work and promote reconciliation.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1 ECA's National Reconciliation Advisory Group to actively monitor the development and implementation of the ECA Reconciliation Action Plan, and provide advice to the National Board.	The ECA National Reconciliation Advisory Group to include both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous representatives, appointed by the ECA National Board, with established Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oversee the development, endorsement, launch and implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan • meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on progress and any areas of difficulty or risk to the ECA Board • advise ECA on how best to promote the Reconciliation Action Plan to our stakeholders and tell our story • ensure that the ECA CEO and Reconciliation Advisory Group Staff Representative champion the Reconciliation Action Plan internally. 	Meetings held in: February, May, September and November 2018, 2019 and 2020	Reconciliation Advisory Group Co-chairs
	The ECA National Board to be involved in the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan, endorsement of the Reconciliation Action Plan and then monitoring of both the implementation and impact of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	The Board to receive progress reports twice a year: June and December 2018, 2019 and 2020	National President and CEO



1. Relationships

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	The ECA Reconciliation Advisory Group will present at the ECA National Council meeting to support ECA's state/territory branches to develop their own Reconciliation Action Plans and/or establish Reconciliation Advisory Groups.	ECA National Council meeting, September 2018	Reconciliation Advisory Group Co-chairs
	Reconciliation will be a standing agenda item at the ECA National Council meetings beyond 2018.	ECA National Council meeting, September 2019 and 2020	National President and CEO
1.2 Support strong and effective representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and communities in early childhood policy and service delivery.	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with SNAICC—National Voice for our Children to support coordinated advocacy and representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities in early childhood programs and policy frameworks.	By June 2018 (contingent on SNAICC's availability)	CEO
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to increase the participation, in our work, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that deliver early childhood services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocacy (submissions, campaigns and position statements) • sector development projects (project advisory groups) • events (ECA National Conference and smaller events) • content development for publications and online learning. 	Beginning: June 2018 Plan finalised: December 2018 Implementation: January 2019 to December 2020	CEO



1. Relationships

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>1.3 Work with Reconciliation Australia to support the engagement of early childhood organisations in reconciliation.</p>	<p>Promote the importance of Reconciliation Action Plans and the value of Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning resources available to early childhood services, schools and other organisations that work with young children. Specifically, ECA will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grow the number of early childhood services and schools engaging with Narragunnawali increase the quality of Reconciliation Action Plans developed by early childhood services and schools, including the sophistication of examples of reconciliation and cultural inclusion in these settings reach out to the early childhood sector to assess attitudes and knowledge in relation to reconciliation. 	<p>ECA to assess this every May (2018, 2019 and 2020) when delivering the Reconciliation Symposium</p> <p>By May 2020, ECA will aim to have 3000+ early childhood services engaged in Narragunnawali to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan</p>	<p>CEO and Communications Team</p>
<p>1.4 Champion reconciliation across the early childhood sector.</p>	<p>Commit to hosting an annual ECA Reconciliation Symposium in partnership with Reconciliation Australia, SNAICC and other organisations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote the importance of reconciliation enhance cultural responsiveness in early childhood settings increase understanding and appreciation of the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples showcase best practice 'reconciliation' in early childhood settings. <p><i>Note: ECA's Reconciliation Symposium is expected to attract 250–350 participants each year.</i></p>	<p>Symposium dates:</p> <p>Fremantle, WA, 11–12 May 2018</p> <p>Early May 2019</p> <p>Early May 2020</p>	<p>CEO and National Events Team</p>
	<p>Commission a <i>Research in Practice Series</i> publication to demonstrate the rationale, importance and process for developing reconciliation work in early childhood services.</p>	<p>By September 2018</p>	<p>Publications Committee and Studio and Publications Team</p>



1. Relationships

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
1.5 Celebrate National Reconciliation Week to strengthen and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ECA staff.	Host at least one event during National Reconciliation Week, and encourage ECA branches and member organisations to also host an event. Register the event on Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week website and encourage others to do the same.	27 May to 3 June 2018, 2019 and 2020	Communications Team—reporting to the CEO
	Encourage the ECA Board, branch committee members, staff and volunteers to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	27 May to 3 June 2018, 2019 and 2020	CEO
1.6 Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance.	Promote and celebrate days of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry Day (May) • National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (August). 	Promotional content to be included in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECA <i>WebWatch</i> • ECA <i>Voice</i> newsletter • <i>Every Child</i> magazine • social media channels Each year (2018–2020), and reported on as part of the implementation reports to the ECA National Board (June and December 2018, 2019 and 2020)	Communications Team—reporting to the CEO



2. Respect



Respect forms the basis of our efforts towards true and lasting reconciliation. It manifests in our language and structure, as well as our daily actions.

Focus area: ECA has considerable influence on the way that early childhood services are delivered, and we seek to use that influence to promote reconciliation and cultural responsiveness.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way ECA functions.	The Reconciliation Advisory Group will review ECA's <i>Protocol on Acknowledgement of Country</i> and <i>Welcome to Country Protocol</i> and suggest improvements (if required).	Revised protocols launched at the Reconciliation Symposium, May 2018	Reconciliation Advisory Group Co-chairs
	Continue to implement ECA's <i>Protocol on Acknowledgement of Country</i> and <i>Welcome to Country Protocol</i> in all official meetings and gatherings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at all significant events each year (ECA National Conference and symposiums), after consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations provide an Acknowledgement of Country at all ECA meetings, including ECA Board and Council meetings, reference/advisory group meetings and staff meetings display the Acknowledgement of Country plaque and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in ECA's National Office in Canberra, and any other premises under ECA management. 	Annual implementation review of the protocols in December 2018, 2019 and 2020	National Board and CEO
	The Reconciliation Advisory Group will review the use of the <i>Protocol on Acknowledgement of Country</i> and <i>Welcome to Country Protocol</i> by state and territory branches and ECA Regional Networks, and/or encourage the development of equivalent state/territory or local protocols.	By December 2019	Reconciliation Advisory Group Co-chairs



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>2.2 Build and strengthen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within ECA's staff team.</p>	<p>Develop, implement and review an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for staff, which defines the continuous cultural learning needs of ECA employees. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all new ECA staff to undertake two online learning modules on reconciliation, available on the ECA Learning Hub as part of their induction • all ECA employees, including Senior Executives, to attend at least one approved professional development event every two years to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (the ECA staff team is estimated to grow to 65 by 2020). Approved events will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » a cultural awareness training workshop delivered by a local provider—at least one workshop per year (ECA estimates that 45 staff members will attend a workshop by 2020) » the SNAICC Conference, Garma Festival or equivalent (ECA estimates that 10–15 staff members will attend an approved event by 2020) » more intensive learning opportunities such as cultural immersion, study tours, secondment or exchange opportunities (ECA estimates that five staff members, at least, will do one of these more intensive activities by 2020). • enable ECA staff members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » access paid study leave to undertake approved study in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures » use approved paid hours to provide voluntary service to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation to improve cultural understanding. 	<p>Strategy to be developed by March 2018</p> <p>Implementation of the strategy from April 2019</p> <p>Assess impact through a staff survey in May/June 2020</p>	<p>CEO</p>



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
2.3 Build and strengthen understanding of, and responsiveness to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across the early childhood sector.	Building on the work done through KidsMatter Early Childhood, ECA will undertake the development of a series of 'best practice' factsheets on cultural protocols and responsiveness for early childhood organisations, covering topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and heritages—how and where to source local information • understanding cultural identity, including language groups and family relationships • how to respectfully include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in early childhood settings—including, but not limited to, language, music, symbols (such as flags) and traditional styles of art and dance • how to consult and engage with communities, including Elders and representatives, as well as protocols for booking and remunerating individuals and organisations for cultural activities such as Welcome to Country. 	Two protocols by June 2018 Four protocols by June 2019 Six protocols by June 2020	Reconciliation Advisory Group and CEO
	Develop a position statement in support of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content in mandatory qualification training for early childhood educators and teachers, including degree, diploma and certificate courses. This position statement may be a joint project with partners. Once finalised, send it to decision-makers across the tertiary and vocational training sectors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SkillsIQ • Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) • Australian College of Educators • education faculty heads in leading universities. 	By September 2019	Reconciliation Advisory Group and CEO



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	Review the availability of cultural awareness training resources for the 194 000+ early childhood educators and teachers across Australia, to identify gaps and to assess driving and restraining factors impacting uptake (attitudes, priority, cost, availability, etc.).	By June 2018	CEO and General Managers
	<p>Following the review above, ECA will develop a strategy to increase the uptake of cultural awareness training in the early childhood sector, with the aim to increase uptake by at least 5 per cent from 2018 to 2020. The strategy may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building and promoting links to free resources such as Reconciliation Australia's online content • investing in the development of new online learning products (modules, webinars and videos) • maintaining a strong focus on cultural awareness in our delivery of the National Education Initiative (replacing KidsMatter) • working in partnerships with other providers (including SNAICC) that deliver cultural awareness training, to increase uptake • feature articles in publications, newsletters and social media, highlighting the value of cultural awareness training. <p>Repeat the online survey in 2020 to assess the impact of the strategy.</p>	<p>By December 2018</p> <p>Implementation between January 2019 and September 2020</p> <p>By September 2020</p>	CEO and General Managers
	Scope an exchange program to support non-Indigenous early childhood educators to work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators from rural and remote communities to work in metropolitan settings to facilitate cultural exchange and potentially help with workforce shortages in rural and remote areas.	By September 2019	CEO and General Managers



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
2.4 Embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of teaching, learning and knowing in order to embed this throughout ECA's work.	Ensure that the range of ECA publications and professional development resources contain regular content that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of teaching, learning and knowing—including the authentic voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and positive images of cultural identity. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building ECA's talent pool of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, presenters and consultants • expanding the ECA photo library to ensure inclusion of positive images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and educators • increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content in ECA publications, events and online learning (to at least 10 per cent of all content by 2020). 	Ongoing through 2018–2020 Audit current content in early 2018 to set targets for increasing this to 10 per cent by December 2020	Publications Committee Chair and Studio and Publishing Manager
	Develop understanding and broader use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of teaching, learning and knowing in the early childhood sector by actively supporting and promoting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies • oral storytelling • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural symbolism and language • time spent on Country and connecting to Land • kinship relationships and the role of Elders • the development and mentoring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student contributors • joint papers/resources and publications. 	Each year (2018–2020), incorporate this into the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Board Retreat in April • Annual Staff Planning Day in July • National Conference in September 	CEO



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	Ensure that ECA's major projects and initiatives include strategies to strengthen cultural responsiveness and increase the number of resources/materials that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, building on the work done through KidsMatter Early Childhood.	Incorporate this into project plans and review progress in July and December 2018, 2019 and 2020—through the Staff Planning Day and Board Progress Report	CEO and General Managers
	Use ECA's extensive social media reach to promote reconciliation and encourage early childhood professionals to be Reconciliation Champions—including, but not limited to, our Facebook group, which continues to grow.	Incorporate this into the ECA Communications Strategy and review in July and December 2018, 2019 and 2020	CEO and General Managers
	Work with ACECQA and state/territory regulators to enhance practice and strengthen rating/assessment expectations relating to cultural competency within the <i>National Quality Framework</i> (NQF).	Beginning 2019 after changes to the NQF have been implemented To be completed by December 2020	CEO



2. Respect

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
2.5 Celebrate NAIDOC Week and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, volunteers and contractors to engage with culture and community during NAIDOC Week.	Review ECA's Human Resource policies and practices to actively encourage staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events or activities. The review will aim to remove any potential barriers, with particular attention to the potential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in events.	By June 2018	CEO and General Managers
	Each year, ECA CEO and national staff team to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledge NAIDOC Week and its importance • encourage early childhood services to acknowledge NAIDOC Week and engage in local community events or activities • hold an internal or public NAIDOC Week event, or support an external NAIDOC Week community event that staff can participate in. 	July 2018, 2019 and 2020	CEO



3. Opportunities



Opportunities indicate possibilities and remind us that change comes about when we open doors. ECA is uniquely placed to provide opportunities at all levels, from advocacy to participation.

Focus area: Building the capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to have their own influence and voice.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1 Actively foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals to take leadership roles in the early childhood sector and to be recognised for their expertise.	Recruit one or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Director(s) to the ECA National Board.	By December 2020	National President
	Increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals on committees, expert advisory or reference groups through intentional recruitment, and better promotion opportunities to appropriate candidates, with the aim of making at least three new appointments over three years.	By December 2020	National President and CEO
	Increase leadership development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood professionals. ECA is currently supporting two Aboriginal early childhood professionals to participate in the Global Leaders for Young Children program, and aims to increase this number to four by 2018 and to six by 2020—as well as look for ways to create new opportunities.	Increase to four by June 2018 Increase to six by June 2020	National President and CEO
	Work in partnership with HESTA and ME Bank to ensure that the Early Childhood Education and Care Awards recognise leaders in the area of reconciliation, cultural inclusiveness and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.	ECA National Conferences: September 2018, 2019 and 2020	CEO



3. Opportunities

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
3.2 Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working at all levels of the early childhood services sector.	Develop a position statement on supporting the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the early childhood sector, in consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal employment services • recruitment agencies • registered training providers offering early childhood qualifications • universities offering early childhood qualifications. 	June to December 2019	Reconciliation Advisory Group, National Board and CEO
3.3 Work to enhance the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.	In collaboration with Indigenous peak bodies and advocates, ECA will promote national action to reduce educational disadvantage by increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in high-quality early childhood education and care, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parliamentary submissions (including to the Federal Budget) • contributions as part of national policy consultation—inquiries and reviews • advocacy campaigns and activities (including the Early Learning: Everyone Benefits campaign and the annual <i>State of early learning in Australia</i> report) • scrutiny and analysis of all public policies relating to children and their families (including consideration of their specific impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families) • monitoring the Australian Early Childhood Development Index (AEDI) outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to identify and draw attention to evidence of vulnerability and educational disadvantage. 	January 2018 to December 2020	CEO



3. Opportunities

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	<p>Support and disseminate research projects that enhance understanding of best practice in achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnering with research teams and individuals on grant opportunities • providing access to ECA membership and social media audiences for research activities • encouraging researchers to publish papers in the <i>Australasian Journal of Early Childhood</i> (AJEC) • summarising and distilling research findings in ECA publications and events (ECA National Conference, AJEC Research Symposium). 	<p>Ongoing promotion and partnerships from January 2018 to December 2020</p> <p>Encourage researchers to publish and share findings at the AJEC Research Symposium, February 2018 (dates yet to be set for 2019 and 2020)</p>	CEO
	<p>ECA to support campaigns led by other organisations that promote the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly children, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Racism stops with me</i> campaign from the Australian Human Rights Commission • supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies to enact the recommendations in the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> • assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies to push for constitutional reform • <i>Family Matters: Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children</i> campaign—reducing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care • First 1000 Days Australia—highlighting the importance of the first three years. 	<p>Ongoing from January 2018 to December 2020. Review support in progress reports to the ECA Board—July and December 2018, 2019 and 2020</p>	CEO



3. Opportunities

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
3.4 Use the ECA National Conference to showcase achievements, perspectives and stories.	Strengthen the ECA National Conference guidelines to enhance the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and stories, including at least one keynote speaker and two to five invited speakers, panellists or workshop presenters.	ECA Conference Guidelines to be reviewed annually in December 2018, 2019 and 2020	National Conference Committee Chair
	Monitor the proportion of conference delegates who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and work to increase this over time, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of travel subsidies and registration discounts • enhanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the program • promotion of the conference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. 	Measure the level of engagement in September 2018, 2019 and 2020	National Conference Committee Chair
3.5 Support the economic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy to increase the value of goods and services purchased from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. Aim to increase this to 30 per cent over the next three years by making intentional purchasing decisions in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books, artwork and merchandise purchased for on-selling, or projects and events • consultant engagement by ECA for projects and online professional learning • author engagement in writing ECA content and publication titles • speaker and facilitator participation in events. This strategy will involve the development of commercial relationships with at least three Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses, as well as four to six individual consultants or contractors.	Strategy to be developed by December 2018 and implemented between January 2019 and December 2020	CEO and General Managers



3. Opportunities

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	Promote these suppliers more widely to ECA stakeholders through the ECA website, social media channels and publications.	Strategy to be developed by January 2019 and implemented by July 2020	CEO



4. Tracking and reporting



Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1 Review, refresh and update the ECA Reconciliation Action Plan.	Development of ECA's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2020 started in 2017, drawing on the learnings from ECA's 2012–2016 Reconciliation Action Plan, with input from the ECA National Board, branches, members, Reconciliation Advisory Group and staff. Once launched in May 2018, the updated Reconciliation Action Plan will be distributed to all ECA members and stakeholders. The reconciliation pages and resource directory on the ECA website will be updated, and an article will be published in <i>EveryChild</i> (ECA's member magazine).	By June 2018	CEO
	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new Reconciliation Action Plan based on learnings, challenges and achievements from the 2018–2020 Reconciliation Action Plan for 2021 and beyond.	Commence by July 2020, with view to launch in early 2021	Reconciliation Advisory Group and National President
4.2 Report Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Report.	Complete and submit the Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Investigate ECA participation in May 2018 and again in May 2020 On advice from Reconciliation Australia	CEO



4. Tracking and reporting

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
	Implement systems to measure the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan and report on progress to the ECA National Board twice each year.	June and December 2018, 2019 and 2020	Reconciliation Advisory Group Co-chairs and CEO
4.3 Report Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	Publically report on Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings. Communicate quarterly updates on Reconciliation Action Plan progress to all ECA staff.	Annual Staff Planning Day (December 2018, 2019 and 2020)	CEO
	Progress against the Reconciliation Action Plan will be summarised each year as part of our Annual Report, and reported at the ECA National Council meeting.	September/October 2018, 2019 and 2020	Reconciliation Advisory Group and CEO
	The Reconciliation Advisory Group (including Board and staff representative) will meet at least four times per year. Reports to be issued twice a year to the ECA National Board on ECA's progress against the Reconciliation Action Plan.	February, May, September and November 2018, 2019 and 2020	Reconciliation Advisory Group, National Board and CEO



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