

# **INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

December 2023 to November 2025





## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Western Bulldogs acknowledge Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their ongoing connections to the land and waterways. We offer and pay our respects to them and their Elders past, present and emerging.



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Western Bulldogs are proud to develop and unveil our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Bulldogs have a long-standing, respected reputation as the community club of the AFL, and we have developed a strong commitment to promoting reconciliation and building stronger links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We have made great strides through the first edition of our RAP, leading several initiatives which support the journey to reconciliation, including cultural awareness education sessions with our staff and players, the cultivation and strengthening of relationships with key stakeholders, participating in celebrations of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures across Australia and being an active voice against racism.

Our Club is proud of its support of First Nations people, highlighted by the Club's Nallei Jerring Koori Youth Leadership Project, which aims to inspire, educate and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to become future leaders in the community.

We look forward to continuing our journey and strengthening our commitment toward reconciliation both through the actions outlined in this RAP and our unwavering commitment to our diverse community.



**Kylie Watson-Wheeler,**  
Western Bulldogs Club President



**Ameet Bains,**  
Western Bulldogs CEO



## MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



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

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. The Western Bulldogs continue to be part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

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

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that Western Bulldogs will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to the Western Bulldogs using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for the Western Bulldogs to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, Western Bulldogs will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of the Western Bulldogs' future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Western Bulldogs on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
CEO  
Reconciliation Australia



## ABOUT THE ARTIST **TARNI JARVIS** **KURRONG KALAT**

I am a Djab Wurrung & Gunditjamara artist working on Wadawurrung Country.

I had always been a creative child, constantly creating and building. This grew through my relationship with my grandfather, who created art and would teach me, and we would connect and bond over creating art. He had used art as a form of therapy and storytelling, which I had taken upon myself, especially when I reached my early teen years, to help with my mental health.

As well as being a way to look after my mental health and connect to my grandfather that has now passed, it has been a way to connect to my culture, especially as I have spent my whole life living off Country on Wadawurrung Country. My art has helped keep my connection to the Country, our stories, and our culture strong despite living off the Country.

My artwork is a contemporary take from traditional styles passed onto me by my grandfather. It has evolved over the years as I have practised and developed my style. I bring my personal stories and life into my art, as well as my family's stories and Country, into my art.

Kurrong Kalat began at the end of 2019 out of my home in Ballarat, Victoria. The name comes from one of my traditional language groups Kirrae Wurrung from the southwest region of Victoria. The first part of the name, "Kurrong", translates to "little", and "Kalat" translates to "eldest sister". I am the eldest of my grandfather's grandchildren, given the title of "Kalat" within my family order. Being of a more petite build, I often was referred to as the little big sister, where the name originates.



## ABOUT THE RAP ARTWORK

Mirwill Kooyang Merrereng  
"Platypus Eel Country"

The colours chosen are variations of the club's iconic blue, white and red. Variations of the blue have been used to represent the waterways and Port Phillip. The reds are chosen to represent the members and communities that the Club and Western Bulldogs Community Foundation reach. It provides a link to the Club's iconic red but also allows the elements to stand out and draw attention to the importance they have within the club. White was used to link to the club white but also to have the symbols stand out without drawing away from the other aspects of the artwork.



The circles within the artwork have unique designs within, each different from the others. They are to show the different elements that came together to form the RAP, especially within a football club environment. These include the First Nations staff & players, non-First Nations staff & players, community foundation programs, operations, policies and procedures, coaching staff, environment, acknowledgment of journey and aspirations for the future.



The platypus is an animal that is made up of many characteristics that are like other animals. I've chosen to include it within this artwork after spending time with members of the RAP Working Group, which is made up of many different members within the organisation. I felt it was a great representation of the Working Group and the diversity that existed within this group.

## ABOUT THE RAP ARTWORK CONT

Mirwill Kooyang Merrereng  
"Platypus Eel Country"



The eel is a food source that is popular throughout all of the countries in the Western Bulldogs region. The animal is also extremely resilient, able to survive in both fresh and saltwater and travel throughout all the waterways, making large journeys. This signifies the long, ongoing journey of the RAP and the resilience required to keep moving forward.



A common term used by mob is 'water is life', which is true for both First Nations people and non-First Nations people as it connects us and provides life to us all. The river networks connect to each other through the western region of Victoria, bringing all the areas together.

The waterways have connected us for generations and will for generations to come, from the Maribyrnong River in the western suburbs of Melbourne to the Hopkins down near Warrnambool and the Fitzroy River down near Heywood. These river networks connect back to Port Phillip, which is an important landmark for the Kulin nations that is a meeting place for ceremonies and a source of food.



Within the background, there are small symbols. These are used to symbolise the different and diverse communities that make up the Western Bulldogs community. I wanted to represent the membership and communities that the Club and Western Bulldogs Community Foundation reach out to. The communities and membership are an important part of this journey that the club is currently on, so it is important that they are a part of this artwork. This connects to a strong theme that came from speaking with the RAP Working Group about collectiveness being important to everyone in this process. This means that the broader Bulldogs community are a part of this journey, as well as the staff and players.

It was clear that engagement is important to the staff within the Western Bulldogs, this being engaging with the staff, the players, the coaching team, their membership and the broader community.

## OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

The Western Bulldogs have a strong and unwavering commitment to supporting reconciliation for First Nations people and all Australians.

Our vision for reconciliation is to build a culture of equality, respect and recognition of the cultures, histories and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, and to stand as a beacon to the community around us. This includes creating an inclusive and diverse workplace, where shared history is acknowledged, negative stereotypes are removed, and the road forward is clear, using our unique reach and influence to light the way to a better and brighter future for all Australians.

Possessing a strong societal voice, we will use our influence in sport to educate our members and fans, staff, players, partners and other stakeholders about First Nations cultures, to create an environment of inclusiveness and harmony for all Australians.

We strive to be a national leader on the road to reconciliation, a strong advocate for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander matters of national significance, and a Club which celebrates the achievements of First Nations people.

The Bulldogs' second Innovate RAP will focus on community engagement and connection, relationships, and education for internal and external stakeholders.

We will continue to seek knowledge from other organisations who have faced challenges in areas of cultural respect, harmony and understanding, and continue to assess our current practices, to ensure we remain a leader in this space.

The Western Bulldogs are as committed as ever to pursue our vision for reconciliation, and we are deeply dedicated to continuing our work long into the future.



## OUR BUSINESS

As far back as the 1870s, football has been the beating heart of Footscray, and its football club, the Western Bulldogs, have been synonymous with the land west of the Maribyrnong River, from its days as an industrial borough to the increasingly gentrified streets we see today.

We are represented by four elite men's and women's football teams, participating in the AFL, VFL, AFLW and VFLW competitions. The Bulldogs have won two AFL premierships (1954 and 2016), one AFLW premiership (2018) and two VFL premierships (2014 and 2016).

However, the Western Bulldogs are more than a football club to the people in and of our community. We have a long and proud history as the community club of the AFL, including delivering innovative and engaging programs through our Community Foundation, that provide real outcomes for the people living and working in our backyard and broader regions.

We are located at Whitten Oval in West Footscray, and also have a presence with an office in Ballarat. Our home base is currently undergoing a multi-million-dollar redevelopment, which will enhance opportunities for the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation to provide First Nations and cultural programs, and for the Club to honour the Traditional Owners of the land and their connection to Country as the updated facility comes to life.

The Club employs 213 people, including four staff members, three AFL players, one AFLW player, five VFL players, four VFLW players and one board member who identify as First Nations people. Historically the Club have not collected identification information from our members and fans, however we are in the process of adding a question into all of our membership and engagement forms to begin understanding the First Nations representation within our Club community.

Our geographical reach extends throughout Victoria, particularly through the west of Melbourne and the western corridor to the South Australia border. That reach extends across the country through our members, fans and supporter groups in different states.

Through participation in the AFL and AFLW competitions, and the work of our community foundation, our sphere of influence is truly national. The Club's presence through its digital platforms elevates this reach even further, and is a crucial communication tool for the Club as it aims to enhance its education of First Nations peoples, cultures and histories.





## OUR RAP

The Western Bulldogs' second Reconciliation Action Plan aims to formalise the Club's role in celebrating First Nations people, while promoting reconciliation and a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, cultures and histories.

The RAP is championed by the Club's board and executive team, led by our CEO, Ameet Bains and the General Manager, People & Culture, Sophie Porra, who are supported by the RAP Working Group.

Our current First Nations players, across AFL and AFLW, play an important advisory role in the development and implementation of our RAP and associated actions, meeting regularly with our Indigenous Programs Manager and RAP Working Group.

A RAP Working Group was established in 2017, and continues to play a pivotal role in driving action within the Club and externally, by delivering on the Club's formal actions within the document.

Each of our First Nations employees have joined the RAP Working Group, and the Club aspires to have additional player representation from our four football programs in the coming two years.

The Club would like to acknowledge the work of its RAP Working Group for taking a lead role in actioning the items within the document, and all external individuals and organisations who have assisted the Club through its journey so far.



## OUR RAP CONT

### **The Bulldogs' RAP Working Group consists of the following individuals:**

- Sally Zacharewicz (Chair) – People & Culture Manager
- Lachy Edwards – Indigenous Programs Manager
- Zoe Anderson – Education & New Business Manager
- Adrian Ceddia – Head of Communications & Digital
- Rhys Contessa – Membership Services & Engagement Manager
- Danielle Gower – Indigenous Youth Programs Coordinator
- Chris Grant – Executive Director of Football
- Dave Newton – Football Operations and Talent Pathway Manager
- Geoff Morgan – Head of Finance & IT
- Kate Morcom – Head of Merchandise & Licensing
- Marayne Muller – Community Member
- Sophie Porra – General Manager People & Culture
- Travis Varcoe – AFL Development Coach
- Linda Peachey – Group Relationships & Premium Memberships Manager

The RAP Working Group is ably supported and guided by Club Board Director and proud Wotjobaluk / Dja Dja Wurrung woman, Belinda Duarte.

### **In addition, over the next two years the Club has plans to establish a First Nations Advisory Committee, to provide guidance and strategic advice to the Club in a variety of areas, including:**

- Governance & Policies
- Procurement
- Employment pathways and opportunities
- Projects, such as the redevelopment of the VU Whitten Oval precinct
- Understanding and acknowledging the Club's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander history
- Promoting awareness and understanding
- Other relevant matters



## OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Since beginning its journey of reconciliation in 2018, the Western Bulldogs are proud to have created a positive impact both within the organisation and in the broader community.

### Our achievements to date include:

- Former Club President Peter Gordon and CEO Ameet Bains hosting a reconciliation event at a home VFL match for National Reconciliation Week in 2018, at the start of the Club's RAP journey.
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags erected at front of the Whitten Oval facility.
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags flown from the room at Marvel Stadium for AFL home games.
- An Acknowledgement of Country plaque placed in the foyer of Whitten Oval.
- Education of all Western Bulldogs staff and players, including:
  - o Cultural awareness training delivered by Leon Egan with a focus on First Nations history and enduring culture.
  - o Private Screenings of Adam Goodes documentaries 'The Australian Dream' and 'The Final Quarter'.
  - o Overnight Cultural Immersion Experience organised by proud Larrakia / Tiwi woman Tarina Fanning for the RAP Working Group on Wadawurrung Country including a smoking ceremony, education session, dance performance, boomerang throwing, First Nations music performance, bush tracking, basket weaving, "Koori Art Trail" Lake Walk and Aboriginal artwork session.
  - o NAIDOC Week workshop with Rob Hyatt from the Koori Heritage Trust.
  - o Cultural Immersion Workshop with Kutcha Edwards including teaching through song on his omnicond.
  - o Aboriginal art class led by Kylie Clarke.
  - o Marngrook making session led by Wolithiga women, Bernadette & Isabella Atkinson.
  - o Traditional Aboriginal Games run by TAG.
  - o Intercultural reflection workshops for our staff and Club Board facilitated by proud Arrernte woman, Kath Travis and Greg Thorpe at the Koori Heritage Trust, Melbourne.
- The continued operation and expansion of the Nallei Jerring Koori Youth Leadership program.
- The continued operation of the Club's Next Generation Academy, with a focus on cultivating First Nations football talent – culminating in the recruitment of 2020 NAB AFL Draft number one selection, Jamarra Ugle-Hagan.
- Online education sessions provided for the community through the Play-On Webinar series during the COVID lockdown.
- Acknowledgement of Country conducted at the start of larger Western Bulldogs staff meetings and added to staff member email signatures.
- Smoking Ceremony and education regarding Welcome to Country ceremonies.
- Employment of an Indigenous Programs Manager.
- Engagement with other organisations which have a Reconciliation Action Plan (including other AFL and sporting clubs, NAB and ASICS).
- A Club-issued statement regarding the treatment of Adam Goodes following the release of 'The Final Quarter' documentary.



## OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

- A member of the Club's RAP Working Group discovering her own Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- Internal best practice guidelines created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.
- The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation launched a Statement of Commitment to Inclusion in November 2020.
- The addition of more than 15 new First Nations business into the Club's procurement chain.
- Proceeds from the sale of AFL and AFLW Indigenous Round guernseys donated back into First Nations programming.
- The entire AFL playing squad and staff attending a cultural pre-season camp in South-East Victoria in 2022.
- Continued advocacy via the Club's social media channels regarding issues of national significance including January 26 and instances of racism within our industry.

The successful completion of the Club's inaugural Innovate RAP was not without its challenges. Engaging with relevant stakeholders across our vast region was difficult, particularly once our first Indigenous Programs Manager, Brett Goodes, departed the Club at the halfway point of our two-year RAP. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Club being without this position for two years and presented its own challenges in the latter stages of the first RAP period.

The First Nations representation on our RAP Working Group whilst initially poor, was improved as we progressed through the inaugural RAP with the onboarding of additional First Nations employees and players as part of the Club's evolution and journey in the reconciliation space.

Our home of Whitten Oval sits on the traditional lands of both the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people with the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries intersecting through our facility. This has presented both challenges and opportunities for our Club when acknowledging, paying respect and engaging with First Nations communities.

**Post the completion of the Club's first RAP we identified a number of different learnings which present new opportunities as we embark on the second iteration of our Innovate RAP particularly within the following key areas that are now represented in our action items outlined later in the document:**

- Truth Telling / History
- Ongoing Education
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Procurement
- Employment / Opportunities
- Processes

Following the success of our first RAP, we intend to continue building on the contribution we have made to reconciliation in Australia.

## 2023 FIRST NATIONS GUERNSEY

In mid 2023, the Western Bulldogs revealed their 2023 Indigenous guernsey, designed by proud Kerrup-Mara Gunditjmara and Yorta Yorta man Jason Walker.

For the first time in Club history, all four teams (AFL, AFLW, VFL and VFLW) will wear the design in respective rounds.

The design represents Murring (country) on Gunditjmara, where the Bulldogs are affiliated with in south-west Victoria, and is inspired by the Lake Condah Possum Skin Cloak.

The etching designs on the cloak represent the Bulldogs' staff, players and supporters connection to country and journey throughout life.

The front of the guernsey features an eel (kooyang) intertwined throughout the red, white and blue hoops, which represents many things for Gunditjmara people, including resilience, and is an important resource for food and trade.

The kooyang's inclusion in the design also acknowledges the West-Vic Eels Aboriginal Football Club, where many Aboriginal and Gunditjmara families – including Jamarra Ugle-Hagan – have played in state-wide Aboriginal Football Carnivals.



# INDIGENOUS GUERNSEY TIMELINE

## 2014/15

**Anzack Newman**

Cairns based artist, friend of Liam Jones



## 2016

**Pitcha Makin Fellas**

Group of artists from Ballarat



## 2017

**Kylie Clarke**

Gunditjmara Wotjobaluk & Ngarrindjeri woman



## 2018

**Cooper Craig Peters**

Yorta Yorta, Wadi Wadi, Ngurai Illum Wurrung, Dja DjaWurrung and Yara Yara man



## 2019/20

**Nathan Patterson**

Wagiman man



## 2021/22

**Nathan Patterson**

Wagiman man



## 2021

AFLW S5

**Ky-ya Nicholson-Ward, Wurundjeri & Dja Dja Wurrung woman**

Club's Inaugural Indigenous AFLW Guernsey



## 2022

AFLW S6

**Rubii Red, Lama Lama women**

Designed in collaboration with Nallei Jerring program participants



## 2022

AFLW S7

**Kirby Bentley, Noongar woman**

Designed with the AFLW players in mind about connection, support and empowerment



2022 - Arthur Jones & Jamarra Ugle-Hagen at the First Nations cultural immersion experience with our Men's Football Program on Gunditjimara Country in the Warrnambool area.



2023 - Cody Weightman wearing the First Nations Warm Up top designed by Djab Wurrung & Gunditjamara artist, Tarni Jarvis, also worn in 2023 by our AFLW team.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES PHOTO GALLERY

Throughout the Western Bulldogs' inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan, the Club has demonstrated its commitment to First Nations Australia by celebrating important milestones, connecting with Country, educating staff, players and fans, and leading in the advocacy space.

The Club has enhanced its recognition of First Nations people in the public sphere, using storytelling and physical activities to promote reconciliation and build stronger links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Early in 2022, the entire AFL playing list embarked on a First Nations cultural immersion experience on Gunditjimara Country in the Warrnambool area – the first of its kind for the Club. This included a visit to Framlingham Mission, the home of Jamarra Ugle-Hagan.

The Club has also facilitated a multitude of public events, workshops and programs which have created a deeper connection with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.



2022 - Nallei Jerring Koori Youth Program Graduates



2022 - Ryan Gardner and Tom Liberatore with their boots painted by proud Oreg - Nyaki-Nyaki, Wadjak - Balardog woman, Kirby Bentley for 2022 Sir Doug Nicholls Round.



2022 - Aboriginal Womens Dance Group, Djirri Djirri, perform at the Season 7 AFLW Best & Fairest.



2021 - Bailey Williams supporting the Free the Flag campaign.



## RELATIONSHIPS

The Club's second Innovate RAP is a continuation of our ongoing commitment to maintaining and building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our community.

Developing strong, enduring and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a key defining factor to the success of our Reconciliation Action Plan, and its commitment to influencing meaningful change in our community. Our aim is to build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, acknowledging the strengths of First Nations peoples through collaborating and sharing stories, knowledge, skills and expertise.

The Club not only strives to develop deeper existing relationships, but to foster new connections which will strengthen learning and understanding, and ultimately create a stronger platform for the Club to influence community sentiment and move closer to reconciliation. The national brand and profile of our sport provides us with an opportunity to engage and positively influence outcomes with First Nations people and provides us with a platform to influence community views and opinions regarding issues such as racism, respect and reconciliation.



## RELATIONSHIPS



### ACTION

#### 1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	March 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Formalise, update and evaluate existing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Stakeholder & Organisation Engagement Plan	April 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Meet twice annually with key local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner groups, co-ops and other organisations	March 2024 & 2025; November 2023 & 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Reconnect with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Past Players and create an additional opportunity annually for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Past Players to come together outside of Sir Doug Nichols Round.	July 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Arrange two functions per year that bring together our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and players together.	July 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager

### ACTION

#### 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024 & 2025	Education & New Business Manager
RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2024 & 2025	Executive Director of Football
Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager

### ACTION

#### 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Formalise, document and evaluate a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	October 2024	General Manager People & Culture
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	January 2024 & 2025	Head of Communications
Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	December 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	January 2025	General Manager People & Culture
Assist at least two partner organisations to commence their RAP journeys by sharing the process undertaken and our learnings from our inaugural RAP	June 2025	Education & New Business Manager
Develop a Stakeholder Matrix across the Club to ensure that we identify key First Nations stakeholders within our community to ensure we are including representation in any key Club events and celebrations	December 2023	Indigenous Programs Manager

## RELATIONSHIPS



### ACTION

#### 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	January 2024	People & Culture Manager
Roll out a new public Anti-Racism & Discrimination campaign	September 2025	General Manager People & Culture
Review and update our Workplace Bullying, Discrimination & Harassment Policy in line with new Anti-Racism & Discrimination campaign.	February 2024	General Manager People & Culture
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	December 2024	Group Relationships & Premium Memberships Manager
Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	March 2024	General Manager People & Culture
Champion Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander causes and campaigns publicly during AFL and AFLW Indigenous Rounds to demonstrate our commitment to standing alongside our First Nations people and combatting racism and discrimination	June 2024 & 2025; September 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Establish a whistleblower service for external instances of racism and communicate to our members and fans	December 2023	General Manager People & Culture
Formulate a Social Advocacy Strategy that includes a process for internal stakeholders dealing with public instances of racism and discrimination relating to our Club and our wider industry	January 2024	General Manager People & Culture
Review and update the Club's Code of Conduct for members and fans	April 2024 & 2025	General Manager People & Culture
At the commencement of each AFL and AFLW Season, provide Code of Conduct to members and fans via EDM and/or via social media channels	June 2024 & 2025; September 2024 & 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Monitor social media channels to ensure that instances of racism and discrimination are deleted and reoccurring offenders blocked from Club's formal social media channels	March 2024	Head of Communications & Digital

### ACTION

#### 5. Support the campaign to Change the Date.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Publicly support the campaign to change the date via our Social Media channels.	January 2024 & 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Educate our staff & players regarding the Change the Date campaign	January 2024 & 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Continue to provide staff the option to not recognise 26 January as a public holiday and reposition the day off to an alternate day.	January 2024 & 2025	General Manager People
Encourage RAP Working Group & other Club representatives to attend the Invasion Day March	January 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager

### ACTION

#### 6. Seek to strengthen relationships with the local First Nations community during the period of redevelopment.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Engage a First Nations business to provide consultation during the redevelopment of our facility.	June 2024	People & Culture Manager
Consult Traditional Owner groups regarding the design of the Club's redevelopment.	June 2024	People & Culture Manager
Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people regarding the design of the Club's redevelopment	June 2024	People & Culture Manager



## RESPECT

The Respect pillar acknowledges the importance of truth-telling and seeks to further embed a knowledge, appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within the Club.

The Western Bulldogs respect and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' deep-seated, spiritual connection to their land. We understand the important role we play in increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

The Club continues to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by observing frequent cultural protocols in its working rhythms, and will continue an education focus for its staff, members and fans to enhance an appreciation for the history and achievements of First Nations people.





**ACTION**

**7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	February 2025	People & Culture Manager
Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	June 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Formalise, document & evaluate our cultural learning calendar and circulate to our staff.	February 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager
Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	February 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager
Provide compulsory Cultural Awareness training to all new employees at the Club within their first month of employment.	December 2023	People & Culture Manager
Include an in-depth introduction to the RAP including a yarning opportunity for all new staff within their first three months.	February 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Rediscover, acknowledge and educate our staff and our fans regarding both the Club's past and that of the western region of Victoria	December 2024	People & Culture Manager
Share and promote the Deadly & Proud stories compiled by the Victorian State Government on the path to treaty.	November 2024	Head of Communications & Digital
Provide cultural immersion and cultural education opportunities for our AFL and AFLW Players each season.	July 2024 & 2025; January 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Organise for our Club Board and Executive to undertake a cultural immersion experience or cultural education every two years.	November 2025	General Manager People & Culture

**ACTION**

**8. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2024	Group Relationships & Premium Memberships Manager
Formalise and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	April 2024	General Manager People & Culture
Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	February 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country to our men's and women's playing group at the commencement of each season.	January 2024 & 2025; July 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	December 2023	People & Culture Manager
Continue to encourage all staff to complete their own respectful and individualised Acknowledgement of Country at our weekly Staff Meetings.	May 2024	People & Culture Manager
Create a calendar of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander significant dates and ensure each is recognised through the education of staff or events	January 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager



**ACTION**

**9. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	August 2024	People & Culture Manager
Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager
Celebrate NAIDOC Week annually by hosting either an internal or external event	First week in July 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
RAP Working Group & other representatives to take part in the NAIDOC March	First week in July 2024 & 2025	People & Culture Manager

**ACTION**

**10. Create a culturally safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players and communities**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Incorporate Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander art, history, and storytelling into the redevelopment of the Club's facility	February 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Include a Yarning Circle / Cultural space both inside and outside of the facility	February 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Incorporate an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander historical timeline of the western region within the facility	February 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Celebrate the contribution of past Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Players within the precinct	February 2025	Head of Communications & Digital
Include the use of local materials and native flora in the redevelopment of the facility as guided by the Traditional Owner groups.	February 2025	General Manager People & Culture



## OPPORTUNITIES

The Western Bulldogs continue to make great strides in creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be more directly involved with our organisation, whether through direct employment and vocational placements, or engaging with First Nations businesses across a wide range of Club projects, events and match-days. We will continue to evolve our business to ensure current and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff feel valued and supported, and are encouraged to contribute across our wide sphere of influence.

The Club aims to increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce, and to review and update its procurement practices to encourage the involvement of further Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to ensure that we are assisting our First Nations people in reaffirming their identity and accomplishing their aspirations.

Building on the foundational work of our inaugural RAP, our focus is to strengthen, implement and embed policies, processes and programs that further support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## OPPORTUNITIES



### ACTION

#### 11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	January 2024	Indigenous Programs Manager
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	July 2024	People & Culture Manager
Review and formalise our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	January 2025	People & Culture Manager
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2024	People & Culture Manager
Work closely with VU's Moondani Balluk Indigenous Academic Unit to promote employment and Vocational Placement opportunities	November 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Partner with AFL SportsReady to provide a 12-month First Nations Internship	June 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Review recruitment practices and ensure that employment opportunities are being advertised and promoted to target Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities	February 2024	People & Culture Manager
Continued appointment of a First Nations Board member or observer on the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation Board.	January 2024 & 2025	General Manager People & Culture
Continued employment of a First Nations Coordinator role within the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation	February 2024 & 2025	General Manager People & Culture
Continued First Nations representation on the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation Strategic Advisory Committee	January 2024 & 2025	Indigenous Youth Programs Coordinator
Investigate a First Nations Ambassador for the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation	June 2024	Indigenous Youth Programs Coordinator

### ACTION

#### 12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	February 2025	Head of Merchandise & Licensing
Meet with Supply Nation to investigate membership opportunities.	October 2025	Head of Merchandise & Licensing
Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	May 2025	Head of Merchandise & Licensing
Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2025	People & Culture Manager
Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	January 2025	Head of Merchandise & Licensing

## OPPORTUNITIES



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Add an additional 5-10 Indigenous owned businesses into the Club's procurement pipelines	February 2025	Executive Director of Football
Provide two opportunities per year for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individual to MC Club Events	October 2024 & October 2025	Head of Merchandise & Licensing

### ACTION

#### 13. Improve processes around the commissioning of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artwork and design.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Create a procedure for engaging Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artists including provision of credit.	June 2024	Head of Merchandise & Licensing
Create a tender process for the design of the AFL/AFLW Indigenous Round guernsey and associated products each year.	January 2024	Head of Merchandise & Licensing

### ACTION

#### 14. Develop a 3-5 year First Nations Strategy that outlines the key focus areas for the Club which compliments and advances the work outlined in the Club's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Consult with Traditional Owner Groups to establish the needs of our First Nations local community to assist with ascertaining key focus areas of the First Nations Strategy.	March 2025	Indigenous Programs Manager
Draft and launch First Nations 3-5 year Strategy document.	October 2025	General Manager People & Culture



**ACTION**

**15. Establish a First Nations Advisory Committee to provide support, feedback and guidance for key Club initiatives.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Develop an Expression of Interest to be circulated to our local First Nations community.	September, 2024	People & Culture Manager
Finalise members of the First Nations Advisory Committee.	February 2025	People & Culture Manager
Develop Terms of Reference and scope of the First Nations Advisory Committee.	March 2025	People & Culture Manager
First Nations Advisory Committee to meet quarterly.	April 2025	People & Culture Manager

**ACTION**

**16. Maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2023 & 2024	People & Culture Manager
Review and update the Terms of Reference for the RWG.	August 2023	People & Culture Manager
Meet every 2 months to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, April, June, August, October, December 2023; 2024; 2025	People & Culture Manager

**ACTION**

**17. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	August 2023	People & Culture Manager
Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2023	Indigenous Programs Manager
Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August 2023	People & Culture Manager
Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	August 2023	People & Culture Manager



**ACTION**

**18. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
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.	June annually	People & Culture Manager
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	People & Culture Manager
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	People & Culture Manager
Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	January, April, July, October 2023; 2024; 2025	People & Culture Manager
Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	July 2024; 2025	People & Culture Manager
Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	People & Culture Manager
Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	July 2025	People & Culture Manager

**ACTION**

**19. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.**

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibilities
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	October 2023	General Manager People & Culture



**For more information contact:**

Sally Zacharewicz

Position: People & Culture Manager & RAP Chair

Phone: 0402 672 984

Email: [sally.zacharewicz@westernbulldogs.com.au](mailto:sally.zacharewicz@westernbulldogs.com.au)