



# Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–20



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions







Reconciliation Australia congratulates the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on its past successes and continued commitment to reconciliation as it implements its second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

I am delighted to see the department continue its reconciliation journey, which started in 2013. Since that time, the RAP program has grown to over 1,000 organisations across Australia, all working to build respectful relationships and create opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The department is responsible for lands and waters that run over many Traditional Lands of Aboriginal groups in Western Australia and has significant influence over Country, which underpins identity, spirituality and home for Aboriginal peoples. Its reconciliation actions impact people in communities from Kununurra to

Esperance, and many regions in between with a high proportion of Aboriginal residents.

The department's leadership in reconciliation action has the capacity for high impact in local communities, particularly in relation to fostering cultural knowledge, generating employment and harnessing respect to increase the knowledge of Aboriginal cultural heritage amongst the wider community.

I am particularly pleased to see that institutional integrity, a key dimension of reconciliation, is at the heart of the department's vision for reconciliation. Seeking Aboriginal input for the development and review of relevant departmental policies is a great step forward. The department is sure to achieve positive outcomes from this approach and is setting a good example for other government organisations to follow.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the department on its commitment to driving reconciliation in Australia, and look forward to following its continued achievements.

Karen Mundine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



Managing and conserving Western Australia's biodiversity, cultural and natural values requires the support, understanding and collaboration of the whole community.

Engaging collaboratively and effectively with Aboriginal people is essential in achieving this aim. The department has a long history of partnerships with Traditional Owners and has many successful and ongoing partnerships in place for joint management.

We are committed to further strengthening these ties by creating more joint management arrangements where possible in the future, increasing representation of Aboriginal people in our workforce and through the establishment of the new Aboriginal Ranger Program.

This new State Government initiative along with other existing department programs acknowledges the unique role and expertise Aboriginal people have as traditional custodians of the lands and waters and recognises the valuable contribution they make to the conservation of biodiversity.

By continuing to foster strong working partnerships with Aboriginal people we can not only help protect, promote and conserve their culture and heritage, we can also provide opportunities for cultural tourism generating employment, social and economic benefits.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is one of several strategies the department has in place to achieve these positive outcomes. It focuses on key initiatives such as Acknowledgement of Country, working collaboratively and fostering new working partnerships with Aboriginal people, recognising the value Aboriginal people make to the department through their cultural knowledge, networks and skills and creating opportunities for employment and fee for service for Aboriginal people and groups.

We are committed to building on the existing strong foundations we already have with Aboriginal people and the effective implementation of the outcomes in this Reconciliation Action Plan will help achieve this.

Mark Webb PSM  
Director General  
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



## *A message from the co-chairs of the Reconciliation Action Plan Committee*

This Action Plan has been developed to recognise the importance of Reconciliation for Aboriginal people and other Australians and the role the department plays in helping facilitate reconciliation. Aboriginal people are the custodians of the land and waters managed by the department. We strongly support them in maintaining their culture and heritage and are committed to working with Aboriginal people to care for country.

The department has a strong commitment to strengthening relationships, respect and trust with the Aboriginal community and the actions and targets set out below have been developed to help achieve these goals. We encourage all staff to read this plan and adopt all relevant actions into their everyday activities and roles.

Peter Sharp  
Executive Director  
Parks and Visitor Services

Dr Stephen van Leeuwen  
Assistant Director  
Biodiversity and Conservation Science





## *Our vision for reconciliation*

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) is committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are extended the same opportunities as all other Australians.

The department's vision for reconciliation is for all Australians to value and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as part of a proud, shared identity. The department is committed to sharing knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to ensure an understanding and appreciation by all Australians; this is only possible through mutually respectful working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses and communities.

The department has been entrusted with the care of Western Australia's most precious natural assets and the conservation focus is to ensure those lands, waters and the species and communities they support are actively managed and protected. In achieving this, the department respects and recognises the valuable and significant contribution made by Aboriginal people through their connection with and responsibility for land, water and heritage.

The department's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an overarching strategy that underpins the department's approach and commitment to improving the livelihood and maintaining the cultural integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the land and waters it manages.

## *Our business*

DBCA was formed on 1 July 2017 following the State Government's decision to bring together the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA), Rottnest Island Authority (RIA), Zoological Parks Authority (ZPA) and the former Department of Parks and Wildlife. This RAP applies to the entire department however, BGPA, RIA and ZPA will continue to operate under their own RAPs. DBCA's mission is to manage Western Australia's parks, forests and reserves to conserve wildlife, provide sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities, protect communities and assets from bushfire and achieve other land, forest and wildlife management objectives.

The department operates from nine regions and 15 district centres spanning from Kununurra to Esperance. The department's staff include permanent full-time and part-time employees, contractors, casual and seasonal workers, and trainees. Of this workforce, 5.49 per cent of staff directly employed by the department identify as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander.





## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The State Government made significant amendments in 2011 to the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) (<https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks/aboriginal-involvement>) relating to the involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of lands and waters vested with the Conservation and Parks Commission and managed by the department. These amendments recognise Aboriginal connection to lands and waters, and will enable Aboriginal people to become more involved in managing Country and using parks and reserves for customary activities. These changes support the department's desire to build strong enduring relationships with Aboriginal people.

The department is committed to the national reconciliation effort of building better relationships between Aboriginal people and the wider community, for the benefit of all Australians. The RAP is just one strategy to assist in achieving these outcomes.

Since 2013, the department's reconciliation actions have been guided by a formal RAP, which delivered the following outcomes:

### Our Reconciliation Journey:

Over 1,100 staff have completed the mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Program.

The majority of department buildings and properties throughout the State have an Acknowledgement of Country plaque displayed.

The department has significantly increased its engagement with Aboriginal service providers through fee-for-service contracts.

Through joint management we are working in partnership with 30 Ranger groups.

Twenty-one internal departmental RAP Champions throughout the State assist with the implementation of RAP outcomes.

Increased staff participation in NAIDOC and Reconciliation events.

There is greater representation of Aboriginal content across the range of department's publications.

More Aboriginal staff directly employed than previously recorded.

Increased Aboriginal involvement in science programs.





This RAP was developed through consultation and cooperation with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff members from various divisions and levels of management across the department. A committee comprising of representatives from the department's divisions directed the development of the RAP, and will guide the implementation and monitoring of progress. Members include senior Aboriginal staff Rhonda Murphy (Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement; Parks and Visitor Services), Stephen van Leeuwen (Assistant Director, Science; Biodiversity and Conservation Science) as well as Peter Sharp (Executive Director, Parks and Visitor Services), Kathryn Wilkinson (Workforce Development Consultant; People Services) and Peter Dans (Deputy Director General; Parks and Wildlife Service) Lauren Cabrera (Project Officer Editorial) and Tina Bowers (Project Officer Aboriginal Heritage Unit) provided executive support.

This RAP sets out how the department will strengthen its relationships with Aboriginal people. The 2018–20 RAP details the specific actions, targets, responsibilities and implementation timelines required to fulfil the plan by 2020.







## *Relationships*

DBCA acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters it manages. The department also recognises the unique role and expertise Aboriginal people have as Traditional Owners, respects the longstanding aspirations of Aboriginal people to be involved in the management of Country and threats to biodiversity, and to carry out traditional activities on Country.

The department's second management objective is to 'manage the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people'. This is a statutory obligation which the department follows to support cultural obligations as per part 56(2a) of the CALM Act.

Through the promotion of reconciliation the department will build and strengthen relationships through respectful and active engagement with Aboriginal people.

The department will develop, build, maintain and strengthen its relationships and partnerships with the community and business partners. It is a strategic priority to work with Aboriginal people ensuring connection to Country, heritage protection and customary use.





Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation</b>	Oversee the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.	June 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Ensure there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and senior management on the RWG.		
	Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG.		
	Meet quarterly to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	June / September / December / March Annually	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Appoint an internal RAP Champion from senior management (Corporate Executive).	June 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Establish RAP champions in each division/region to support the implementation of the RAP.	December 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
<b>2. Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) to strengthen and maintain relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</b>	Organise at least one internal NRW event per region/division each year.	27 May – 3 June Annually	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement Project Officer – Aboriginal Programs
	Register the department's NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.		
	Provide information on external events to recognise and celebrate NRW and encourage staff and senior leaders participation.		
	Support an external NRW event that could include in-kind support and/or partnering with community organisations.		
<b>3. Maintain and leverage mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes</b>	Implement and review the Cultural Learning Program's engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	June 2019	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Through joint management, local area arrangements and obligations under the CALM Act the department will meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2020	Senior Planning Officer – Divisional Executive Group
	Maintain Aboriginal representation on the Conservation and Parks Commission and the Swan River Trust Board.		Executive Director Conservation and Parks Commission Deputy Director General
	Commit to establishing six formal two-way partnerships to build capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and/or communities relevant to the department's sphere of influence.		Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
<b>4. Raise internal and external awareness of the RAP to promote reconciliation across the organisation</b>	Implement and review the RAP champions roles and responsibilities document to ensure effective communication of the RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	December 2018	Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services
	Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.	June 2020	Deputy Director General Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science
	Senior leaders are engaged in the delivery of RAP targets.		Corporate Executive
	Support Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation WA.		
<b>5. The 2012 amendments to the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 are implemented</b>	Information on the legislation to Aboriginal partners and departmental staff continues to be rolled out.	June 2020	Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services
	Departmental policies and guidelines relating to customary activities and joint management are implemented to assist in facilitating local area arrangements and initiatives to manage parks and reserves in partnership with Aboriginal people.		
	Management planning processes and guidelines are revised to incorporate the new management planning objective of 'protecting and conserving the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people'.	December 2019	Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services Senior Planning Officer – Divisional Executive Group



Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
6. The customary rights of Aboriginal people and the value of cultural heritage are promoted as core departmental business	Information packages/sessions are developed for departmental staff working on Aboriginal heritage and native title matters.	June 2020	Senior Planning Officer – Divisional Executive Group Programs Coordinator Aboriginal Heritage Unit
	A policy is developed outlining the guiding principles for consultation, identification and management of cultural heritage sites and values on departmental-managed land.	June 2020	Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services Senior Policy and Planning Officer – Divisional Executive Group Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services
7. Aboriginal input is sought for the development and review of relevant departmental policies	Undertake consultation as required to ensure Aboriginal perspectives are incorporated into all relevant policies as they are developed and reviewed.	June 2020	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Director General Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
8. Develop an Aboriginal Science Program and apply for grants	Aboriginal ranger teams to undertake research and monitoring activities on Country that align with departmental priorities.	December 2019	Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science Assistant Director, Biodiversity and Conservation Science Executive Director Conservation and Ecosystem Management
	Work collaboratively with Representative Body, Prescribed Body Corporates, ranger teams and other research providers to co-design research and monitoring projects that are culturally appropriate, mitigate threats and ensure persistence of biodiversity on Country.	December 2019	
	Co-design research and data-sharing agreements with Traditional Owners and their Prescribed Body Corporate or Representative Body, to enable research to occur on Country. This research needs to be culturally appropriate, acknowledge and enable Traditional Bio-cultural Knowledge and the intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners.	June 2020	







## Respect

Through the department's strategic priorities, we will build and maintain respect by working in partnership with Aboriginal people to conserve and protect culture and heritage; and increasing awareness of the cultural diversity and history of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	Implement and review the cultural awareness training strategy which defines continuous cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersion).	December 2018	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Executive Director
	100 per cent of staff undertake the mandatory face-to-face Aboriginal cultural awareness training.	June 2020	Parks and Visitor Services Manager Employee Relations and Safety
	Provide opportunities for all staff to undertake cultural immersion learning activities.		
	All RWG members undertake mandatory cultural awareness training and participate in one cultural immersion activity yearly.		
	All senior executive, board and commission members undertake cultural learning activities through face-to-face cultural awareness training and practical cultural immersion activities.		
	Participation in the mandatory cultural awareness is embedded in all staff performance and development plans.	Annually	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services Manager Employee Relations and Safety
	Promote an understanding of Aboriginal culture through interpretive material and cultural tourism.	June 2019	Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services
	Develop a procedure to support the aspirations of Aboriginal people in naming of the department's areas, features and assets; ensuring cultural protocols are followed with Traditional Owners who have authority to do so and that the name suggested is appropriate.		Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science Nomenclature committee
	Protocols for the selection and use of Aboriginal images in departmental material are developed.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Ensure the use of images on department websites and in corporate publications reflect the diversity of Aboriginal language groups in Western Australia.		Business Services Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Ensure RAP achievements are promoted at departmental and external events.		Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Identify cultural learning requirements and training needs specific to roles and positions.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Promote the Reconciliation Australia's 'Share Our Pride' online tool to all staff.		Project Officer – Aboriginal Programs



Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way the organisation functions</b>	Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country on appropriate occasions including departmental openings, launches, significant events and/or conferences.	June 2020	Deputy Director General
	All staff and senior leadership to provide an Acknowledgement of Country at all public events.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
	Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important internal meetings and departmental meetings with external stakeholders.		Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science
	Maintain and review a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country.	December 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Create and display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in or on DBCA office buildings and properties where appropriate.	June 2019	
	Maintain a database on Welcome to Countries performed around the department.	December 2018	Project Officer – Aboriginal Programs
<b>3. Celebrate NAIDOC Week and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage in cultural and community activities during NAIDOC Week</b>	Review human resources policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	December 2018	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
	Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.	First week of July Annually	Deputy Director General
	Support all staff who wish to participate in NAIDOC Week events in the local community.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
	Hold an internal or public NAIDOC Week event.		Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science
	Monitor the broadcasting of NAIDOC events and staff participation.		Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Senior staff to provide leadership to acknowledge NAIDOC Week and its importance.		Deputy Director General
	Support an external NAIDOC Week community event.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
			Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science
			Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement





## Opportunities

The department recognises the valuable contribution that Aboriginal people make to the department through their cultural knowledge, networks and skills. The department will work towards increasing Aboriginal representation in the department's workforce.

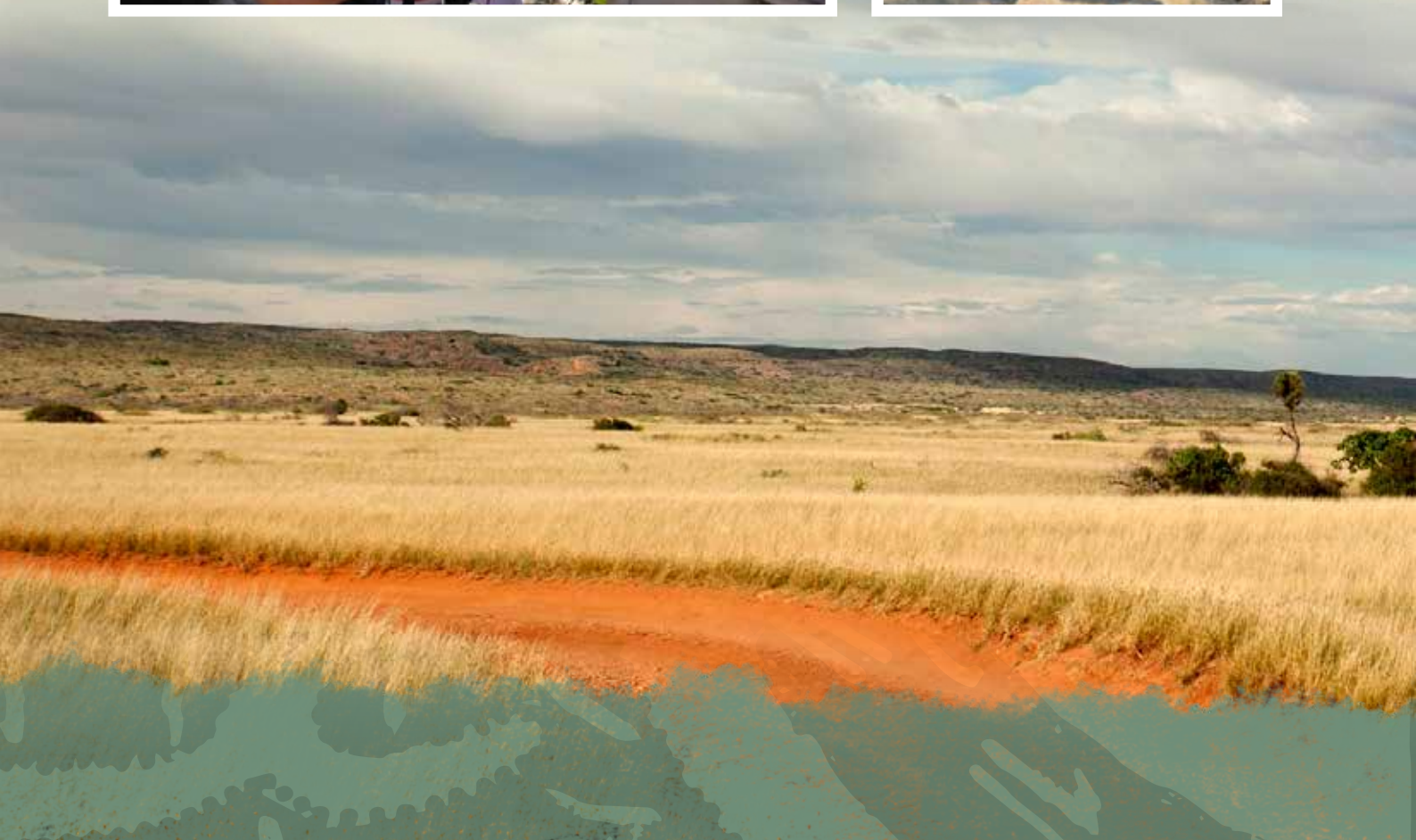
The department is committed to providing economic development participation opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Increased Aboriginal employment is a strategic priority for the department. This will improve the potential for Aboriginal people to participate in the State's economy.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Through recruitment and retention, increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all levels, roles and locations	Implement, review and update the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which includes retention and professional development initiatives.	June 2018	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
	Achieve Aboriginal Employment Strategy target of 6 per cent by increasing Aboriginal employment from 71 staff as of January 2018 to a minimum of 83 by June 2019.	June 2019	
	Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on employment strategies, including professional development.	June 2019	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Explore opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary students through either cadetship and/or scholarship programs.	June 2020	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services
	Continue to advertise all job vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.		Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
2. Increase development and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Managers and supervisors to actively identify and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to fill future vacancies, through career development, training and acting opportunities.	June 2020	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Deputy Director General Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science
	Identify and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in the department's leadership and scholarship programs.		Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Manager Employee Relations and Safety
	Develop a strategy to mentor new Aboriginal employees including a focus on youth.		
	Develop a strategy to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander staff in management and senior executive roles from 1.33 per cent in 2016 to 3 per cent by 2020.		
3. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	Implement the State government's Aboriginal procurement strategy.	December 2018	Executive Director Corporate and Business Services Manager Strategy and Reform
	Set procurement targets for goods, services, community services and works from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	1 per cent from July 2018–2019 2 per cent from July 2019–2020 3 per cent from July 2020–2021	
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses through goods, services, licenses, leases and fee for service.	June Annually	
	Both the Aboriginal Business Directory WA and Supply Nation websites will be used to search for potential businesses within WA.		



Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Provide opportunities for economic development through commercial tourism on the lands and waters the department manages	Develop and implement the Culture in the Parks program.	December 2018	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement  Coordinator, Tourism and Concessions
	Hold forums to inform the community of the tourism opportunities on the conservation estate.	June 2020	
	Work in partnership with stakeholders to support Aboriginal commercial tourism businesses.		
5. Administer the State Government's \$20 million Aboriginal Ranger Program to protect the environment and leverage social and economic benefits through employment for Aboriginal people in regional and remote areas	Continue to implement the communication strategy to inform the community of the program.	December 2018	Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator, Office of the Director General
	Establish a steering committee with representation from Native Title Representative Bodies to review the effectiveness of the Program.	2017–18 2018–19	







## Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Impact Measurement Report</b>	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Investigate participation in the RAP Barometer.	May 2020	
	Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	June / September / December / March Annually	
	Investigate opportunities to measure the impact of RAP activities.	June 2020	
<b>2. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally</b>	Publicly report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings.	June / September / December / March Annually	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
<b>3. Review, refresh and update RAP</b>	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop the next RAP based on achievements, key learnings and challenges.	January 2020	Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement
	Submit first draft of 2020 RAP to Reconciliation Australia four months prior to desired launch for formal feedback and endorsement.		







*For public enquiries contact:*

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This plan features photography by DBCA staff of Western Australia's parks and reserves and the people working to protect these special places.

It also incorporates original artwork by Aboriginal artist Jade Dolman in partnership with *Bush Ranger* cadets from Mount Lawley Senior High School.

This publication is available in alternative formats on request. Information current at July 2018.