



**WESTERNPORT**  
WATER™

# Our journey to reconciliation

**Reflect RAP**

May 2018 - May 2019



**RECONCILIATION**  
ACTION PLAN

**REFLECT**



Artwork by Steve Ulula Parker

# Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that we manage water resources on the traditional lands of the Bunurong People. The Bunurong Peoples played an important role over thousands of years in managing water resources around the waterline areas of Western Port and Millowl, otherwise known as Phillip Island.

At Westernport Water we acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were the First Peoples on this land. We will work to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and work together as we continue to manage the lands and water resources today.

## Our commitment

Westernport Water is committed to building resilient, liveable and healthy communities that recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.

Our RAP sets out our commitment, acknowledges the past and provides a road map for the future.

We will seek to understand and embrace reconciliation within our Corporation and to encourage reconciliation across our service area.

## Managing Director message

I'm pleased to be involved in shaping Westernport Water's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

It is important that we recognise and acknowledge the area's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and share it with our communities. We are in a unique position as a government water corporation and a natural resource manager to actively work with our communities to acknowledge, respect and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and wellbeing.

Our 12 month plan provides a summary of activities currently underway and outlines the everyday initiatives and partnerships we've committed to as we progress on our journey towards reconciliation.

We are committed to an inclusive and meaningful approach to engagement and will look for opportunities to work in partnership with Traditional Owner Organisations as we implement the specific actions designed to encourage greater understanding, acknowledgement, respect, inclusion and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



Peter Quigley  
Managing Director



## Traditional Owners

The Bunurong Peoples are the Indigenous people of South-Eastern Victoria. They consider their traditional land to extend from the Werribee River in the North-West, down to Wilsons Promontory in the South-East. It includes Western Port, Port Phillip Bay, Mornington Peninsula as well as Phillip Island and French Island.

The Bunurong Peoples are part of a language group or nation known as Kulin (Koolin).

## Our business

Westernport Water is a regional water corporation whose core function is to provide drinking water, recycled water and wastewater services, wherever economically, environmentally and socially practicable, to properties and communities throughout its service region on the Bass Coast. Westernport Water has approximately 86 employees, including one Aboriginal employee that started late in the development of this Reflect RAP.

## Our geographic region

Westernport Water services a small but culturally significant area on Victoria's South Coast, encompassing Phillip Island and waterline townships on the Eastern side of Western Port from the Gurdies in the north to Archies Creek and Dalyston in the South.

The geographic region that Westernport Water services includes an area of 300 sq. km and comprises rivers and streams that flow through the Bass hills and waterline townships on the southeast side of Western Port. The Western Port coastline consists of broad, shallow embayments, whilst the Bass Strait coastline extending from east of the Powlett River to San Remo consists of many beaches, extensive rock platforms and cliffs.

The other major area is Millowl, otherwise known as Phillip Island, which is located approximately 100km south-southeast from Melbourne. Millowl is approximately 26km long and 9km wide and has 97km of coastline featuring rocky shorelines and beaches to the south and sand and mud shorelines to the north.

## Our service area



## Our Reflect RAP

Our RAP details how Westernport Water will respect and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their connection to the land and waterways. Our RAP commits to implementing specific actions that build respectful relationships and outlines opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Throughout our journey, we will strengthen relationships and work closely with the Registered Aboriginal Party, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, to support and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in water management and at the same time, improve outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We see the process of engagement with our employees, Leadership Team, Board of Directors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities as well as Traditional Owner Organisations as crucial to this Plan.

To date we have established a RAP Working Group comprised of 16 members, including 11 Westernport Water employees representing assets and operations, customer and community and corporate and people divisions, two members from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, representation from the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and a community member.

The group has been working together to develop a future focused plan that commits to a range of actions under four key focus areas. The plan also includes a summary of current activities, governance and reporting necessary to track and measure progress.

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Governance, tracking and progress

## Victorian Water Plan

Water corporations manage a resource that is considered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as one of the most important and sacred, water. We all need water to survive, and the protection and management of our local waterways and sites of cultural significance are an example of where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and water corporations can work in partnership for shared benefit.

'Water for Victoria' sets out the Victorian Government's long-term direction for managing Victoria's precious water resources. The Plan includes a commitment to recognise the values that water has for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

In accordance with this commitment, Westernport Water will create meaningful opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in water planning and develop respectful relationships.

## Current partnerships and activities

Westernport Water has established a partnership under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, which seeks to establish a Natural Resource Management Team to provide services for partner organisations seeking to incorporate an appreciation of culture and heritage into contemporary land management practices.

Working together with the Phillip Island Nature Parks and Bass Coast Shire Council, the three largest corporations in the area, we aim to identify opportunities for collaboration in relation to reconciliation, share and learn from one another and present a unified position on reconciliation activities and events in the region.

## Other activities underway include:





- Support for community art project and funding application for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
- Funding for the Phillip Island Community Orchard Indigenous Bush Tucker Garden.
- Provision of Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) services that encourage participation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Implementation of the Corporation's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy.
- Implementation of the Corporation's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which includes employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.
- Providing opportunities for South Gippsland Water and Bass Coast Landcare to participate in cultural awareness training.
- Participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training offered across the water sector.
- Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags.
- Acknowledgement of Country at key corporate events and proceedings.
- Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies at major events and ceremonies.

## Our journey to reconciliation



# Completed actions and initiatives

Through the development of Westernport Water's first RAP it has been actively working to deliver a number of actions and initiatives and has successfully completed the following:

Action	Deliverable	Completed
 <p><b>Relationships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form an internal RAP Working Group to support the development of our draft RAP and its actions and initiatives.</li> <li>Develop relationships with Traditional Owner Organisations through a range of cultural awareness training sessions to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Cultures.</li> <li>Participate in National Reconciliation Week activities by promoting local area events on social media and attending local events.</li> <li>Formalise partnership with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and provide funding support for the Caring for Country initiative.</li> <li>Sponsorship support for the Gippsland Bunjils AFL football team and the Phillip Island Community Orchard Indigenous Bush Tucker Garden.</li> </ul>	2016-17
 <p><b>Respect</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags and conducting flag raising ceremonies for significant events.</li> <li>Hold an internal Sorry Day event to reflect on past government policies and painful histories of the Stolen Generations.</li> <li>Raise awareness of our RAP and the importance of reconciliation by holding an internal event and guided tour on country.</li> <li>Attend language workshops in NAIDOC week for the preservation and revival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.</li> </ul>	2016-17
 <p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities, inline with the Corporation's Diversity and Inclusion Plan.</li> <li>Engage with and participate in water sector facilitated workshops on reconciliation.</li> <li>Explore options with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists for artwork to support Westernport Water's RAP.</li> <li>Provide work-related experience, as well as hands-on practical skills for an Aboriginal student to complete the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning.</li> </ul>	2016-17
 <p><b>Governance, tracking and progress</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a RAP Action Progress Report to track the progress of actions and initiatives.</li> </ul>	2016-17

## Art and culture

Custom surfboard artwork designed for Westernport Water by **Steve Ulula Parker**, descendant of the Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung, Erub Torres Strait Island.

**Title:** Mur-ran-beek Millowl Wurneet, bungernurul Banny Nairm.

**Translation:** Western Port Country, Phillip Island, creeks, rivers, water holes and bay.

**Pictured:** Steve Parker presenting Surf Board art to Westernport Water Board of Directors and RAP Working Group members. (photo - April 2017)





# Relationships

Westernport Water is committed to working in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and Traditional Owner Organisations to build meaningful relationships and deliver shared community benefit.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	1. Continue to grow our RAP Working Group to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising staff from across our corporation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from the community.	Jun 2018	Manager Communications and Engagement (MCE)
2. Build internal and external relationships	2.1 Approach and connect with organisations undertaking RAP plans and other like-minded organisations, to share our reconciliation journey.	Jul 2018	MCE
	2.2 Identify a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence to approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.	Jul 2018	
	2.3 Continue to build partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and organisations.	Jun 2018	
	2.4 Explore partnership opportunities within the local area that respectfully acknowledge the Bunurong Communities and their rich histories.	Feb 2019	
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	3.1 Host a National Reconciliation Week (NRW) event at Westernport Water's Phillip Island HQ to promote reconciliation and reflect on our shared histories and the contributions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.	Jun 2018	Chair RAP Working Group (RAPWG)
	3.2 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and materials to our staff.	Jun 2018	
	3.3 Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW and encourage staff involvement.	May 2019	
	3.4 Include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the planning and promotion of events.	Jul 2018	
4. Raise internal awareness of our RAP	4.1 Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff about our RAP.	Jun 2018	Chair RAPWG
	4.2 Include RAP events in the Corporation's customer and community event calendar to engage and raise awareness.	May 2019	
	4.3 Inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP by building specific commitments into performance plans.	Jan 2019	
	4.4 Develop and implement induction program for new employees that raises awareness of the importance and our commitment to reconciliation.	May 2019	
5. Raise external awareness of our RAP	5.1 Engage our Board, senior leaders and all staff in the delivery of RAP outcomes by reporting on achievements through regular all staff communications and building ongoing support, involvement and participation in community events and activities.	Jul 2018	Chair RAPWG
	5.2 Raise customer and stakeholder awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by promoting community events and activities via external communications channels and community engagement.	Sep 2018	
6. Recognise Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia	6.1 Support the recommendations outlined in the report delivered by the Referendum Council: <a href="https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report">https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report</a>	May 2019	Chair RAPWG



# Respect

Westernport Water understands that it has a significant role to play in the community in managing water and environmental resources that have been looked after by the First Peoples of Australia for tens of thousands of years. We aim to foster mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, show our respect, acknowledge Traditional Owners and raise awareness of cultures, histories and achievements. .

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
7. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	7.1	Develop a plan to increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our corporation.	Dec 2018	Human Resource Coordinator (HRC)
	7.2	Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	May 2018	HRC
	7.3	Provide face to face cultural awareness training across the whole corporation, which includes planning and heritage management obligations, Bunurong cultural heritage and Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.	Jun 2018	Chair RAPWG
	7.4	Facilitate and create cultural immersion programs in partnership with, or in consultation with, Traditional Owner Organisations.	May 2019	HRC
8. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	8.1	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week, which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities.	Jul 2018	MCE
	8.2	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Jul 2018	Chair RAPWG
	8.3	Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.	Jul 2018	GM C&C
	8.4	Ensure organisational participation in NAIDOC week event.	Jul 2018	GM C&C
9. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	9.1	Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area.	Jun 2018	Chair RAPWG
	9.2	Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our corporation's sphere of influence.	Jun 2018	Chair RAPWG
	9.3	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).	Sep 2018	MCE
10. Provide opportunities to staff, customers and stakeholders to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories	10.1	Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance by creating a calendar of key dates and distribute to all staff.	Jul 2018	Chair RAPWG
	10.2	Communicate and encourage staff to use Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool.	May 2019	MCE
	10.3	Design and implement a number of culturally appropriate interpretative signs at corporate sites, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and Traditional Owner Organisations to publicly acknowledge and show respect.	Mar 2019	MCE



# Opportunities

Westernport Water is committed to creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. We recognise that we are in a position to work collaboratively with Traditional Owner Organisations and Communities to explore opportunities for increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in water management.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	11.1 Identify and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways, inline with the Corporation's Diversity and Inclusion Plan.	Jan 2019	HRC
	11.2 Invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.	Jun 2018	GM Corporate and People (GM C&P)
	11.3 Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities.	Sep 2018	HRC
12. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	12.1 Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Jun 2018	GM C&P
	12.2 Review and improve the Corporation's purchasing and procurement policy to support and encourage procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Jan 2019	GM C&P
	12.3 Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation.	Apr 2019	GM C&P
13. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in water management	13.1 Identify Aboriginal water values within the region by working with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Water Officer.	May 2019	Chair RAPWG
	13.2 Identify Traditional ecological knowledge that could be included in water planning.	May 2019	GM C&C
	13.3 Develop a Cultural Heritage Assessment to identify areas of cultural heritage sensitivity across the Corporation's service region.	May 2019	Chair RAPWG
14. Provide work placement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	14.1 Engage with local schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Groups to promote work placement opportunities for students.	May 2019	HRC
15. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in the water industry	15.1 Engage with and support the Aboriginal Water Officer at the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation to incorporate Aboriginal water values and traditional ecological knowledge in water planning.	Jan 2019	Chair RAPWG
16. Investigate opportunities to increase voluntary support activities	16.1 Provide support for Traditional Owner Organisations and their programs that align with RAP actions and initiatives.	May 2019	MCE



## Governance, tracking and progress

Our RAP working group is integral to the development, promotion and delivery of the actions and initiatives that demonstrate our commitment. The working group regularly reviews and tracks our progress against our RAP to ensure we continue to realise our vision for reconciliation.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
17. Build support for the RAP	17.1 Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation.	Aug 2018	MCE
	17.2 Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities, recorded in the RAP Action Plan Progress Report.	Sep 2018	Chair RAPWG
	17.3 RAP Working Group to complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and seek internal approval to submit to Reconciliation Australia.	Sep 2018	Chair RAPWG
18. Review and Refresh RAP	18.1 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Feb 2019	MCE
	18.2 Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal review and endorsement.	Mar 2019	Chair RAPWG

## Acknowledgements



**RECONCILIATION**  
AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia  
[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

### Registered Aboriginal Party



Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation  
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e | [admin@bunuronglc.org.au](mailto:admin@bunuronglc.org.au)  
[www.bunuronglc.org](http://www.bunuronglc.org)

### Traditional Owner Organisation

Boon Wurrung Foundation  
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[www.boonwurrung.org](http://www.boonwurrung.org)

### Community

Westernport Water would like to acknowledge our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members for their contributions and efforts in assisting Westernport Water in developing it's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

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## **RAP contact**

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For more information about  
Westernport Water's  
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

[www.westernportwater.com.au](http://www.westernportwater.com.au)



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