

RAP Working Group Terms of Reference

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Talking, walking and working together we will build trust, respect and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal Australians that enables us to achieve positive social change and lead reconciliation activities within our sphere of influence.

Background

The core functions of Westernport Water (WPW) are to provide drinking water, recycled water, and wastewater services to properties and communities throughout its district, in accordance with the standards listed in the Westernport Water Customer Charter 2018-23, or by agreement.

We acknowledge that WPW provides services on the traditional lands of the Bunurong Peoples, who have managed the natural resources over thousands of years. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Elders, past, present and future as we work together to manage the land and water resources today.

WPW commenced its reconciliation journey in 2016 and had its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) endorsed in May 2018. Its second RAP, an Innovate RAP, was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia on 22 June 2020 and ends on June 2022.

WPW is one of 18 water corporations operating and reporting to the State Government of Victoria. WPW is responsible for its own management and performance, servicing some 21,500 customers from 27 townships across an area covering 300 square kilometers, including Millowl (Phillip Island) and waterline communities from The Gurdies to Archies Creek.

In-line with the Victorian Water Plan we will support water for Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and economic values, and recognise and support self-determination of Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion in the water sector.



Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) is the registered Aboriginal Party which represents the interests of Bunurong Traditional Owners. They are the Registered Aboriginal Party appointed pursuant to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) covering part of metropolitan Melbourne, the Mornington Peninsula, the Bass Coast and West Gippsland. The BLCAC is an inclusive organisation that represents Bunurong People, their culture and heritage. The BLCAC provides a unified voice for its members and **supports its people's cultural goals and aspirations**.

Purpose

The RAP Working Group (RWG) is considered the governing body of the RAP. The RWG is ultimately responsible for the development, implementation, and reporting phases of WPW's RAP. The RWG provides a platform to enable two-way communication and consultation between the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community and wider community, reconciliation stakeholders and the Board, and does not have decision making powers.

We are a team

Our RWG is focused on outcomes to respectfully move forward within the framework of our RAP to achieve broader goals for reconciliation and recognition for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Bass Coast. We:

- acknowledge that our RWG is made up of members from varied backgrounds with different responsibilities
- value the trust and relationships we have developed and recognise the mutual value of all parties and agree to learn, share and work together
- expect all parties to approach activities with good intention. We are on a learning curve and if mistakes are made, we can say sorry and move forward
- commit to training for all and will take the time for Working Group members to understand how and why we do things to create a culturally safe place for working together.

Membership

WPW's RWG will consist of employees from across the organisation, including senior leadership, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and community members. Members of the RWG will represent the various divisions and departments, key decision makers and areas of the business expected to drive RAP initiatives.

The RWG will facilitate ongoing input from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in planning and governance processes. Ideally the RWG will consist of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, Traditional Owners, Elders, business partners and key representatives of the local community.

The size of the RWG may vary from time to time, however minimum membership requirements dictate that at all times the RWG shall consist of two Leadership Team members, two officers, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member and representation of at least two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members.

WPW welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander customers and community members with a connection to the area to join the RAP Working Group and will invite expressions of interest annually.

Quorum

- The minimum number of RWG members required for conducting of a meeting is considered four, comprising three Westernport Water employees and at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative.

Roles and responsibilities

The delivery of RAP actions and initiatives is the responsibility of the whole organisation. To support the delivery of RAP commitments the RWG will support the following roles: Chair, Co-chair and Secretariat, these positions are to be filled by Westernport Water employees.

- The Chair will:
 - o act as a conduit between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community, take care of governance matters, RAP budget, reconciliation stakeholders, develop meeting agendas and assume responsibility for reporting. i.e. Board Reports, RAP reporting tracker, internal reporting and public reporting.
- The Co-chair will:
 - o primarily support **the chair and assume the chair's responsibilities in their absence**. Maintain regular communication with the chair and contribute to the process by being a reconciliation champion. Provide an alternative contact for RWG members and Reconciliation Australia.
- The Secretariat will:
 - o provide administrative support to the RWG and assist organise venue, catering, coordinate meetings, take notes, assist with payments and the preparation of minutes.
- The Committee members shall:
 - o meet regularly to measure and monitor the progress of the implementation of the RAP and to promote reconciliation
 - o develop and implement activities for National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC
 - o share information on our reconciliation journey with the rest of the Westernport Water team and our community at relevant forums.

Appointment

- Members will be appointed by the Executive in consultation with the RWG Chair and the appointed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members.
- Expressions of interest will be called annually and advertised through RAP networks, social channels and the local papers.

Terms

- Members may be appointed for a term of up to three years upon commencement of their first meeting and will dissolve at the completion of each RAP.
- Members may serve up to three, three year terms. Members of the RWG are eligible to apply for reappointment when their term expires.

Meetings

The RWG will meet at least five times annually and be hosted by the Chair or his/her delegate.

Meetings will be held:

- **at Westernport Water's office in Newhaven**
- on country/outside where possible
- by online means only when in person options are not possible
- at minimum, four times per year or once every three months in accordance with the annual meeting schedule
- from 9.30am to 11.30am on an agreed day, unless otherwise arranged.

Remuneration

In line with guidance from Reconciliation Australia and Closing the Gap, WPW commits to provide appropriate remuneration for travel and time for RWG community members. Community members are to be treated like consultants as they provide valuable knowledge, advice and assist with delivering RAP actions. The following remuneration is approved by the Board:

- meeting attendance - \$180
- event attendance, if representing as a RWG member - \$180
- community consult - \$50 per hour
- agreed travel expenses **as per Westernport Water's** Travel and Accommodation Policy.

Communication

Communicating with RWG members will be done in a number of ways including but not limited to:

- direct emails and calendar bookings
- sharing information and important updates via Workplace
- verbal updates at RWG meetings.

Our commitment

Westernport Water is committed to:

- ensuring cultural safety is embedded and visible in the way Westernport Water works
- transforming our systems and practices to increase the accountability of all WPW staff to prevent racism and be part of providing a culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and visitors. In doing so, we acknowledge this is a key step in enabling the self-determination of Aboriginal people
- embedding cultural competency across all aspects of professional practice and service delivery. This includes investing in cultural competency training and professional development opportunities for all Westernport Water staff
- formalising our support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to advance and develop as employees and leaders within WPW and the broader community
- partnering with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people living in the Bass Coast to consistently deliver on what we say we will do.

Conflict of interest

Where a member has any direct or indirect interest in any matter before the RWG, which may be construed as pecuniary or other gain, that interest shall be declared to the Chair.

Where a member so declares, the Chair may request the member not to participate in the matter, or to withdraw from the meeting for the period of discussion.

Lateral violence

WPW is committed to creating a safe and healthy workplace and ensuring the safety of its employees and RWG volunteers.

Lateral violence is not just an individual's behaviour. It often occurs when a number of people work together to attack or undermine another individual or group. Lateral violence may include: gossiping, personal put downs, social exclusion, family feuding, physical violence, organisational conflict, bullying and jealousy.

WPW will not tolerate lateral violence and will openly discuss and constructively address it if it arises in the RWG. Members exhibiting any form of lateral violence will be removed from the RWG.

Dispute resolution

RWG members will avoid disputes, where possible. If a dispute arises:

- the RWG members in dispute will act in good faith to resolve the dispute as soon as possible
- the Chair will actively guide the parties towards resolution of the dispute. If the Chair is party to the dispute then this role will be undertaken by a member of the WPW executive.
- it is preferable for disputes to be resolved on an informal basis. Acting in good faith, the parties will make a reasonable, thorough and conscientious effort to do so, under the guidance of the chair.

To avoid disputes, the RWG in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party has developed Working Together Protocols to clarify decision making process and matters that are for the Registered Aboriginal Party only.

Evaluation / review

This document is scheduled for review by the Board every three years, in consultation with the RAP Working Group.

Related documents

- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020-22
- WPW Working Together Protocols
- WPW website <https://www.westernportwater.com.au/learning-centre/education/reconciliation/>
- WPW Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24
- WPW Social Procurement Strategy 2021-24
- Victorian Public Sector (VPS) Code of Conduct.