



Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

Reconciliation Action Plan
November 2023 - November 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for the Conversation of Cultural Material (AICCM) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work each day, throughout Australia. The Institute recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respect to the past and current Elders and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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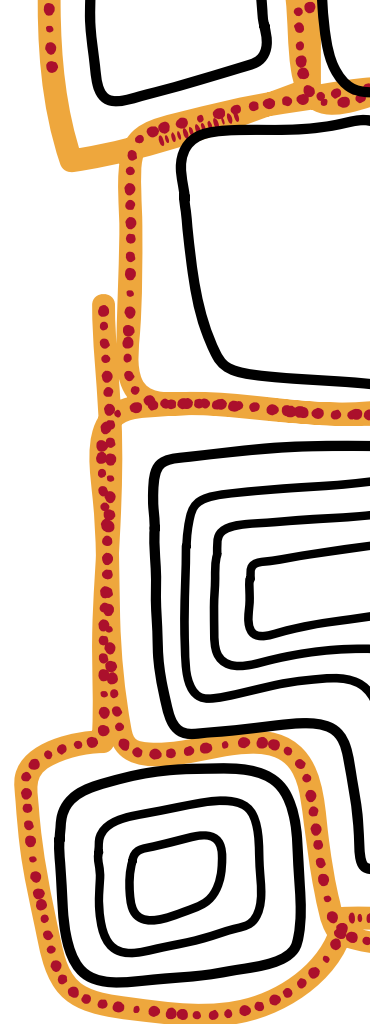
Message from the AICCM Reconciliation Committee



Samantha Hamilton
Chair, AICCM Reconciliation Committee



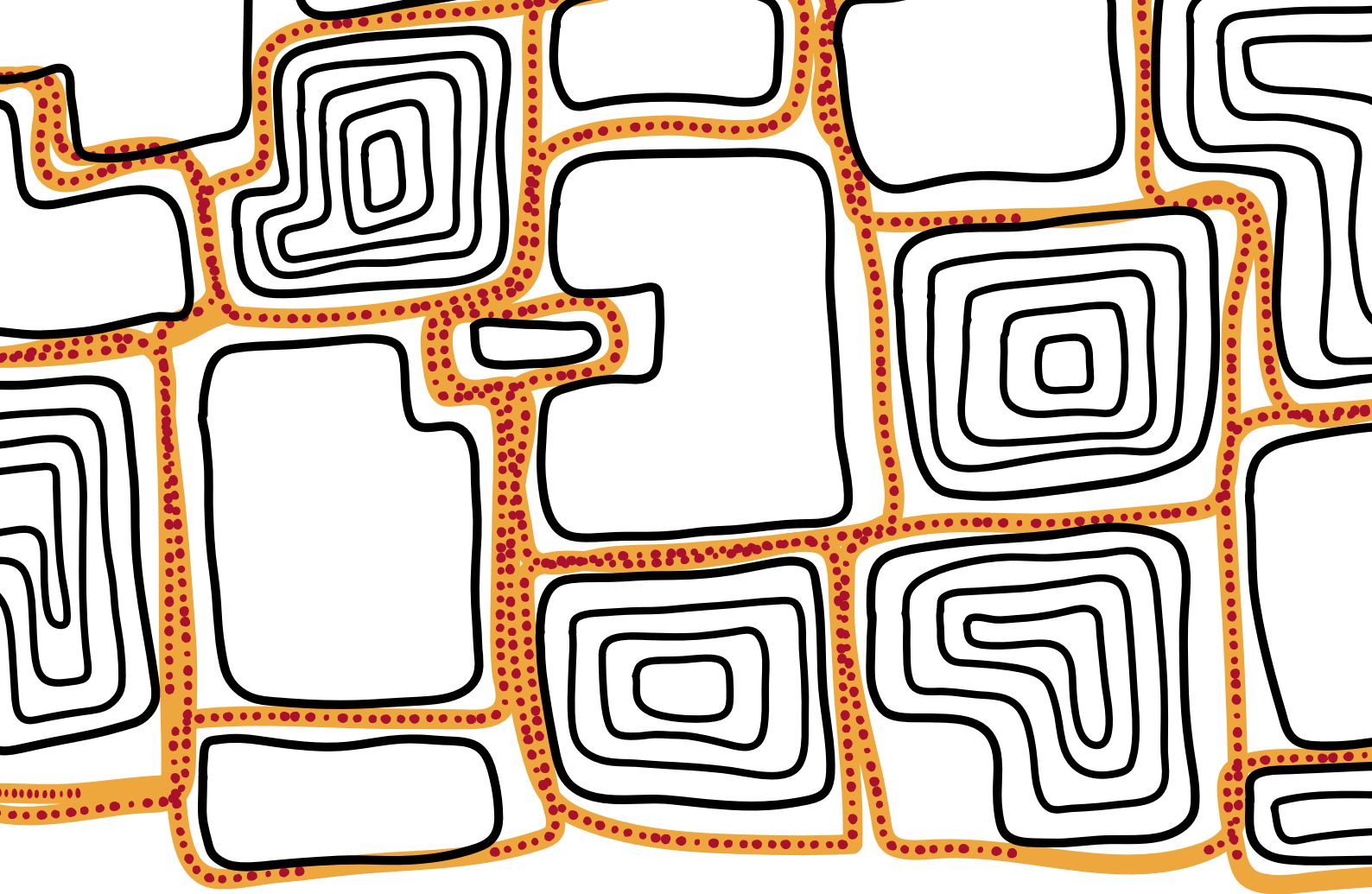
Alice Cannon
President, AICCM



The AICCM Reconciliation Committee is pleased to have had the opportunity to lead the development of the AICCM's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This process allowed us to celebrate the work of those who have come before us, but more importantly it opened space for us to think about where we wanted to be as a profession. Through this RAP we hope to establish some small, practical steps that help us to continue to grow as an organisation and into a profession that is respectful, ethical, engaged, future-thinking and innovative, and develop meaningful approaches that support access to collections for truth telling and collaboration.

We want to acknowledge the hard work of First Nations Elders who have kept culture alive and support them in preserving and passing down language, culture, material, and story. The statements that follow are drawn from AICCM's guiding documents and reflect our commitment to reconciliation through our Vision, Mission, Values and Code of Ethics and Practice.



Our commitment to reconciliation aligns with our Reconciliation Statement

We, the members of AICCM acknowledge and value the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of this land and its waters.

As conservators we especially recognise and respect First Nations people's ownership of and right to self-determination concerning the preservation and representation of First Nation material culture. We acknowledge that conservation practice must adapt to be inclusive of First Nations cultural requirements and to respect all information relevant to objects.

We join with many Australians in expressing our sorrow and sincere regret for the wrongs and injustices of the past, for their continuing consequences and resultant disadvantage. We are sorry for the pain and suffering Indigenous Australians endure as a result of these practices.

We look forward to a future together that recognises these wrongs, a future where all Australians enjoy equal rights, with the opportunity to achieve our full potential.

Our commitment to reconciliation aligns with our Vision

We support First Nations peoples seeking to protect and sustain their cultural heritage. Conservation and preservation activity is outward looking, participatory, and centered around people and community.

Interconnectivity, partnerships and collaboration are the norm. We support a decentralised approach to conservation, respecting traditional modes of caring for cultural collections. The AICCM links the 'when' of conservation (deep time, present time, and carrying forward the present to the future) to a multiplicity of meanings and values. We foster an environment where conservation decisions are led by the meaning and value of objects, and are capable of incorporating multiple contexts.

Our commitment to reconciliation aligns with our Mission

We are committed to preserving Australia's past and present material culture and heritage as a resource for present and future generations. Cultural heritage plays an essential role in developing and sustaining national, community, familial and personal identities.

Our commitment to reconciliation aligns with our Values

Participatory

- We collaborate with colleagues and communities to understand the context or contexts of cultural heritage.
- Decisions about cultural heritage are made with the full participation of those to whom it is most significant.

Respect

- We recognise differences, value diversity, and collaborate with those for whom we carry out work.
- We recognise that culture is inextricably linked to human identity, and identify where unconscious assumptions and bias affect our practice.
- We consider human needs alongside the needs of the material in our decision making.
- We recognise that knowledge is to be exchanged, and that we can learn as much from others as they can from us.

Commitment

- We care deeply about the work we do and seek to share our knowledge and enthusiasm with the general public, community and heritage groups, and allied professionals.
- We advocate for our profession and for related causes.

Professionalism

- We observe a Code of Ethics and a Code of Practice.
- We commit to ongoing professional development.

Accountability

- We use our resources responsibly and sustainably.
- We demonstrate the social, cultural and economic value of the work that we do.

Adaptability

- We adapt our skills and knowledge to reflect the needs of changing environments, culture, cultural values, economic realities, and museum and community practice.



National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)

Genevieve Sullivan, Conservator of Indigenous Art NGV, and Myra Herbert, Artist and Director at Warnayaka Art and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation, Lajamanu, discussing conservation treatment options for Lajamanu paintings as part of the NGV Bank of America Art Conservation Project 2022-2023. Photo taken by Steven Protuder and Daniel Nganeko, Lajamanu NT, August 2023.

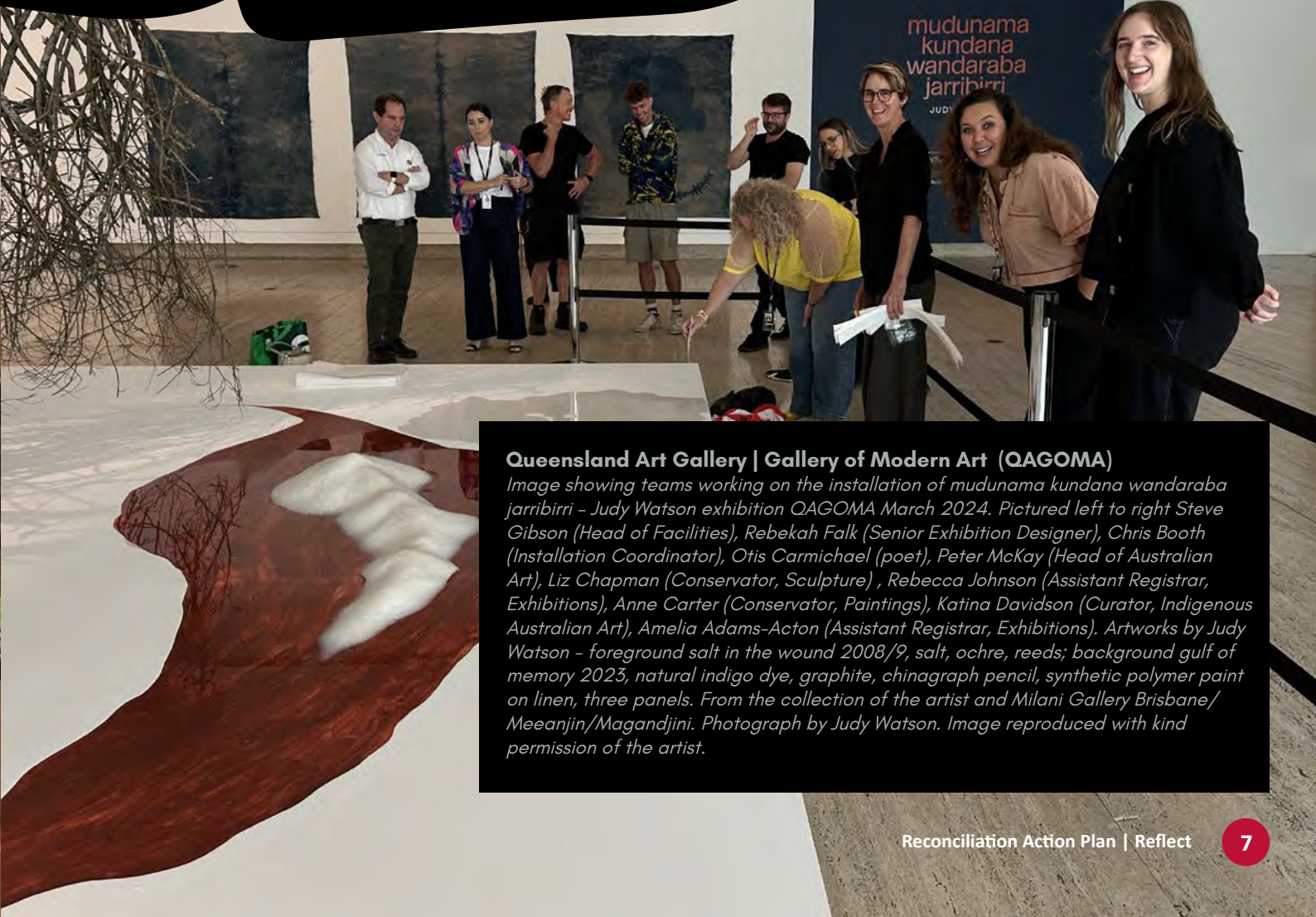
- We develop expertise alongside advancements in materials and technology. Individual conservators develop different skill sets depending on their area of expertise and the context of their work.

Our commitment to reconciliation aligns with our Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

The AICCM member should be informed and respectful of the cultural and spiritual significance of cultural material and should, where possible, consult with all relevant stakeholders before making treatment or other decisions relating to such cultural material. The AICCM member should recognise the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Peoples, and as key stakeholders in the conservation of their cultural heritage material. When undertaking conservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural property, the AICCM member should recognise that the objects and the information relevant to them are of equal importance, and that conservation practice must adapt to cultural requirements, particularly in respect of secret/sacred items.

References

[AICCM Reconciliation Statement 2000.](#)
[AICCM Code of Ethics and Code of Practice 2002.](#)
[AICCM Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025.](#)



Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA)
 Image showing teams working on the installation of mudunama kundana wandaraba jarribirri - Judy Watson exhibition QAGOMA March 2024. Pictured left to right Steve Gibson (Head of Facilities), Rebekah Falk (Senior Exhibition Designer), Chris Booth (Installation Coordinator), Otis Carmichael (poet), Peter McKay (Head of Australian Art), Liz Chapman (Conservator, Sculpture), Rebecca Johnson (Assistant Registrar, Exhibitions), Anne Carter (Conservator, Paintings), Katina Davidson (Curator, Indigenous Australian Art), Amelia Adams-Acton (Assistant Registrar, Exhibitions). Artworks by Judy Watson - foreground salt in the wound 2008/9, salt, ochre, reeds; background gulf of memory 2023, natural indigo dye, graphite, chinagraph pencil, synthetic polymer paint on linen, three panels. From the collection of the artist and Milani Gallery Brisbane/ Meeanjin/Magandjini. Photograph by Judy Watson. Image reproduced with kind permission of the artist.

Message from Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

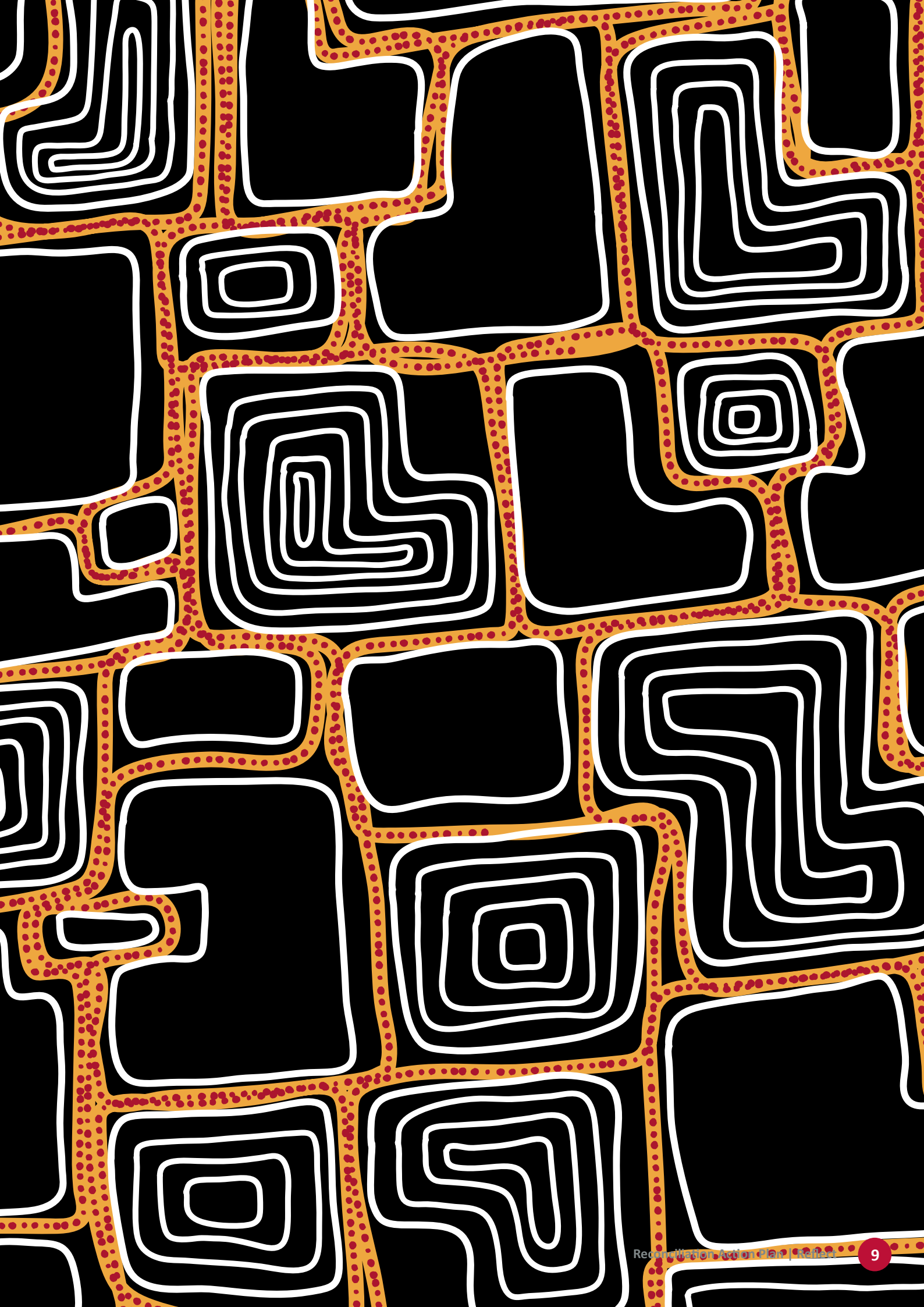
The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey. Congratulations Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer



AICCM

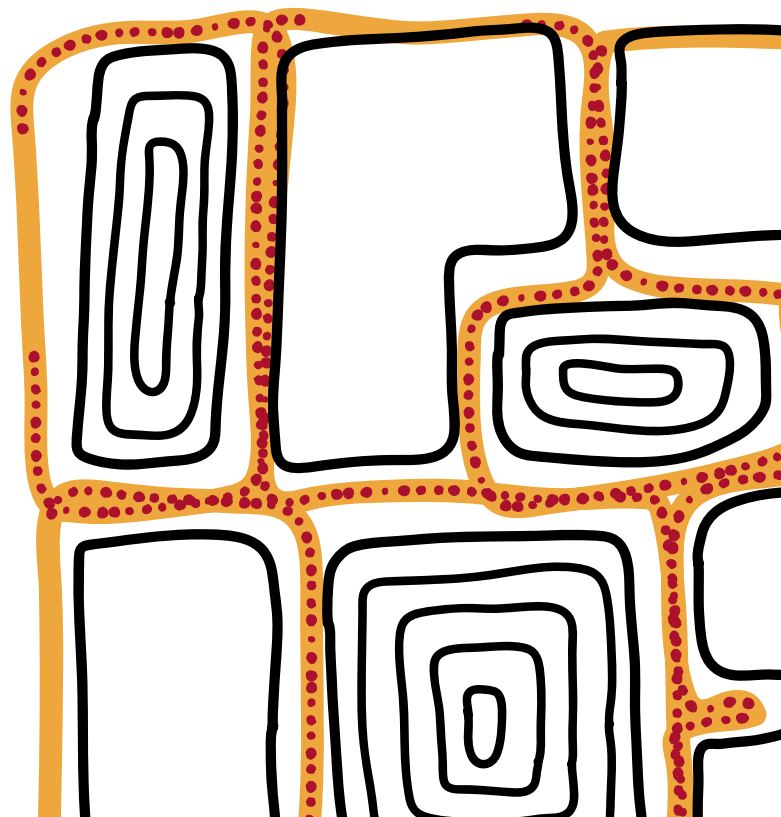
The Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) is a not-for-profit organisation concerned with the conservation and preservation of Australia's tangible and intangible social, artistic, historical, and scientific heritage.

The AICCM is Australia's primary professional association for experts in the conservation of cultural heritage. It acts as a support framework for members, providing opportunities for professional development, networking and advocacy. The AICCM also acts as a resource and peak reference body for those seeking conservation and preservation expertise. It provides support for members through its National Council, which provides centralised oversight of the organisation and through State and Territory Divisions which assist local members and address local concerns.

The AICCM currently has a membership of approximately 630 conservators, associated professionals, students and members of the public. The AICCM has one part-time employee in the Executive Officer and engages the services of five contractors to carry out tasks essential for the ongoing operation of the organisation. There are approximately 180 active volunteers across the various National, State and Territory committees of the AICCM. While the number of First Nations staff is currently not known, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this.

The AICCM's reach extends to remote, regional, national, and global conservation communities. At the local level, the AICCM has State and Territory Divisions around Australia that act as local representatives for the organisation in capital cities and, to a lesser extent, regional communities. Activities between local Divisions are coordinated by the AICCM National Council. AICCM has an international profile amongst other professional conservation associations, most notably those in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The AICCM currently has approximately 30 individual and six organisational international members.

The AICCM does not have any physical office locations. The organisation operates throughout Australia, with independently incorporated bodies operating nationally and across States and Territories. The National Council, and State and Territory Divisions are represented by separate volunteer committees (South Australia and the Northern Territory have a combined SA/NT Division), making a total of eight (one National and seven Divisional committees).





Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT)

Elaine Sandy, (Barkly Regional Arts Art Worker and Desert Professional Development Program recipient) with Sandra Yee (Senior Conservator, Museum and Art Gallery of the NT).



Museums Victoria (MV)

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation Community working with Museums Victoria Senior Conservator, Sarah Babister, on a possum skin cloak. Copyright Museums Victoria 2023. Non-exclusive licence.

Our Reconciliation Journey

The AICCM is developing a RAP to contribute to reconciliation with First Nations peoples, to meet the needs and changing priorities of the cultural sector and provide its members with the necessary direction and skills to work in this arena.

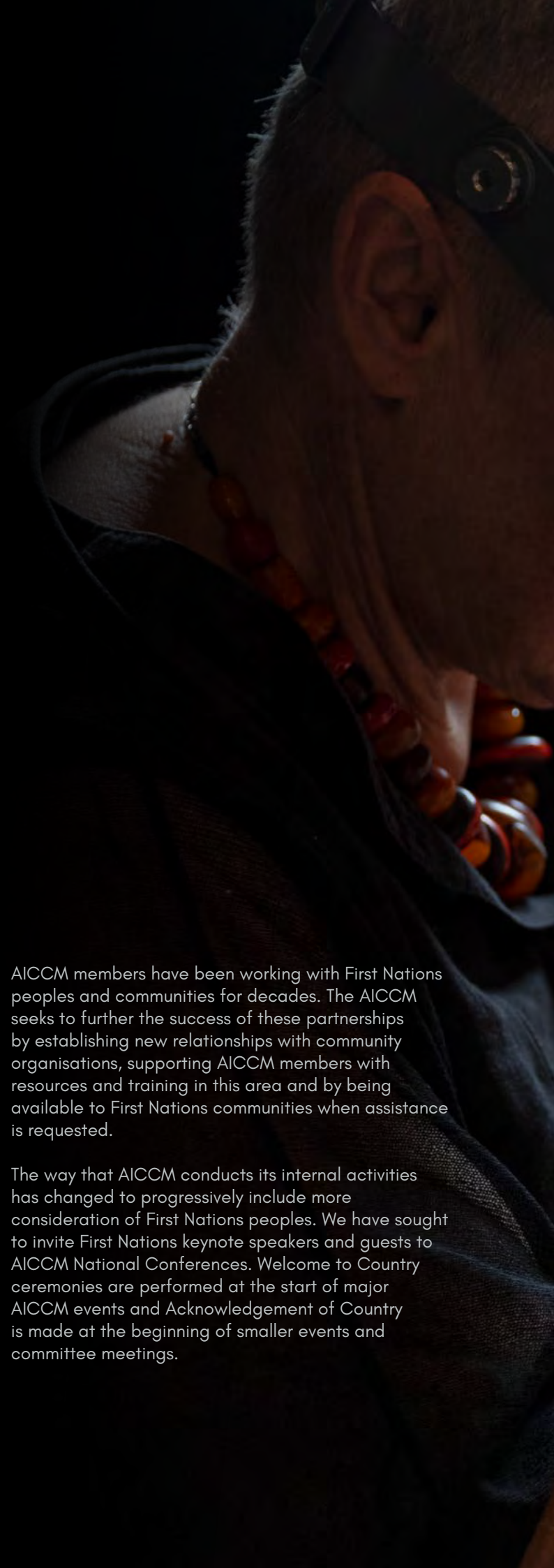
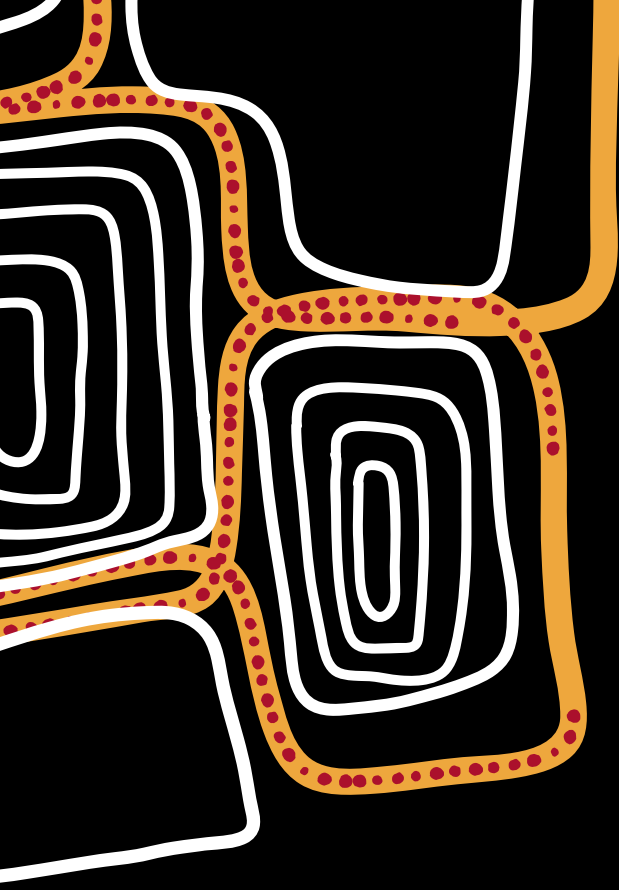
Through the RAP AICCM has an opportunity to recognise the primary role that First Nations peoples have in the preservation of their own histories and cultural heritage. This reflects a shifting in attitudes more broadly in Australian museums, galleries, and the heritage industry. The AICCM has a responsibility to provide leadership, resources, training, and respectful language to help its members meet the needs of this changing environment. Implementing a RAP will strengthen our practice and build our capacity to integrate meaningful actions across all areas of our sector.





The AICCM will meet its reconciliation goals through the efforts of a voluntary Reconciliation Committee, which will serve as our designated RAP Working Group. The Reconciliation Committee will be led by a Chair, who will be an AICCM volunteer. There is no expectation that the Chair will hold any other paid or voluntary position in the AICCM. The Reconciliation Committee will meet at least six times per year to discuss the deliverables we have committed to within this document. The AICCM National President will act as our RAP Champion, driving awareness of and engagement with the RAP within our organisation. Deliverables from the RAP will be embedded into the AICCM's Business Plan and resources will be allocated accordingly.

Both the industry and the AICCM have already achieved several successes along the road to reconciliation. In 2018, the Australian Museum and Galleries Association published the Indigenous Roadmap - First Peoples: A roadmap for enhancing Indigenous engagements in museums and galleries. The roadmap charts the way ahead for reconciliation in the Australian arts industry.



The AICCM has undertaken many small steps towards reconciliation. In 2000, we released our Reconciliation Statement and in 2019 formed a Reconciliation Committee whose efforts have included drafting this document. The unique status of First Nations peoples as key stakeholders in the conservation of their own cultural heritage materials has been formally recognised in the AICCM Code of Ethics and Practice. Submissions to the organisation's journal, the AICCM Bulletin, requires authors to address the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research for relevant papers. Our website promotes awareness of First Nations peoples' cultural heritage. The AICCM has made numerous public statements and submissions of support in relation to the preservation of First Nations peoples cultural heritage, including:

- Statement by the AICCM on the Felling of the Djab Wurrung 'Directions' Tree
- The AICCM Submission to the Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia
- Statement by the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material on the destruction of the Pilbara Caves
- Letter in response to the Burrup delisting National Cultural Policy Submission

AICCM members have been working with First Nations peoples and communities for decades. The AICCM seeks to further the success of these partnerships by establishing new relationships with community organisations, supporting AICCM members with resources and training in this area and by being available to First Nations communities when assistance is requested.

The way that AICCM conducts its internal activities has changed to progressively include more consideration of First Nations peoples. We have sought to invite First Nations keynote speakers and guests to AICCM National Conferences. Welcome to Country ceremonies are performed at the start of major AICCM events and Acknowledgement of Country is made at the beginning of smaller events and committee meetings.



National Gallery of Australia (NGA)

Objects Conservator, Beata Tworek-Matuszkiewicz working on the First Nations Collection at the National Gallery of Australia, 2023. Photo: National Gallery of Australia.



RAP Targets Relationships

1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations peoples and organisations.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify First Nations peoples and organisations within our sphere of influence or through existing networks of our members. These may include but are not limited to First Nations conservators and communities undertaking conservation; First Nations museum and gallery professionals; First Nations academics and artists; and Traditional Owner groups. This may be done via a Stakeholder Mapping Workshop | March 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations peoples and organisations. The AICCM will align itself with organisations working in this area and keep updated on new work in this area. We will develop and/or share resources with our membership. | February 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

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

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our membership and contractors. | May 2024 | President and Secretariat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reconciliation Committee members to participate in an external and/or AICCM-led NRW event. 27 May - 3 June | 27 May - 3 June 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage membership and support elected volunteer positions to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May - 3 June 2024 | President |

3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Statement of Commitment | November 2023 | President and Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate our RAP to all AICCM staff and members | November 2023 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch our RAP at the 2023 National Conference, including a reading of the Statement of Commitment in opening proceedings from the President | November 2023 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can influence and engage with on our reconciliation journey via a Stakeholder Mapping Workshop | March 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify organisations in the RAP network that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey via a Stakeholder Mapping Workshop | March 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|-----------|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | July 2024 | Executive Officer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate anti-discrimination provisions into new Human Resource (HR) and/or relevant onboarding policies and procedures | July 2024 | Executive Officer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of established HR policies and procedures to identify anti-discrimination provisions and future needs | July 2024 | Executive Officer |



RAP Targets Respect

5 Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. | October 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation and membership. | September 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review the AICCM Codes of Practice and Ethics, specifically looking at paragraphs that relate to First Nations peoples to ensure that the language is appropriate, and that practice and ethical recommendations are up to date and relevant to current best practice in working with First Nations peoples and on their cultural materials. | October 2024 | Chair of Code of Ethics Working Group |

6 Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area and prepare resources that assist local AICCM divisions and committees to identify and pay respects to appropriate Traditional Owners or Custodians. | January 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update all relevant AICCM internal documents, manuals and guiding templates with information on how to identify and pay respects to appropriate Traditional Owners or Custodians. Share these resources to local AICCM divisions and committees and members for implementation. | February 2024 | Secretariat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase members' and elected committee members' understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | February 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |



RAP Targets Opportunities

7 Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|-----------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and members about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. | July 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee and Secretariat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduce our staff and members to NAIDOC Week by promoting State/Territory based external events. | July 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee and Secretariat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reconciliation Committee to participate in an external and/or AICCM-led NAIDOC Week event. | July 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

8 Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations peoples recruitment, retention and professional development.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for an identified First Nations position (or contractor) as an AICCM Community Liaison. | August 2024 | Vice President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop resources for membership to assist in building business cases for creating First Nations employment in their own workplaces | September 2024 | Executive Officer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Build understanding of current First Nations staffing in member conservation workplaces to inform future employment and professional development opportunities (e.g. paid internships, identified employment positions). | August 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

9 Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses (e.g. catering, speaker gifts, venue hire, etc.) | April 2024 | Executive Officer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate Supply Nation membership and other listings such as through Kinaway. | April 2024 | Executive Officer |



RAP Targets Governance

10 Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Committee to drive governance of the RAP.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and revise the existing Reconciliation Committee to govern RAP implementation. | December 2023 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft a new Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Committee. | December 2023 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek interest from First Nations peoples to participate in the Reconciliation Committee | December 2023 | President |

11 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | December 2023 | Vice President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage the AICCM National Council in the delivery of RAP commitments. | November 2023 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Add the Chair of the Reconciliation Committee to the AICCM National Council | November 2023 | Secretary |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Appoint the AICCM President to champion our RAP internally. | November 2023 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments by dedicating a session at our annual face to face meeting to review our RAP commitments | January 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrate RAP commitments into the business plan | January 2024 | Vice President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Set agenda for Reconciliation Committee meetings and integrate measurement and reporting schedule | January 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

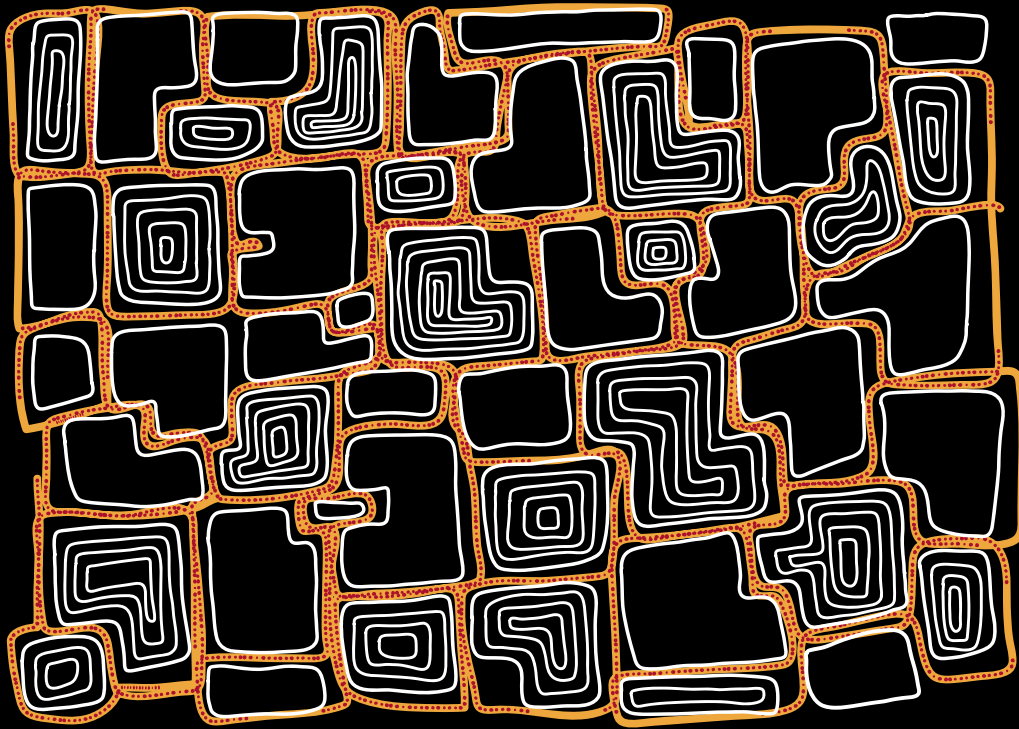
12 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | President |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. | 1 August annually | Vice President |

13 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

| Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | August 2024 | Chair of Reconciliation Committee |

The Design



About the design

The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials Reconciliation Action Plan bespoke design by ingeous studios tells the story about the work of the Institute in improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities through inclusion, knowledge sharing and understanding throughout it's work across cultural conservation.

About the design studio

The Australian Institute for the Conservation Reconciliation Action Plan bespoke design and collateral elements were designed by Indigenous design and digital agency ingeous studios in Cairns.

Creative Director and founder of ingeous studios, Leigh Harris is a proud Kanguoulu and Gungarri man who is also proud of Italian and Welsh heritage, draws upon his Aboriginal cultural heritage and knowledge to influence his design works across all of his design works.





Contact details

Alice Cannon
AICCM President
president@aiccm.org.au

Samantha Hamilton
Chair AICCM Reconciliation Committee
Samantha_hamilton@bigpond.com

www.aiccm.org.au