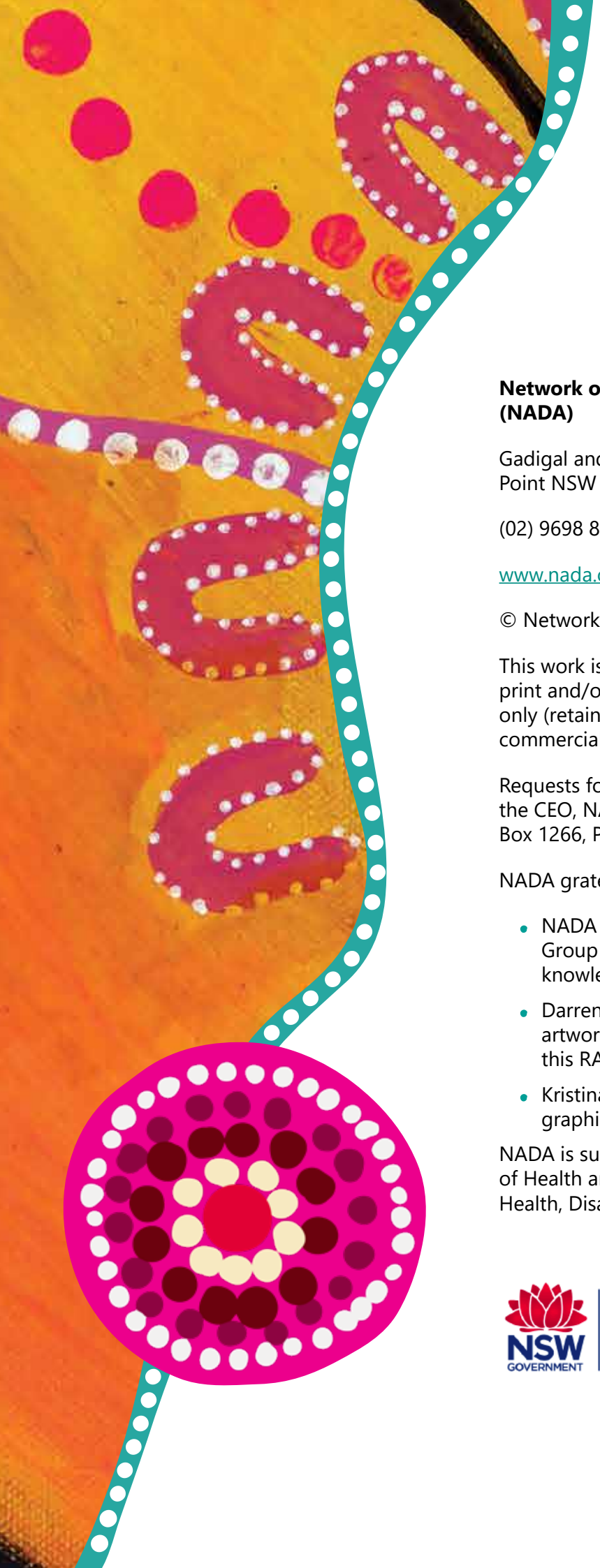
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
STRETCH

NADA STRETCH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

JUNE 2026- JUNE 2029

NADA
network of alcohol and other drugs agencies



Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA)

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NADA gratefully acknowledges:

- NADA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group who contributed their time, experience, and knowledge to the development of the RAP.
- Darren Winterbottom, the artist who created the artwork shown on the front cover and throughout this RAP.
- Kristina Taylor and Burbangana Group for the graphic design (www.burbangana.com.au)

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NSW GOVERNMENT Health

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

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Acknowledgement of Country

NADA proudly acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters throughout Australia. Our office stands on the land of the Gadigal and Birrabirragal people.

We recognise, respect and value the deep and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to land, water, community and culture.

We acknowledge the diverse language and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across this continent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have looked after country and culture for over 60,000 years.

We look to and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for their cultural guidance, leadership and expertise.

NADA's acknowledgement of, and respect towards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is furthered through the implementation of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

About the artwork

Biyala Yalmun *(Yorta Yorta)* *– "Paths of Belonging"*

Artist: Darren Winterbottom *(Yorta Yorta-Barapa Barapa)*
Medium: *Acrylic on canvas*
Year: *2026*

Biyala Yalmun – Paths of Belonging tells the story of a personal journey as a Yorta Yorta-Barapa Barapa man — a long road through drug use, time in custody, and the steady return to culture, identity, and community.

The flowing lines throughout the painting represent the many paths we walk in life. The bright colours (pink, purple, yellow etc.) represent diversity. Some paths are difficult and uncertain, while others lead us back toward connection and belonging. The footprints symbolise the people who travel those roads — each step carrying experiences, lessons, and growth.

The circles in the painting represent meeting places. These are the spaces where people come together to share stories, find support, and begin healing. They reflect the importance of community, culture, and safe places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can connect and feel understood.

Today, through my work with NUAA at Nepean Hospital, working with the local Aboriginal community in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District I walk alongside mob who are travelling their own paths. Just as others once walked beside me, peer support creates space for connection, understanding, and hope.

This artwork also reflects the values supported through the work of the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) and its Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan — strengthening cultural safety, building relationships, and improving pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access care and wellbeing.

"This painting is both a reflection of my own journey and a symbol of the many paths our people walk as we find our way back to culture, community, and belonging."

About the artist

Darren Winterbottom (Yorta Yorta-Barapa Barapa) is an Aboriginal Peer Support Worker with NUAA based at Nepean Hospital. His work is deeply informed by lived experience, culture, and connection to community. Drawing on his lived experience of drug use and incarceration, Darren's journey back to culture and community has shaped both his professional work and his artistic practice. Through his role, he walks alongside mob who are navigating their own journeys with substance use, health systems, and recovery, offering support grounded in respect, understanding, and cultural safety.

Darren's artwork reflects these experiences. His paintings often feature footprints, pathways, and gathering circles that represent journeys, connection, and meeting places where healing and support can occur. Through art, Darren shares stories of resilience, survival, and the strength that comes from reconnecting with culture and community.

Message from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its fourth RAP overall.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise.

As the peak body for non-government alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services in NSW, NADA supports and strengthens its member organisations as they deliver high-quality AOD services, improving the health and wellbeing of people with lived and living experience of AOD use. This work positions NADA to contribute to equitable health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

This Stretch RAP is built upon the considerable experience NADA garnered in its previous RAPs.

One of NADA's key focus areas has been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty. This work, guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, has resulted in the publication of NADA's Data Sovereignty Statement, setting a new standard for culturally safe and respectful data practices. NADA has also invested in a range of cultural safety and professional development initiatives, including culturally responsive, trauma-informed practice training and a Cultural Learning Strategy which has embedded cultural learning onto its organisational practice.

Guided by these lessons and experiences, NADA is looking to expand and embed its commitments to data sovereignty and cultural safety. In this new RAP, NADA will continue to strengthen its data sovereignty and cultural safety practices and ensure they are always guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. Information has the power to connect people and change outcomes. NADA recognises that control of data and practices concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples belong with those communities.

NADA has the potential to drive considerable reconciliation outcomes across its sphere of influence. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from the CEO of NADA

On behalf of the NADA Board and staff, I am proud to present the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2026–2029. This Stretch RAP represents a significant step forward in our reconciliation journey and reflects NADA's deepening commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations across NSW.

As the peak body for the NSW non-government alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector, NADA has a responsibility to lead by example. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be a priority population within the AOD sector, with now over one quarter of all episodes of care delivered by NADA member services. We are proud that Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations now represent a growing proportion of our membership, and that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are contributing their wisdom, expertise, leadership and lived experience across the sector.

This Stretch RAP builds on the strong foundations established through NADA's previous two Innovate RAPs. It challenges us to move beyond commitment into action — strengthening relationships, embedding respect, expanding opportunities and ensuring accountable governance. Central to this plan is our commitment to self determination, culturally safe practice, data sovereignty, and the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shaping the systems and services that affect their communities.

The NADA Board and staff are committed to ensuring that this Stretch RAP guides our governance, advocacy, workforce development, research and engagement with members. We will continue to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, seeking cultural guidance, leadership and expertise, and listening carefully to feedback as we move forward.

While NADA is a small organisation, our reach extends across more than 90 member organisations operating in over 150 locations throughout NSW. Through this influence, we have an important opportunity — and responsibility — to support culturally safe and responsive AOD services, strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, and promote approaches to care that recognise social and emotional wellbeing and connection to culture as fundamental to healing.

I would like to sincerely thank the NADA RAP Working Group, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, for their leadership, guidance and generosity in shaping this Stretch RAP. I also thank NADA staff, members and partners for their continued commitment to reconciliation.

We look forward to working together over the coming years to implement this Stretch RAP, to deepen our partnerships, and to play an active role in achieving meaningful and lasting reconciliation.

Dr Robert Stirling
Chief Executive Officer
Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies

Our vision

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have equitable access to culturally safe services that empower health, wellbeing, and self-determination.

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) is the peak organisation for the non-government alcohol and other drugs services in NSW. We envision a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have health and wellbeing outcomes equal to all other Australians.

Through our *Stretch* Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and role as a peak body, we are committed to fostering deeper respect, building stronger relationships, and creating broader opportunities for reconciliation and to help close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the wider Australian. population.

Our business

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) is the peak body for non-government alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services in NSW. We lead, strengthen and advocate for the sector, representing 93 organisational members operating in over 153 locations across NSW. Our members are diverse in their structure, philosophy, and approach to service delivery. They provide a broad range of AOD services, including health promotion, harm reduction, early intervention, and treatment—counselling, case management, day programs, residential and continuing care.

NADA delivers programs and services across advocacy, sector representation, and public health policy; workforce and sector development; data and information management; governance and organisational support; and research and evaluation. We hold award-level accreditation under the Australian Services Excellence Standards (ASES), a quality framework certified by Quality Innovation and Performance (QIP).

Together, we improve the health and wellbeing of the NSW community. NADA's strategic plan for 2023-2026 outlines three strategic priorities:

- NADA will lead strong and impactful advocacy
- NADA will strengthen AOD services and workforce
- NADA will promote the impact of members and the AOD sector

Initiatives under these priorities that NADA undertakes are:

- Advocacy for increases to AOD sector funding, contracting, service access
- Advocacy for programs to address stigma
- Developing resources and tools to build capacity within NADA's member organisations
- Delivering workforce and professional development for staff of member organisations
- Partnering on initiatives to attract workers to the AOD sector
- Supporting the collection analysis and reporting of quality data through NADAbase
- Conducting and promoting sector-led research and evaluation
- Facilitating cross-sector collaboration

NADA operates from a single workplace and employs 16 staff (13.3 full-time equivalent), including two team members who identify as Aboriginal.

Governance is provided by a board of 9 directors elected from the NADA membership and 2 independent board appointments, which includes an Aboriginal board member to serve in an independent capacity.

NADA staff photo [National Reconciliation Week 2025, Royal Botanic Gardens Bush Food immersion]

Our RAP

NADA's *Stretch* RAP will serve as a strategic framework for how the organisation engages and collaborates with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, stakeholders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), workers within the alcohol and other drug sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who seek treatment.

NADA's RAP is informed by the NADA RAP Working Group which is made up of 11 external members, 8 of whom are Aboriginal community members. Following consultation and input from the working group, NADA incorporated more robustly worded priorities within the Respect pillar, and more intentional actions in the preamble of the Opportunities pillar as well as the addition of immersion activities in our action plan and actions that prioritise people from rural and regional areas.

Following the biennial consultation with NADA's members through a Member Needs Assessment survey, we will be updating the NADA strategy to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture are clearly woven through our strategic priorities and resulting initiatives.

Additionally, NADA undertook a survey of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations about the preferred language NADA should use when referencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; the responses to the survey resulted in NADA changing all internal references from First Nations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ALIGNMENT TO NSW AND OTHER NATIONAL STRATEGIES

DRUG STRATEGY

As there has been no AOD strategy in NSW since 2010, NADA continues to advocate for a NSW AOD strategy and that it should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices in its development. Additionally, NADA continues to advocate for a renewed strategy since the end of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' drug strategy (2014-2019).

CLOSING THE GAP AGREEMENT

In this Stretch RAP, NADA aligns to the key priority reforms of this national agreement through strategic focus on partnerships, support for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, advocacy and information for culturally safe practices and a commitment to safeguard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data ownership.

Building the Community-controlled Sector NADA actively supports the growth and capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation members (currently 20 out of a total of 93 member services) by advocating for increased and sustained funding in order for them to deliver culturally appropriate services and recognises that these organisations are best placed to achieve positive health outcomes for their own communities.

Shared access to data and information at a regional level NADA is involved in initiatives around data gathering and reporting within the AOD sector through its database. NADA enables Aboriginal communities and organisations to review data within NADAbase to support analysis, interpretation and reporting of data on Aboriginal people within NADAbase. This is guided by an Aboriginal-led governance structure and a data sovereignty statement.

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION (RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA)

NADA is aligned to the Five Dimensions of Reconciliation through our formal commitment to this Stretch RAP and actively promotes positive race relations through its anti-discrimination policy and code of conduct. NADA works to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by increasing employment opportunities and procurement and ensuring equitable access to AOD services for all communities.

This RAP aims for a shared national identity by valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage and by promoting the understanding and acknowledgement of Australia's history and its effects on Indigenous culture and people.

NADA ensures good governance through its constitution and code of conduct, by having a RAP Working Group made up of mainly external members, and accountability and transparency through annual reporting and regular communication. Through the deliverables outlined in this RAP, NADA takes on a leadership role, driving meaningful change within its sphere of influence in the NSW NGO AOD sector.

By delivering on the RAP commitments and staying true to NADA's core purpose, we aim to reduce the harms and negative impacts of alcohol and other drug use on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This *Stretch* RAP builds upon the strong foundation established through NADA's previous *Reflect* RAP and two *Innovate* RAPs. With this next phase, NADA is prepared to take on new challenges and deepen its commitment to reconciliation, through close alignment to the above national strategies and reforms.

Key achievements:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Data Reference Group**

  Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research & Data Reference Group (made up of more than 75% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who will inform, provide feedback on, guide and critically evaluate the way NADA collects, analyses, interprets and reports on data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, both through NADA's database and any research, data and publications. This resulted in NADA developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty statement which is published on the NADA website.

- **Resources/activities:**
  - There were 31 attendees at the cultural supervision webinar which was held in November 2024 to improve awareness and knowledge on cultural safety for service staff in Aboriginal community controlled organisations.
  - A fact sheet on cultural supervision and safety was developed as an outcome of the workshop.
  - A Self-care workshop for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the AOD sector was held in Orange in May 2025 attended by 18 workers.
  - Culturally Responsive Trauma Informed Practice two-day training was held in May 2025 for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff from NADA member services.
  - Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Training was held in October 2025 for NADA staff and NADA member services staff.

- **NADA biennial conference:** The 2025 NADA conference featured an Aboriginal yarning circle and 10 Aboriginal-focused abstract presentations in relation to workforce and providing AOD services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Cultural learning strategy:** Developed NADA's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Cultural Learning Strategy, affirming our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace culture and encouraging staff to enhance their understanding of Aboriginal cultures.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy:** NADA's HR policy was updated to include this strategy which is NADA's commitment to employment and workplace practices that respect and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- **Staff representation:** Increased Aboriginal staff representation from one to two team members in 2024.
- **Leadership commitment:** Representatives from NADA's senior leadership remain actively engaged and committed to the RAP's implementation, serving as RAP Champions within the organisation.

Challenges encountered during RAP implementation:

- **Tracking and reporting:** Identifying an efficient system to monitor and report on RAP deliverables proved challenging. While initial efforts using *Teamwork* were helpful, the transition to Excel provided a more user-friendly and accessible solution for staff, allowing for clearer visibility of progress across all deliverables.
- **Balancing priorities:** Managing RAP commitments alongside NADA's core work projects was difficult, particularly given limited staffing and resources.
- **External engagement:** Maintaining consistent representation and active engagement from external voluntary Aboriginal representatives on the RAP Working Group required ongoing effort and coordination.

KEY LEARNINGS

ADAPTABILITY

Transitioning to Excel for tracking RAP deliverables highlighted the importance of choosing tools that align with staff workflows and accessibility needs. Such tools and systems enhanced engagement and accountability across the organisation.

PRIORITISATION

Integrating RAP priorities with broader organisational goals required careful consideration, especially in a resource-constrained organisation such as NADA. Clear prioritisation and efficient project management processes helped to maintain progress of RAP activities without compromising NADA's core purpose.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

To ensure and continue engagement from the Working Group, NADA reduced meetings from bi-monthly to quarterly and replaced this with an e-update between meetings. NADA acknowledged the difficulty in managing competing priorities and encouraged using email correspondence where required to provide input or advise.

NADA's Key partnerships relevant to this RAP:

- Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network (ADARRN)
- Aboriginal Corporation Drug and Alcohol Network of NSW (ACDAN)
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC)
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the AOD sector
- Social Services Reconciliation Industry Network Group (RING)

NADA RAP WORKING GROUP

This *Stretch* RAP was developed by NADA with advice and input from the NADA RAP Working Group. The NADA RAP Working Group has a total of 16 members made up of 11 external members and 5 NADA staff (including 2 senior leaders who are the RAP Champions). 10 of the members are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

The external working group members represent NADA's stakeholders or member organisations. The external working group were selected through an Expression of Interest application process. The RAP Working Group meets at least 4 times per year, and is Chaired by 2 NADA staff members, one of whom is Aboriginal. NADA staff across the organisation will work to implement the RAP.

Angus Jack Mason	Gomeroi man and representative of the AOD NGO sector
Ashley Thomas	Drug and Alcohol Officer, Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
Elke Wooderson	Redress Support Program Counsellor, The Buttery
Ethan Howard	Executive Officer Strategy and Business Processes, Odyssey House
Gloria Hill	Post Custodial Support Worker, Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
Karla Priestley	Team Leader, Lives Lived Well
Leanne Lawrence	Team Leader, Women and Children's Residential Rehabilitation Service, Waminda
Mary-Anne Whitworth	Manager Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Commissioning Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network
Rebecca Kennedy	RAP Coordinator, Lives Lived Well
Shawnee Rose	Health Education Officer, Uniting's Medically Supervised Injecting Centre
Steve Neale	NSW Community Development manager, Aboriginal and Community Housing Limited
Majella Fernando	Project Coordinator and co-chair, NADA
Maricar Navarro	Operations Manager, NADA
Nathanael Curtis	Aboriginal Research Officer and co-chair, NADA
Raechel Wallace	Aboriginal Program Manager, NADA
Robert Stirling	Chief Executive Officer, NADA

List of members current at April 2026

As NADA is a small organisation of 16 staff (13.3 FTE), assigning responsibilities has been carefully considered. Thanks to open communication channels, close interaction with each other, commitment from the Executive and tight management of deliverables by the Project coordinator, accountability and transparency are easily achieved. NADA RAP deliverable progress updates are provided to the NADA Board at each meeting, and all staff during the monthly staff meeting and Inclusion is a standing agenda item in the staff meeting. Staff are encouraged to raise any concerns or improvements in regard to cultural inclusion. NADA's Cultural Learning Strategy, Human Resources and Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-discriminatory policy are mandatory components of induction for new employees. These policies are regularly reviewed by the staff as per the review timetable keeping the theme of reconciliation and RAP deliverables part of daily work at NADA.

Case study 1

NADA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Data Reference Group

The NADA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Data Group was established to strengthen culturally safe research and data practices within the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector. The group is made up of a diverse membership that includes leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, frontline staff from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and representatives with lived and living experience and from Local Health Districts. Members come from both urban and rural settings, and the group reflects the full spectrum of service delivery through representation from residential and day programs. This diversity ensures that decisions are informed by lived experience, academic expertise, and practical service delivery perspectives.

As a person on several committees and advisory boards what makes this experience truly refreshing for me is the collective strength of the group, the common values and principles and the way the group challenges the status quo. Rather than accepting existing systems, members are actively modelling a new way of doing business—one that is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and grounded in cultural authority. This approach is responsive, collaborative, and deeply committed to doing better for communities. It demonstrates that meaningful change in the sector is possible when Indigenous leadership is not just included but empowered to guide decision-making, *especially in the way the creation of the NADA Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty Statement.*

At its core, the group is committed to upholding the principles of self-determination. Members recognise their role as a conduit between the group and the communities they serve, ensuring that all actions reflect community priorities and cultural values. This commitment underpins every decision and initiative undertaken by the group.

One of the first actions taken was to determine the most respectful and preferred term to represent Indigenous peoples in data and research. To achieve this, the group conducted a survey of all Indigenous members, asking whether they preferred terms such as Indigenous, First Nations, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This process ensured that the language used in reporting and research aligns with community preferences and cultural identity.

Another key priority was the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data *Sovereignty* Statement. This was an iterative process that involved consultation and feedback from all voices within the group. The statement sets out principles for ownership and control of data by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, transparency and accountability in how data is collected, stored, and used, and respect for cultural protocols in data governance. This statement now serves as a foundation for all research and reporting activities within NADA.

By embedding cultural governance and community-led decision-making into its processes, the NADA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Data Group is setting a benchmark for ethical and culturally safe data practices in the AOD sector. The group's work ensures that data is not only accurate but also meaningful and respectful, supporting better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A/Prof Danielle Manton, Director of Indigenous Health Education, Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney

Case study 2

ACDAN: Strengthening Collaboration with ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD Workers

The Aboriginal Corporation Drug and Alcohol Network (ACDAN) is committed to strengthening the capacity, voice and leadership of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers across the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector. Our work is grounded in cultural integrity, community-led practice and the belief that sustainable sector change is only possible when Aboriginal leadership, lived experience and self-determination are at the centre of every conversation and change.

A key part of this commitment is our close relationship with the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA). This year, ACDAN and NADA reaffirmed our shared priorities through an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The strengthened agreement reflects our united approach to culturally informed workforce development, collaborative advocacy, and improving NADA's data systems to genuinely support Aboriginal communities and services.

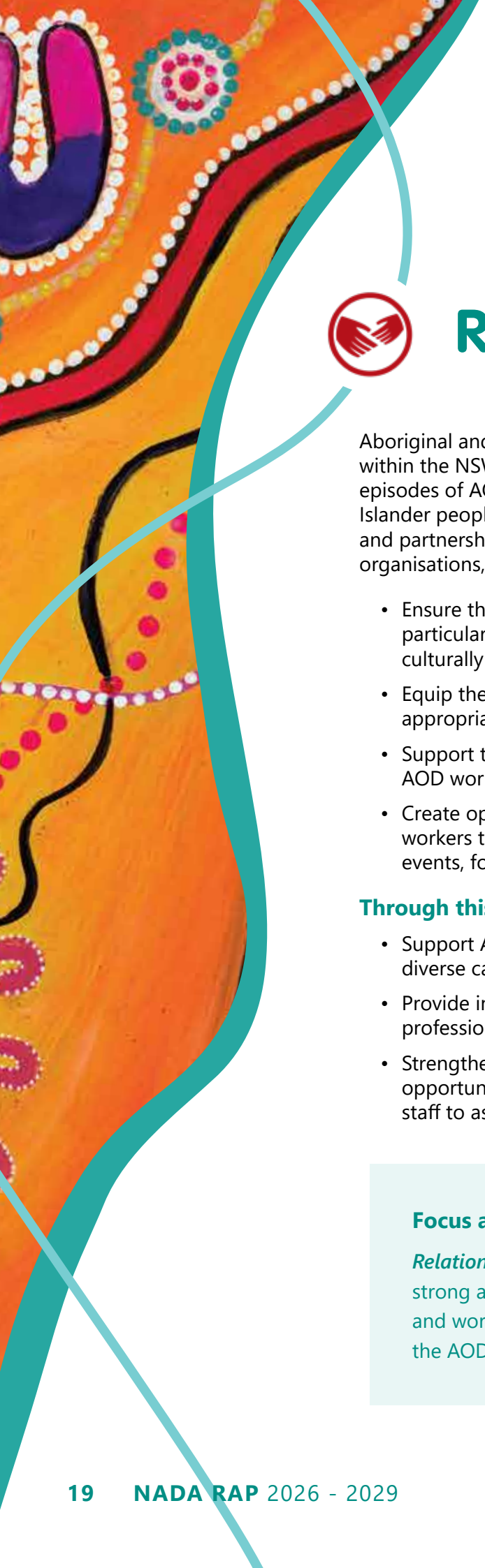
ACDAN continues to participate actively in the NADA Research Group consultation processes, including work on the NADAbase. These consultations ensure Aboriginal perspectives guide how data is collected, interpreted and used, supporting more ethical, culturally safe and meaningful reporting practices for ACCOs. The inclusion of Aboriginal voices in this research and data governance is essential to building evidence that reflects community strengths rather than deficit-based narratives.

Beyond formal structures, NADA generously provides ACDAN with ad-hoc mentoring and support. Their guidance spans complex sector politics, communication strategies, messaging and organisational positioning—areas vital to ACDAN's continued growth and influence. This support helps ensure that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are amplified across the broader AOD landscape and that ACDAN is well-equipped to advocate for the needs of our communities.

NADA has also strengthened ACDAN's connections across the sector by sharing key stakeholders and partners within their network. These introductions have expanded ACDAN's reach and helped build collaborative relationships with services, researchers, policymakers and allied organisations.

Our shared work continues to support ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers through practical tools, cultural advocacy, and a unified commitment to improving outcomes for our people. Together, ACDAN and NADA are building a more culturally responsive, connected and accountable AOD sector—one that recognises the importance of community leadership and supports Aboriginal frontline workers to thrive.

Jade Virgona, Project Officer, Aboriginal Corporation Drug and Alcohol Network (ACDAN)



Relationships

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a priority population within the NSW NGO AOD sector with approximately 25% of all episodes of AOD care were delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NADA is committed to strengthening relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities to:

- Ensure that clients accessing community-based AOD treatment, particularly in regional and rural areas, receive high quality, culturally safe, and appropriate services.
- Equip the non-government AOD workforce with culturally appropriate training, resources, and information.
- Support the growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce and foster unity and respect across the sector.
- Create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers to connect, share experiences, and participate in NADA events, forums, conferences, leadership, and advisory groups.

Through this commitment, NADA will:

- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to pursue diverse career pathways, not limited to specific roles.
- Provide incentives and encouragement for further study and professional development.
- Strengthen staff retention by connecting workers with mentorship opportunities, building confidence, and ensuring safe spaces for staff to ask questions and grow in their role.

Focus area:

Relationships aligns to all of NADA's priorities: leading strong and impactful advocacy; strengthening AOD services and workforce; and, promoting the impact of members and the AOD sector.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive and Program Managers
	• Review, update and continue implementing the engagement plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2026, 2028	Executive and Program Managers
	• Establish and maintain three formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations: o Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network (ADARRN) o Aboriginal Corporation Drug and Alcohol Network of NSW (ACDAN) o Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC)	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Aboriginal Program Manager/Aboriginal Research Officer/ Executive
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator
	• NADA RAP Working Group members to participate in 1-2 external NRW events.	May- June 2026, 2027 and 2028	RAP Working Group
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in 1-2 external events to recognise and commemorate NRW.	May- June 2026, 2027 and 2028	RAP Champions and Executive
	• Organise 1-2 internal NRW events, including at least one organisation-wide NRW event, each year, which includes RAP Working Group members.	May- June 2026, 2027 and 2028	Project Coordinator
	• Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation and engagement with NADA's reconciliation activities among the team	December 2026	RAP Champions and Executive
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through the NADA website, Advocate, and monthly e-newsletters to the AOD sector.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	RAP Champions/ Project Coordinator
	• Positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes through NADA's e-magazine Advocate, the NADA biennial conference (2027), and during site visits or meetings with AOD member organisations.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator/ Communications Officer
	• Collaborate with at least 3 RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement innovative approaches to advance reconciliation through the Social Services RING, RAP Working Group members and NADA members.	June 2029	Executive/ Project coordinator
	• Encourage NADA member services to develop their own RAP by holding 1-2 webinars where NADA members are provided easy to digest information from a representative of Reconciliation Australia on how to develop their own RAP with NADA support	June 2029	Program Managers, Project Coordinator
	• Communicate information about Reconciliation Australia and how to develop a RAP annually via Advocate (e-magazine)	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator/ Communications Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	• Maintain NADA's engagement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), HealthInfoNet and the NSW Ministry of Health (Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs)' Aboriginal Strategic Collaboration Group to ensure Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander clients continue to be recognised as a priority population group	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive, Aboriginal Program Manager, Aboriginal Research Officer
	• Attend a minimum of two RAP Leadership Gatherings hosted by Reconciliation Australia per year	March, June, September, December 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive/Project Coordinator
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/ or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/Executive
	• Continue to implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager /Executive
	• Provide ongoing education to senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, and stances against racism.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	RAP Champions and Executive

Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights is essential to create an inclusive and equitable workforce, specifically for the AOD sector to ensure that our resources and communications are culturally respectful, safe and competent.

NADA will aim to embed respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities every day through these initiatives:

- Recognising and honouring culturally significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by incorporating them into our operational activities. Conversely, NADA will not celebrate January 26, providing staff with an option to choose another day as a holiday
- Embedding cultural protocols: Acknowledgement of Country and people at internal meetings and smaller events; Welcome to Country or similar for larger events
- Sourcing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural works in a culturally respectful and ethical manner, ensuring that all artworks and materials are purchased directly from appropriate member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Including the diversity of perspectives and cultures; especially lived and living experiences by those in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Not placing unfair expectations on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through stereotyping and assumptions
- Recognising and acknowledging that it is inappropriate for non-Indigenous to speak over, lecture, or assume authority over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Creating opportunities where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices are respected and prioritised.

Focus area:

Respect aligns to all of NADA's priorities: leading strong and impactful advocacy; strengthening AOD services and the workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and, promoting the impact of our member services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the AOD sector.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Conduct annual review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/ Executive
	• Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to review the cultural learning strategy and make adjustments if required.	June 2029	Aboriginal Program Manager
	• Review, refresh and communicate the cultural learning strategy for all staff.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/ Executive
	• Commit all RAP Working Group members who are NADA staff, HR managers, senior executive group to undertake formal and structured cultural learning. Offer these opportunities to external RAP Working Group members.	October 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator/RAP Working Group
	• 100% of staff undertake formal and structured cultural learning. o ACAT annual training in each year (face to face) o Online SBS inclusion program for all new staff	October 2026, 2027, 2028	Operations Manager
	• Incorporate cultural immersion activities for staff as part of NAIDOC week and/or National Reconciliation Week activities as well as other professional development activities	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive/Project Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Incorporate Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country in NADA's event management policy and ensure printed acknowledgements are available in meeting rooms • All new staff are informed to familiarise themselves about this policy.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Review and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2026, 2028	Operations Manager
	• Invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year: NADA Conference 2027, International Women's Day annual forum, annual Cross-sector Forums	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/ Project Coordinator
	• Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Arrange Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols at all NADA public events.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Update the displayed Acknowledgment of Country poster at the office reception area	September 2026	Project Coordinator
	• Rename the NADA training / meeting room to the Birrabirragal room following consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council to acknowledge that the location of the NADA office overlooks Birrabirragal lands and waters	September 2026	Project Coordinator/ Executive

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2026, 2027 and 2028	RAP Working Group
	• Ensure HR policies and procedures have no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week activities.	First week in July 2026, 2027 and 2028	Operations Manager
	• Support all staff to participate in 1-2 NAIDOC Week events	First week in July 2026, 2027 and 2028	Executive
	• In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support two external NAIDOC Week events each year	First week in July 2026, 2027 and 2028	Executive/ Project Coordinator
8. Demonstrate recognition and awareness of the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers	• In consultation with internal and external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors, review/ develop one resource which could include trauma-informed care	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Program Managers
	• Hold 2 x workshops and/or training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers focussed on cultural supervision, safety and/or self-care prioritising regional and rural AOD services.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Program Managers

Opportunities

NADA will establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and leadership initiatives across the NGO AOD sector, and support members to achieve these through sector-wide workforce development programs, mentoring, and scholarships.

NADA will continue long-term partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), co-designing joint workforce initiatives, shared training programs, and embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices into sector policy development

Through this NADA will ensure:

- Programs and resources designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are devised, created and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- All Aboriginal Community Controlled NADA member services, alcohol and other drugs workforce and communities have ownership of all NADAbase data. This will be recognised on our NADA website with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty Statement..
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged to be the experts to encourage self-determination
- NADA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are respected, included and empowered and provided equal opportunities
- Embed NADA's procurement strategy and encourage staff to expand the NADA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier database

Focus area:

Opportunities strongly aligns to the NADA priority of leading strong and impactful advocacy and strengthening AOD services and workforce. This is evident due to 21% of NADA member services being Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations, and 12% of the AOD workforce being made up of Aboriginal workers.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on the effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Dec 2027	Operations Manager/ Aboriginal Program Manager
	• Review and update an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	Dec 2027	Executive / Operations Manager
	• Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders through Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times and NADA's own communication channels and monthly e-updates, targeted to ACCOs and all NADA members.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive / Operations Manager
	• Ensure HR policies and procedures have no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive / Operations Manager
	• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions – to be incorporated in the recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	October 2026	Executive / Operations Manager
	• Maintain and look for opportunities to increase current proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers employed by NADA and on the NADA Board	December 2027	Executive / Operations Manager
	• NADA will continue to advocate for traineeships or other similar opportunities to grow the workforce of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within NADA member services	June 2027, 2029	Aboriginal Program Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Review and update the NADA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	December 2026, 2028	Operations Manager
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2026, 2028	Project Coordinator / Executive
	• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2026, 2028	Operations Manager
	• Maintain commercial relationships with at least 3 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses, including: Big River Connections, Yamurrah and Kallico Catering.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager
	• Utilise services or goods from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses at least five times each year.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/ Administration Officer
	• Inform all staff about procurement from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	December 2026, 2028	Operations Manager/ Administration Officer
	• When considering a purchase, where suitable and relevant, staff will refer to the list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers within NADA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement strategy.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/ Administration Officer
	• Broaden the NADA Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Procurement policy to include 5 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive and Program Managers

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to lead and guide NADA research and how NADA interacts, analyses and translates NADAbase data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	• NADA will consult with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research & Data Reference Group to provide feedback on, guide and critically evaluate the way we collect, analyse, interpret and report on data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Aboriginal Research Officer
	• NADA will seek ethics approval via the AHMRC Ethics Committee to ensure that we are using a culturally appropriate ethical framework for our research	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Aboriginal Research Officer
	• Regularly communicate NADA's commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty Statement to NADA members through NADA events and online	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Aboriginal Research Officer

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group	June 2027, 2028, 2029	RAP Champions
	• Review and update the Terms of Reference for our RWG.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator/ RAP Working Group
	• Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation and provide e-updates in-between meetings	Feb, June, Sep, Dec annually	Project Coordinator/ RAP Working Group
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Embed resource needs for RAP implementation	May 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028	Executive/ Project Coordinator
	• Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive/ Operations Manager
	• Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator
	• Maintain two internal RAP Champions from senior management.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Executive/ Project Coordinator
	• Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings and staff meetings.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Operations Manager/Project Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss important RAP correspondence.	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator
	• Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, Sept, Dec annually	Project Coordinator
	• Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings through the NADA website, Advocate and monthly e-newsletters to the AOD sector.	December 2026, 2027, 2028	Project Coordinator
	• Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2028	Project Coordinator
	• Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	June 2029	Project Coordinator
	• Meet with Reconciliation Australia a minimum of twice a year to share progress on RAP implementation	June 2027, 2028, 2029	Project Coordinator/ NADA Executive
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2029	Project Coordinator

CONTACT DETAILS

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NADA
network of alcohol and other drugs agencies