

**1: Cover**

**Riverina Water County Council**

**Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan**

**July 2024-December 2025**

## 2: Our RAP Artist and Artwork



**I have a deep connection with the land of Wiradyuri country and I am passionate about this area. My art reflects my ties to the area and communities within from the regional cities of Griffith to Wagga to the vast landscape that spans from the mountains in the east, to the wide plains of the west of this beautiful Wiradyuri Country.**

I was born in Narrandera NSW, on Wiradyuri country, into a family of 10 children. We lived with my mum and dad at the bottom of the Sandhills in Narrandera, at a place known affectionately as "Down The Lane".

I have dabbled in art for over 30 years, in an informal way completing works with my brother. I started creating artworks as an outlet to help me in dealing with my son's mental illness, which led to my formal art career commencing back in early 2016. My artistic expression of my lived experiences and the land which I call home are what I portray in my works, using traditional dot painting and concepts to create works that also have a contemporary feel.

I created the piece *Living Water* for Riverina Water, and it tells the story of fresh clean water being delivered to Wagga and the surrounding towns and villages.

The platypus represents the clean water in Marshalls Creek, which can be attributed to the filtering provided by Riverina Water, making the creek a sustainable and friendly environment for the platypus to thrive.

The goanna represents Wiradyuri country on which the clean water is distributed. I have also included other Wiradyuri symbols to represent Aboriginal culture. All over this Wiradyuri territory surrounding Wagga Wagga, indicated in blue and green, representing the meeting places or campsites, which are the places where the water is flowing to the communities.



**Owen Lyons**

<https://owenlyonsart.com/>  
[enquiries@owenlyonsart.com](mailto:enquiries@owenlyonsart.com)

### 3: Acknowledgment of Country

*Riverina Water County Council acknowledges the Traditional and continuing Custodians of the land we supply water on, the Wiradyuri people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future, as well giving our respect to all First Nations Peoples living in this community.*

*We recognise the deep cultural connection Wiradyuri and First Nations communities have with the lands and waters of this region.*

*In this plan we have used **Wiradyuri** spelled with the 'dy' to be in keeping with the spelling and sounds used by Uncle Stan Grant Snr in his Wiradjuri Dictionary. We also acknowledge that as an oral language translated into English both spellings are correct and acceptable.*

Grant, S., & Rudder, J. (2010). A new Wiradjuri dictionary. O'Connor, A.C.T.: Restoration House.

#### **4: A Message from Reconciliation Australia**

1 page of text to be provided by Reconciliation Australia after conditional approval of plan – a message from the CEO Karen Mundine welcoming Riverina Water to this process.

## **5: A Message from our Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer**

On behalf of Riverina Water, we are pleased to present our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We pay our respects to the Wiradyuri people, Traditional Custodians of the lands we operate in and express our true appreciation for care provided for these lands and waters over countless generations. It is now important for us to acknowledge the truths of the past, to listen to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities people in our community, and to walk the path towards a better future for everyone.

We are on an ongoing journey toward embedding cultural reflection and action within our organisation. We are proud that Riverina Water is ready to take the next step forward by developing and delivering our first Reconciliation Action Plan; building on initiatives and changes already made within our organisation.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan working group is dedicated to creating a deeper understanding within our organisation and building stronger relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We believe that Riverina Water can and will reflect the diversity of the community we operate in. This may not always be an easy journey, but we are committed to making real changes that have a tangible impact in our community.



**Tim Koschel**

Chairperson



**Andrew Crakanthorp**

Chief Executive Officer

## 6: Our business

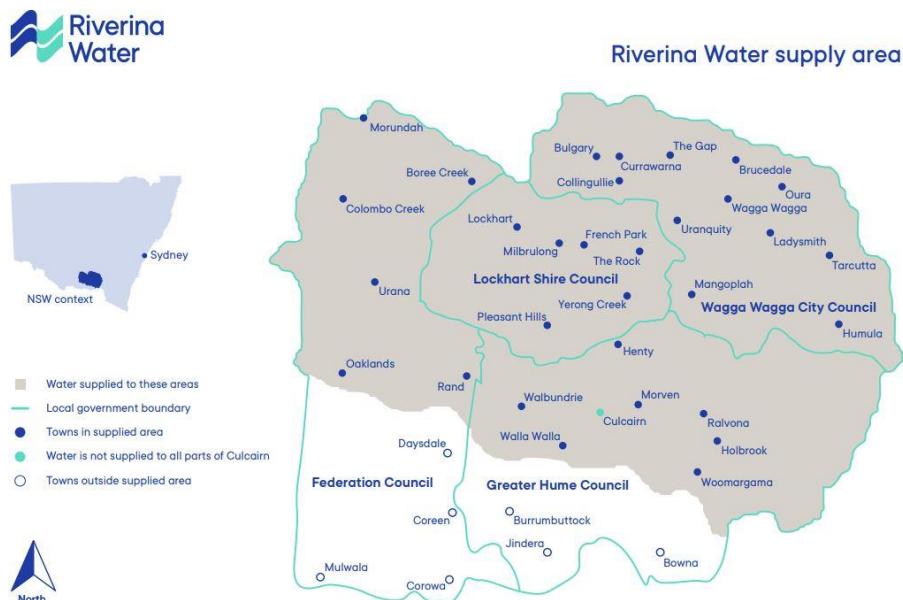
Riverina Water was formed in 1997 as a County Council, specifically for the purpose of water supply and operates under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993. Our history extends back to 1938 when the Southern Riverina County Council was incorporated to make reticulated water available to towns and villages in the shires of Lockhart, Urana, Holbrook, Kyeamba, Mitchell and part of Culcairn Shire.

We now supply water to an area of approximately 15,400 square kilometres and contains a population of more than 77,000 people, in the local government areas of Wagga Wagga, Lockhart, Federation and Greater Hume. Our supply area is entirely within Wiradyuri Country.

In 2022-23, Riverina Water had more than 33,000 connections. Water is sourced from groundwater bores and the Murrumbidgee River, Marambidya Bila.

Water is the backbone of the Southern Riverina region. It's an essential resource which underpins everything we do from drinking, cooking and cleaning through to recreation, heating, cooling and the running of business, industry and agriculture. Water helps our communities grow and thrive.

- *Maps with our 'Area of Supply' + State Context map with Wiradyuri to be included, as per examples:*





According to the latest census data (2021) 5.5% of the population across the four LGAs serviced by Riverina Water (Wagga Wagga, Federation, Lockhart and Greater Hume) identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. In the most populous LGA of Wagga Wagga this rises to 6.6%, over double the national figure of 3.2%.

Riverina Water currently has 118 employees but does not formally collect cultural background data when onboarding new employees. Collecting this data will be discussed as part of our RAP process, and we will also discuss options to understand this information in a culturally safe way.

## 7: Our Vision, Mission and Values

**Our Vision** is to provide passionate and professional leadership in the water industry.

**Our Mission** is: to provide our community with safe, reliable water at the lowest sustainable cost.

**Our Values** are: Respect, Connection, Safety and Cooperation

### Our strategic priorities:

*Our people:* We have a high-performance culture, achieved through accountability, diversity, respect and investment in our people; *Our business:* We strive to be an industry leader by continuously improving our operations and the management of our assets; and *Our community:* We enable our community and customers to thrive by providing exceptional service and demonstrating social responsibility.

### Our whole-of-organisation focus areas are:

*Customer-centricity:* We put customers at the heart of everything we do.

*Innovation:* We are a successful organisation that pursues innovation and continuous improvement at all times.

*Sustainability:* We are environmentally responsible, financially secure and aspire to have a positive impact on our natural world.



## 8: Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Riverina Water is undertaking the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process to better connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to create a greater level of cultural awareness and understanding within our organisation, and to identify the real changes we can implement to contribute to greater opportunities and outcomes for First Nations peoples, particularly the Wiradyuri people whose lands we operate on.

As a water provider we recognise the importance of our role in looking after a precious natural resource and believe that we can play a supportive part in caring for country. By implementing this plan, we hope to gain a better understanding of the cultural importance of water in our region, to build connections and to further facilitate water education in this area.

### Our journey to date

- In February 2022 local Wiradyuri man Mark Saddler took a group of senior staff at Riverina Water on a cultural tour around its sites and the region, providing them with insights into the history and cultural importance of the area.
- From February 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness online training was rolled out to all current Riverina Water staff. This training was then also made a mandatory part of all new staff members' induction process.
- In 2023 Riverina Water commissioned a large-scale artwork by acclaimed Wiradyuri artist Owen Lyons. The artwork *Living Water* shows the Murrumbidgee River and Wagga Wagga along with Marshalls Creek, which runs adjacent to Riverina Water's main offices and water treatment plant. The smaller meeting places or campsites represent the many communities and towns across Riverina Water's supply area, while symbols and animals such as the goanna and platypus represent Wiradyuri Country. Owen Lyons' work was commissioned for display and for branding, and now features as the key artwork in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The artwork proudly hangs in the foyer of Riverina Water's public meeting room, where Board members from across the supply area gather to make decisions.
- In December 2023 our CEO Andrew Crakanthorp and members of the Customer and Communications team met with two local Aboriginal groups in Wagga – Mawang Gaway, and the Wagga Local Lands Council. These meetings were a way to start an initial dialogue with community, to inform right from the start that we were beginning our RAP process, and to take on board thoughts and ideas. We have reached out to other local Aboriginal groups and meetings with them will also be part of our Reflect RAP process.

- In January 2024 Riverina Water made a donation towards a public concert of Aboriginal performance organised by Mawang Gaway. The event details were circulated to staff and RAP working group members as an opportunity to engage with local Aboriginal artists.
- In February 2024 Riverina Water finalised a working group of staff members committed to the process of developing this RAP, and they met for an initial introductory session. The RAP working group comprises people from across different areas of the organisation; one of the members is a Riverina Water employee who identifies as Aboriginal. The Riverina Water CEO Andrew Crakanthorp is the RAP Champion and is keen to take on responsibility for leading the implementation of the RAP.
- The RAP working group will be attending local NAIDOC week activities 27 May – 3 June 2024 to further engage with our community.

## 9: Our RAP working group

- Andrew Crakanthorp, Chief Executive Officer, RAP Champion
  - Clr Tim Koschel, Board Chairperson
  - Clr Jennifer McKinnon, Board Member
  - Tobi Aluko, People and Culture Business Partner
  - Josh Lang, Customer and Communications Team Leader
  - Derek Motion, Communications and Engagement Officer
  - Fiona Smith, Water Quality Supervisor, Operations area representative
  - Colin Fisher, Welding Supervisor, Projects area representative
  - Lyle Burgess, Painter/Building Assistant, Aboriginal staff member
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- Bernard Higgins, consultative member, Mawang Gaway, Wagga Aboriginal Elder Reference Group

## Section 10-14: Action Plan

Tables as below, grouped under 4 headings: **Relationships, Respect, Opportunities, Governance**

### Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	December 2024	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	December 2024	Customer and Communications Team Leader
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	March 2024 and 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June 2024 and 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June, 2024 and 2025	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</li> </ul>	July 2024 (following final Board adoption of RAP)	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can</li> </ul>	December 2024	CEO

	engage with on our reconciliation journey.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	December 2024	CEO
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to research and promote practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
<b>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area, and how we can recognise this.</li> </ul>	June 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including</li> </ul>	September 2025	CEO, Director Corporate Services, Director Engineering

	Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing policies or procedures relevant to Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Protocols.</li> </ul>	April 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	July 2024 and 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</li> </ul>	July 2024 and 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	First week in July, 2024 and 2025	CEO, RAP working group Chair

## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation, including opportunities for traineeships and scholarships.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted traineeships and award scholarships for professional development</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	September 2025	People and Culture Business Partner
<b>9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li> </ul>	September 2025	Manager Finance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li> </ul>	September 2025	Manager Finance

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.</li></ul>	February 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li></ul>	December 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</li></ul>	December 2023	CEO
<b>11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</li></ul>	June 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li></ul>	December 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.</li></ul>	December 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</li></ul>	December 2024	CEO
<b>12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li></ul>	June 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Survey.</li></ul>	1 August 2024 and 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Survey to Reconciliation Australia.</li></ul>	30 September 2024 and 2025	CEO
<b>13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.</li></ul>	September 2025	Customer and Communications Team Leader



## **15: Back Page:**

### **Queries and Contact**

Please direct all enquiries about our RAP to:

*Communications and Engagement Officer*

*Phone: 02 69220607*

*Email: [community@rwcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:community@rwcc.nsw.gov.au)*