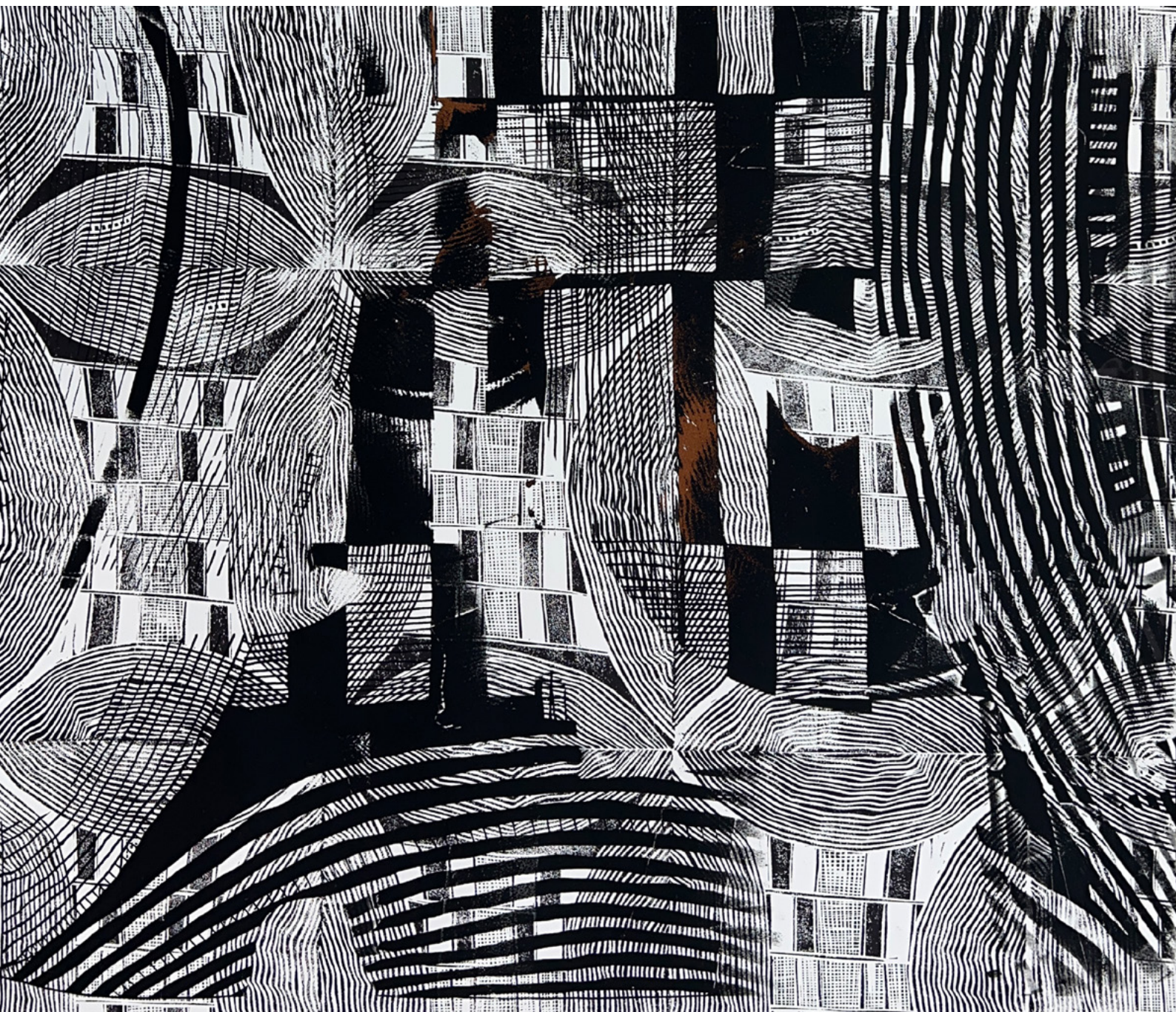


March  
2023—  
March  
2025

Reconciliation  
Action Plan:  
Innovate



NETS  
VICTORIA.



# Reconciliation Action Plan: Innovate

March 2023—  
March 2025

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We welcome feedback on NETS Victoria's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

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## Front Cover

Lisa Waup  
*oneness (24) 2022*  
screen-painting on Somerset cotton rag paper 300gsm,  
ink, reflective glass road beads, ochre  
112 x 76 cm  
Courtesy the artist  
Photograph: Spacecraft

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# Acknowledgement of Country

NETS Victoria acknowledges and pays respect to the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) People of the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters on which our office is based.

NETS Victoria also pays respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands and seas across Victoria and throughout Australia and acknowledges Elders past and present. Working across Country would not be possible without the continuing custodianship of Australia's First Peoples of their unceded lands. It is our privilege to work on Country. NETS Victoria pays our deepest respects to Country and those who have looked after it.

NETS Victoria works towards supporting regional Victorians and regional Australians and connecting them with extraordinary contemporary art, craft and design. This means that NETS Victoria has the opportunity to work with many First Nations artists, curators, professionals and communities. NETS Victoria thanks them for sharing their knowledge, cultural expressions and stories.

Judy Watson  
*standing stone, kangaroo grass, red and yellow ochre* 2020  
acrylic and graphite on canvas  
250 x 181.5 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane  
Photo: Carl Warner  
Presented in *Looking Glass: Judy Watson and Yhonnie Scarce*, a TarraWarra Museum of Art and Ikon Gallery exhibition, touring nationally by NETS Victoria 2020 – 2023, curated by Hetti Perkins.



# Abbreviations

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AMaGA	Australian Museums and Galleries Association
FNEC	First Nations Engagement Coordinator
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums
HR	Human Resources as led by NETS Victoria's Board of Management and Director
ICIP	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
MGNSW	Museums & Galleries of NSW
NAIDOC	Originally the acronym for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week, and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself. NAIDOC Week celebrations across Australia celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
NETS	National Exhibitions Touring Support Victoria (NETS Victoria)
NGV	National Gallery of Victoria
NRW	National Reconciliation Week
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RAPWG	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

# Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and is accepted as such by the community in which they live.
Cultural Safety	<p>A culturally safe environment is an environment in which people's culture is respected and celebrated. It is an environment where people feel completely comfortable sharing their culture with their colleagues.</p> <p>It is where the principle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is put into practice through genuine partnerships, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are in control of when and how their culture is accessed and interpreted.</p>
First Nations People or First Australians	Persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. The term reflects the diversity of cultures of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.
Indigenous people	Persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent and the clans or language groups and communities they belong to.
RAP Champion	Reconciliation Action Plan champion is an internal self-nominated senior member of NETS Victoria Staff who acts as a champion ambassador and spokesperson for the RAP. The RAP Champion is the Director of NETS Victoria.

**NOTE:** NETS Victoria acknowledges and respects the diversity of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorian cultures and pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all over Australia, who are currently living in Victoria.

In this Reconciliation Action Plan we prioritise the use of the term "First Nations Peoples" to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and oldest living culture in the world. That said, we acknowledge people's right to define their relationship to culture and in our work we endeavour to be as specific as possible in our language, acknowledging appropriate clan and family names, and be responsive when people correct us with their preferred terminology.

# Artist's Statement

## *oneness*

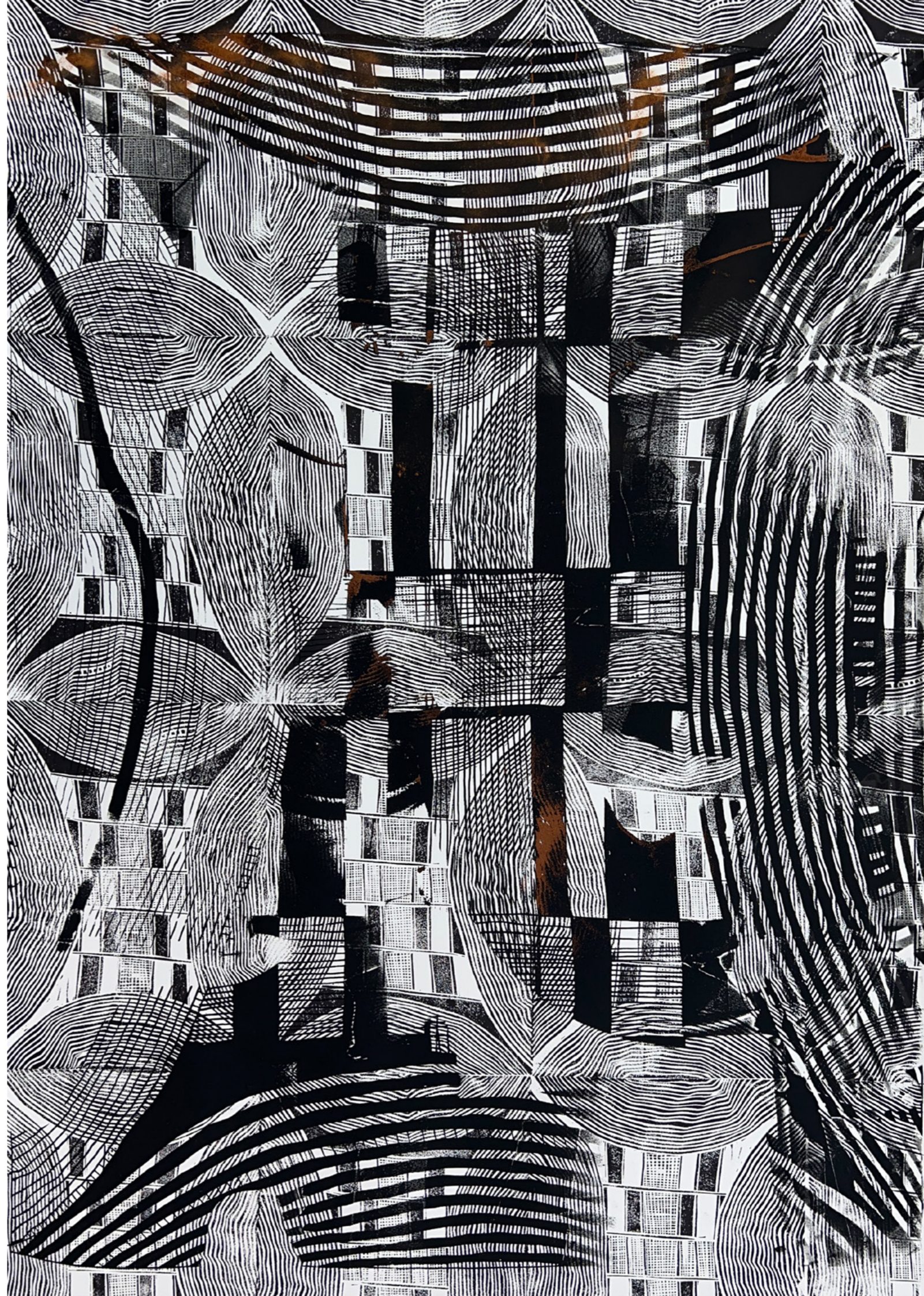
I was given up for adoption at birth, adopted into a family that has unconditionally loved me all my life. I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for my mum, dad and brother – especially my mum. My parents are Australian Italian, Italians are extremely family orientated people – everything revolves around the family. I have learnt this and carried this all my life – my art practice is journey pinned around family, Country, tracing lost history and identity wrapped in storytelling. My art has given me a place to be able to process and to express my life's path – one that was altered at birth. It has been a long road, and it will be a lifelong process for me to find Lost, Stolen and Hidden family through my Mama (birth mother). I feel that I too am honouring her words with the connections I have been given about my family, connections, and history, and my ability to express this through a visual language. I feel through my birth I have broken a past cycle of Lost, Stolen and Hidden children/family – I have learnt to hold on a little tighter to my children, to dedicate my life to them, for them to realise how special they are – a learnt precious tool from my mum.

*oneness* details the many aspects of who I am, *oneness* is centred around identity – where I belong, where I long to belong. *oneness* translates to a state of being unified or whole, though comprised of two or more parts.

## Artist's Profile

Lisa Waup is a mixed-cultural and First Nations woman, multidisciplinary artist, and curator. Born in Naarm, Waup's practice is studio-based, and involves the creation of objects. There is a strong connection of symbology through her work and materiality which connects her to family, Country, history, and story. She works across jewellery, experimental printmaking, photography, sculpture, textiles, fashion and weaving, and her work eloquently illustrates her life's journey through discovery and connection. Waup's practice highlights the importance of tracing lost history, ancestral relationships, motherhood, and time, and ultimately incorporates stories of her past, present and future woven into contemporary forms. At present, she is a Lecturer in the Drawing and Printmaking Department at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.

Lisa Waup  
*oneness (24)* (detail)  
2022  
screen-painting on  
Somerset cotton  
rag paper 300gsm,  
ink, reflective glass  
road beads, ochre  
112 x 76 cm  
Courtesy the artist  
Photograph:  
Spacecraft



# Message from the Board

This will be NETS Victoria's first RAP, but it will not be our last. We see our reconciliation journey as continuous rather than a task with a defined end date. Within recent years and within this RAP we have identified our current spheres of influence. We see the opportunities to promote reconciliation within our organisation through our governance and policy frameworks, and we see opportunities to promote First Nations-led story telling through our programming. NETS Victoria's unique structure means that we also have the opportunity to influence the practices of external professional project partners.

As NETS Victoria's Board we have a role to play in guiding NETS Victoria in both its current plans and future aspirations. This RAP focuses on what we hope to achieve within our current sphere of influence in the next two years. As we implement the actions and deliverables within this RAP we also look forward to ensuring NETS Victoria's ambitions and capacities grow still further, as we continue our journey.

# Message from the Director

It is an exciting phase at NETS Victoria as we acknowledge our role as a peak body in communicating and honouring Australia's oldest living culture. We have a proud past of supporting and representing the artworks and creative visions of First Nations artists and curators. In the last two years we have made considerable progress in cementing these values through policies and procedures. We are more committed than ever to strengthening this work to ensure our organisation is culturally safe for our Board, our committees, our staff and the artists, curators, and contractors we work with.

This Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan outlines achievable goals for the organisation that we proudly endorse.

**Claire Watson**

# Message from Reconciliation Australia

**Karen Mundine**  
Photograph Joseph Mayers

Reconciliation Australia commends NETS Victoria on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for NETS Victoria to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, NETS Victoria will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of *relationships, respect, and opportunities* emphasises not only the

importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. NETS Victoria is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals NETS Victoria's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations NETS Victoria on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# NETS Victoria's Vision for Reconciliation

NETS Victoria's vision for reconciliation is that First Nations arts, cultures, histories, and stories are central to our understanding of who we are as a nation and are always honoured and respected.



## Our plan to reach this vision

NETS Victoria will embed First Nations perspectives in every area of operation including program planning, management and governance. In this way, NETS Victoria will create an organisation that celebrates and promotes First Nations perspectives and reconciliation. We will also be able to provide our stakeholders practical support and guidance to build their own capacity to promote and celebrate First Nations stories and cultural expressions.

NETS Victoria sees our vision as a continuing process in which we are constantly building our own capacity to improve support to our stakeholders on their own reconciliation journeys. As such, our key objectives within our vision for reconciliation includes growing and maintaining:

- First Nations perspectives embedded in every area of operation;
- strong First Nations programming;
- strong relationships with First Nations-run organisations;
- a reputation as sector leader in First Nations engagement;
- a catalogue of training resources;
- databases of digital and physical references;
- strong diversity of applications to the Exhibition Development Fund
- increased investments in First Nations artists; and
- reputation for flexibility in work practices and collaborations

We see success as a flexible process that celebrates First Nations stories, strengthens communities. We are always ready to learn and grow.



## NETS Victoria: Our Business

NETS Victoria was established in 1985 as an Australia Council for the Arts initiative to create a national network of visual arts touring organisations – National Exhibitions Touring Support Australia (NETS Australia).

As a member of the NETS Australia network, the purpose of NETS Victoria is to:

- develop, curate and tour innovative contemporary visual art exhibitions and projects that engage with a diverse audience, including in partnership with other organisations; and
- support regional Victorians and regional Australians to access and engage with extraordinary contemporary art, craft and design.

We employ 3 part-time non-Indigenous employees and 1 First Nations employee. Since 1991 NETS Victoria has been based at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), on the lands of the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) People of the Kulin Nation. However, NETS Victoria has a nation-wide reach to regional and remote as well as metropolitan audiences. This means that NETS Victoria often works on the lands of many different First Nations communities and countries.

NETS Victoria's primary stakeholders are regional galleries as well as curators, audiences and arts workers throughout Victoria and Australia-wide.

## Vision

To connect and inspire diverse communities, through access to cutting-edge contemporary art that challenges the status-quo and celebrates multiple viewpoints.

## Goals

**Artistic Excellence and Courage:** We will deliver a bold, forward-thinking and inclusive Artistic Program that reflects the diversity of contemporary Australian artists and their stories, and the diverse needs of audiences.

**Sustainability:** We will ensure longevity and good governance through exceptional policy and planning frameworks, and by nurturing a positive and supportive workplace.

**Advocacy and Innovation:** We will use our unique position as a connector organisation between galleries, artists arts workers, and curators between metropolitan and regional centres to act as a responsible advocate for the sector, and a positive ambassador for the arts more broadly.

## Our Values

**Collaborative Leadership:** We listen and we lead.

**Radical Transparency:** We share openly what we do, why we do it, and how.

**Integrity:** We demonstrate best practice, respect and ethical courage.

**Equity:** We address disparities to create just and inclusive outcomes.

## NETS Victoria's Innovate RAP

NETS Victoria understands its position as an influencer for galleries and venues throughout Australia. We also understand the importance of art practice in the truth telling process, and re-storying place. Historically, gallery spaces throughout Australia have focused on Eurocentric narratives. This has had a silencing effect for many people, and promoted distorted, untrue and one-dimensional histories of Australia.

NETS Victoria respects First Nations people as the owners of their experiences and stories. NETS Victoria is developing our RAP because we want to play a meaningful role in re-storying these spaces and facilitating processes of First Nations-led truth telling. Cultural Safety is crucially important to truth telling and reconciliation. Venues must be culturally safe spaces front and back of house – for staff, project partners and audiences. A culturally safe space is where First Nations self-determination is put into practice through genuine partnerships and where First Nations people are in control of when and how their culture is accessed and interpreted.

NETS Victoria's reconciliation journey sees us building our capacity to promote First Nations-led truth telling through our exhibition and education programs and promoting cultural safety within our organisation. NETS Victoria is also in the unique position of having many external stakeholders, and so as NETS Victoria is building its own capacity we look forward to supporting venues across Australia in their own reconciliation journeys.

## NETS Victoria's Reconciliation Journey

In recent years NETS Victoria has commenced our reconciliation journey and worked hard to improve our First Nations engagement practices. NETS Victoria recently engaged in professional skills development opportunities including *Cultural Competency and First Nations People* and anti-racism training. Over the last year we have also focused on revising our policies and procedures to ensure they give our staff and project partners good guidance on First Nations engagement particularly through the development of our Artistic Programming. We are grateful to the First Nations consultants who kindly provided their time to share their experiences with NETS Victoria. It is thanks to them, that our policies and procedures were able to undergo a robust review.

In 2020 NETS Victoria focused on the recruitment of First Nations people onto the Board, and within NETS Victoria's management team. Our Board has been fortunate to welcome palawa woman Bec Cole as our Chair. In addition, our First Nations Engagement Coordinator, Nirim Baluk woman Isobel Morphy-Walsh joined in July 2022-March 2023 following Jenna Rain Warwick, proud Luritja woman's appointment from November 2020 – May 2022. Also, in 2020 we established a new Artistic Program Advisory Committee to increase cultural diversity amongst the leadership team and to build an inclusive Artistic Program that reflects the diversity of contemporary Australian artists and their stories. We are glad to have Curator of Indigenous Art at the NGV, Myles Russell-Cook on the Committee, joined by Kokatha and Nukunu artist Yhonnie Scarce. Over the next year we are looking forward to the development of an Indigenous Advisory Group.

Over the next 10 years, and with the help of our RAP and increased government funding, we hope to achieve much more. In 2032 we will:

- be actively supporting galleries in First Nations-led truth telling processes;
- continue working with First Nations artists and promote Indigenous led exhibitions and interpretations;
- have staff who are proud of our mission statement and organisational values;
- enjoy a workplace that is culturally safe for our staff, project partners and collaborators;
- be flexible in our employment arrangements so we attract and retain talented First Nations staff. This includes responding to the needs of First Nations staff who are also balancing family and cultural responsibilities with work;
- be a resource for our stakeholders (especially our venues) as they build cultural safety within their own organisations; and
- be accountable to our First Nations staff and collaborators. This includes being ready to respond to challenges and change to improve our practices.



Yhonnie Scarce  
*Hollowing Earth*, 2016–17  
Blown and hot formed Uranium glass  
Dimensions variable  
Photograph: Janelle Low  
Courtesy of the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY  
Presented in *Looking Glass: Judy Watson and Yhonnie Scarce*, a TarraWarra Museum of Art and Ikon Gallery exhibition,  
touring nationally by NETS Victoria 2020 – 2023, curated by Hetti Perkins.

# The NETS Victoria Team

NETS Victoria’s RAP champions are the Director and First Nations Engagement Co-ordinator. NETS Victoria’s RAP is also championed by NETS Victoria’s Board of Management. We also owe gratitude to our Artistic Program Advisory Committee for their assistance and support in developing this RAP. We have established a RAP Working Group (RAPWG) who will oversee the progress, reporting and promoting of the RAP.

## NETS Victoria’s Board of Management

Bec Cole (palawa)	Chair
Tammy Wong Hulbert	Deputy Chair
Amy Cao	Treasurer
Claire Watson	Secretary
David Sequeira	Board member
Isobel Morphy Walsh (Taungurung)	Board member
Nasalifya Namugala Namwinga	Board member
Nicole Monteiro	Board member (NGV Representative)
Joshua White	Board member
Rhynah Subrun	Board member

## NETS Victoria’s Team

Claire Watson	Director
Vacant	First Nations Engagement Coordinator
Erin Mathews	Exhibitions Coordinator
Jessica Row	Exhibitions Coordinator

## Artistic Program Advisory Committee

David Sequeira (Chair)	
Isobel Morphy-Walsh	Taungurung
Myles Russell-Cook	Wotjobaluk
Yhonnie Scarce	Kokatha and Nukunu
Zoë Bastin	

## Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Claire Watson	Director NETS Victoria
Vacant	NETS Victoria First Nations Engagement Co-ordinator
Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taungurung)	At least 1 First Nations Community Representative (can also be a Board member or a member of NETS Victoria’s Artistic Program Advisory Committee or the Indigenous Advisory Group once established)
Tammy Wong Hulbert	Board member
Zoë Bastin	Artistic Program Advisory Committee Member

# Commitment to 'First Peoples Roadmap'

NETS Victoria supports the 'First Peoples Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries' (the Roadmap) produced by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA). We are committed to engaging with First Nations artists, curators, venues and communities through our programming and stakeholder engagement. We are committed to building those professional relationships to promote First Nations-led truth telling and re-storying of spaces. In addition to reimagining representation and embedding First Nations values within our business and programming, we are committed to increasing opportunity for our First Nations staff by creating a culturally safe workplace that is also flexible in its working arrangements and invests in professional development opportunities. We believe that embedding First Nations voices in our management and programming, and building long-term relationships with First Nations communities throughout Australia, will also build a practice of two-way caretaking of cultural materials.

NETS Victoria also anticipates with interest the AMaGA's planned update to their 2005 policy, *Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities: Principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage*. A consultation draft for the [First Peoples: Connecting Custodians: Principles and Guidelines for Australian museums and galleries working with First Peoples cultural material](#) is currently available. The proposed revision reflects several significant changes to the previous policy, reflecting a shift in focus that emphasises the needs of First Nations communities when it comes to connecting with the museums and galleries sector. Additionally, NETS Victoria notes that AMaGA's *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries* is also undergoing review with a view to embedding First People's active engagement in the *Standards*.



Djirri Djirri Wurundjeri Women's Dance Group (Dancers include Wurundjeri, Dja Dja wurrung, Ngurai illum-wurrung)  
*Wominjeka*, 2018—20  
Video projection, 2 minutes 26 seconds  
Filmed by Ryan Tews  
Installation view: *WILAM BIIK*, at TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2021.  
*WILAM BIIK* is a TarraWarra Museum of Art exhibition touring with NETS Victoria, 2021—2023.  
Courtesy of the artists  
Photograph: Andrew Curtis

# Case study: First Nations Engagement Coordinator

NETS Victoria appointed Nirim Baluk woman Isobel Morphy-Walsh in July 2022 – March 2023 as First Nations Engagement Coordinator, a position previously held by Luritja woman Jenna Rain Warwick from November 2019 – May 2022. This role was deemed as critical for the organisation to support First Nations curators and artists across the NETS Victoria Artistic Program. We also recently engaged Terri Janke and Company, an Indigenous owned and run firm of lawyers and consultants, to develop a new Artistic Program Policy. As part of this process, they consulted with artists and curators (“consultants”) who have worked with Jenna over the last few years. Feedback for Jenna Rain Warwick was extremely positive.

The role of First Nations Engagement Coordinator is critical to maintaining collaborators’ confidence in the process. Any consultants or collaborators must be kept informed of the progress of the project and feel comfortable raising small concerns before they turn into big ones. This role also provides a First Nations cultural lens and understanding to any issues that are encountered by artists, staff or with the project.

Currently we are touring numerous exhibitions with First Nations artists including:

- *Looking Glass: Judy Watson and Yhonnie Scarce*,
- *One foot on the ground, one foot in the water*,
- *Notions of Care*,
- *Wilam Biik*, and
- We recently presented a series of billboards by three First Nations artists (Lisa Waup, Steven Rhall, and Amrita Hepi).

Touring these exhibitions to galleries across Victoria (and interstate) to venues with little to no First Nations persons on staff, means that the role of First Nations Engagement Coordinator is critical in supporting cultural safety of the exhibiting artists, curatorial team, viewers and guests, whether they are First Nations or not. It ensures meaningful and authentic experiences and expressions.



Visitors at the *Looking Glass: Judy Watson and Yhonnie Scarce* opening, Flinders University Art Museum & City Gallery SA, 2021.

*Looking Glass: Judy Watson and Yhonnie Scarce*, is a TarraWarra Museum of Art and Ikon Gallery exhibition, curated by Hetti Perkins and toured nationally by NETS Victoria 2020–2023.

# Case study: Billboards

The *Billboards* project was the first of its kind and was initiated in response to Covid-19 restrictions as galleries closed and touring was unforeseeable. Curated by the previous NETS Victoria's First Nations Engagement Coordinator Jenna Rain Warwick, a proud Luritja emerging artist and curator, this project was unique because instead of touring an exhibition to regional galleries, artists were commissioned to create work for a roadside billboard. Three First Nations artists Lisa Waup Gunditjmara, Steven Rhall Taungurung and Amrita Hepi Bundjaulung (Aus) and Ngapuhi (NZ), were each partnered with a Victorian regional gallery Mornington Peninsula Regional Art Gallery, Mildura Arts Centre and Horsham Regional Art Gallery. Funded by Creative Victoria, this project established relationships with each regional gallery's respective Aboriginal land council. This was also another first, as a NETS Victoria had previously not had relationships with land councils and this was a requirement stipulated by the funding body that these relationships not only set a precedent but continue to be utilised in the future.

Unique in its inception and delivery, the billboards artists were able to see their works in a large and very public context.



Installation view:  
Steven Rhall  
*Ideas of First Nations art practice and late capitalism, 2022*  
Billboard: 52  
Seventh St, East  
Mildura, Victoria  
A Mildura Arts  
Centre exhibition  
presented in  
partnership with  
NETS Victoria.

Installation view:  
Lisa Waup  
*Journeyed, 2022*  
Billboard: 2061  
Frankston-Flinders  
Road, Hasting,  
Victoria  
A Mornington  
Peninsula Regional  
Gallery exhibition  
presented in  
partnership with  
NETS Victoria  
Photograph:  
Christo Crocker

# Case study:

## One foot on the ground, one foot in the water

*One foot on the ground one foot in the water* is a touring exhibition curated by Travis Curtin, that offers varying perspective of grief, dying and re-birth. Developed at La Trobe Art Institute with tour support by NETS Victoria, the exhibition presents diverse cultural materials including works by renowned Tiwi artists Timothy Cook and Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri, as well as Jija artist Mabel Juli and the late Yolnu artist Nawurapu Wununmurra.

The project demonstrated a considered understanding of distinct First Nations ways of doing and being by the curator as he interwove non-Indigenous and Indigenous artists' work within the exhibition. The relationships built are ongoing as the artists continue to be involved in the public programs of the exhibition. NETS Victoria hopes to continue these relationships to the benefit of our organisation and artists. We are extremely proud to have supported this tour and its related materials including the exhibition catalogue and learning resource, both of which were overseen by First Nations Engagement Coordinator Jenna Rain Warwick.



Installation view: *One foot on the ground, one foot in the water*, at Bunjil Place, 2022.  
A La Trobe Art Institute exhibition toured by NETS Victoria 2022-2023.  
Photograph: Christian Capurro

# Relationships

NETS Victoria is committed to building strong relationships with First Nations artists, curators and organisations. NETS Victoria understands that it is too often forgotten that relationships between First Nations people and collecting and interpreting institutions lasts long after the conclusion of the exhibition, or the lifetime of the arts worker. For some First Nations communities, relationships with institutions are viewed with distrust. This distrust is often based on the fact that collecting institutions are a Western construct and have spent the last 200 years taking the voice away from First Nations artists and disconnecting communities from their cultural material. This means that cultural institutions need to start actively investing in repairing these relationships by building trust, being accountable and creating culturally safe spaces.

NETS Victoria will build lasting relationships with First Nations staff, project partners and communities based on accountability, cultural safety and flexibility.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.</b>	1.1 Meet with local First Nations stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	March 2023	FNEC
	1.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with First Nations stakeholders and organisations that is embedded in the overarching Strategic Plan.	December 2023	FNEC
	1.3 Develop a reference list of support services available and promote it amongst First Nations collaborators.	August 2023	FNEC

<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023, 2024	Director
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2023, 2024	FNEC
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2023, 2024	Director
	2.4 Organise at least one event each year that embeds the values of NRW.	May 2023, 2024	FNEC
	2.5 Register any NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2023, 2024	Manager Partnerships and Communication/ FNEC
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	3.1 Develop a methodology for raising awareness of reconciliation across our workforce, including promotion of this RAP. Our methodology will consider how we can raise further awareness amongst existing staff.	June 2023	FNEC
	3.2 Ensure that this RAP is included in our induction materials for all new staff.	March 2023	Director
	3.3 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	March 2023	Director
	3.4 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2023, 2024	Director
	3.5 Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	June 2023, 2024	Director
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination procedures and strategies.</b>	4.1 Conduct a review of NETS Victoria's existing policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, cultural competency provisions and future needs.	May 2023, 2024	Director
	4.2 Seek feedback from NETS Victoria's Indigenous Advisory Group on our anti-discrimination policy provisions.	July 2023	FNEC
	4.3 Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism, the importance of diversity, and the requirements of cultural safety.	September 2023	FNEC
	4.4 Develop an anti-discrimination strategy for NETS Victoria.	March 2024	FNEC
	4.5 Implement the anti-discrimination strategy.	Review December 2024	FNEC



# Respect

NETS Victoria understands that respect for First Nations communities and stories means playing a proactive role in our own learning, respecting the Country that we are fortunate to be able to visit and exhibit on, and promoting First Nations-led truth telling in our education and exhibitions programs. NETS Victoria respects First Nations peoples as the owners of their stories. As such, First Nations people have the right to control how their stories are accessed and shared. It is our responsibility to establish culturally safe spaces in which these stories can be shared, so that our venues can be re-storied. Re-storying benefits and heals the communities that tell these truths, and the nation as a whole.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	5.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	January 2024	FNEC
	5.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or First Nations advisors to inform our cultural competency strategy.	March 2024	FNEC / Director
	5.3 Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	September 2024	FNEC
	5.4 Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	May 2023, 2024	Director

<b>6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations People by observing cultural protocols.</b>	6.1 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2023	Director (FNEC support)
	6.2 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	May 2024	FNEC
	6.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	Where possible, at every exhibition opening – report Dec 2023, 2024	FNEC
	6.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	March 2023	Director
<b>7. Establish and implement best practice in relation to First Nations engagement within our organisation and its projects, programs and deliverables.</b>	7.1 Collate and share publicly available a list of training resources, First Nations cultural awareness and safety resources within the context of art, galleries and exhibitions.	July 2023	FNEC
	7.2 Establish and maintain a database of relevant culturally sound digital and physical references on best practice within our sector.	September 2023	FNEC
	7.3 Seek and be responsive to feedback from artists, institutions and communities on our practices and resources through providing options for consultation including evaluation forms and phone and video-interview.	Jan 2024	Director
	7.4 Maintain and strengthen the inclusion of First Nations-led curatorial projects and programs in the broader NETS Victoria artistic program. In assessing and reporting on this consider the qualitative feedback from First Nations collaborators.	June 2023	Director
<b>8. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	8.1 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July, 2023, 2024	FNEC
	8.2 Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May annually	Director
	8.3 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July, 2023,2024	FNEC

# Opportunities

NETS Victoria is committed to embedding First Nations perspectives at all levels of the organisation, including governance, management, programming and partnerships. We are committed to increasing First Nations recruitment within our organisation in all roles. We are committed to making NETS Victoria a culturally safe and attractive workplace – one in which First Nations staff will want to grow and build their careers.

We also see opportunities to support our external stakeholders into becoming culturally safe and rewarding workplaces as well as opportunities to partner with First Nations run businesses.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development.</b>	9.1 Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2024	Director
	9.2 Engage with First Nations staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2023	Director
	9.3 Develop and implement a First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	September 2024	FNEC and Director
	9.4 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders.	Review December 2023, 2024	Director
	9.5 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Nations participation in our workplace.	May annually	Director
	9.6 Establish a network of First Nations consultants and/or casual contractors that can be engaged as required to consult on exhibitions, policies, educational programs and more.	September 2023	Director

<b>10. Increase diversity of First Nations suppliers to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	10.1 Develop and implement a First Nations procurement strategy.	July 2023	FNEC
	10.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 2023	FNEC
	10.3 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses to staff.	July 2024	FNEC
	10.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses.	September 2024	Director
	10.5 Develop commercial relationships with First Nations businesses.	July 2024	FNEC
	10.6 Develop a reference list of First Nations owned catering businesses. Use this list when organising catering for NETS Victoria events, staff lunches, meetings etc.	November 2023, 2024	FNEC
<b>11. Increase First Nations Participation in key programs funded, auspiced or organised by NETS Victoria</b>	11.1 Create a communication strategy specifically targeting First Nations artist communities and curators for key artistic programs. This will communicate about programs and opportunities run by NETS Victoria. An example of this is the Exhibition Development Fund.	July 2023	FNEC
	11.2 Assess the diversity of applications annually and use this assessment to check if the communication strategy has been successful in increasing diverse participation or further work needs to be done.	September 2023	FNEC

# Governance, tracking progress and reporting

NETS Victoria acknowledges the importance of ongoing progress-tracking and reporting to ensure the successful implementation of this RAP. Strong governance structures will embed reconciliation in NETS Victoria's daily practice, and regular reporting mechanisms will help NETS Victoria track progress and make further improvements.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	12.1 Maintain First Nations representation on the RWG.	March 2023, 2024	Director
	12.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	March 2023	FNEC
	12.3 Develop and implement a First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Commencing March 2023	FNEC
<b>13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	13.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	April 2023	FNEC
	13.2 Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2023	Director
	13.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2023	FNEC
	13.4 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	April 2023	FNEC
	13.5 Ensure First Nations representation on the Board and on major programming committees.	March 2023	FNEC
	13.6 Regularly review NETS Victoria Board to maintain diversity of representation and adjust targets as required.	December 2023, 2024	Director

<b>14. Establish and maintain an effective Indigenous Advisory Group to provide advice on matters of reconciliation, cultural sensitivities, protocols and best practise for NETS Victoria</b>	14.1 Establish First Nations representation on the NETS Victoria Indigenous Advisory Panel.	June 2023	Director
	14.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Advisory Group.	May 2023	FNFC
	14.3 Meet at least twice per year to discuss issues and provide recommendations, raise issues of cultural sensitivity or best practice.	July 2023	FNFC
<b>15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	15.1 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 2023, 2024	FNEC
	15.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023, 2024	FNEC / Director
	15.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2023, 2024	FNEC / Director
	15.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, September, December 2023, 2024	Director
	15.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	September 2023, 2024	Director
	15.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	FNEC
	15.7 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	March 2025	Director
<b>16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	16.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	October 2024	Director

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NETS Victoria is grateful for the generous support of our valued partners.



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