



# The Discovery Science and Technology Centre

## Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2022 - November 2023

## Acknowledgment of Country

### Early Years

*I want to teach you all a thank you that we like to do here at Discovery. Feel free to do the hand motions with me.*

*Here is the land where we live, learn and play (touch the ground)*

*Here is the sun and the sky (reach up to the sky)*

*Here are my friends from all around (arms sweeping in front)*

*And here am I (hands pointing to self)*

*Thank you to the Dja Dja Wurrung people of the Kulin nation*

*for looking after the land and sharing it with us.*

*We promise to look after it (hands on heart)*

*The animals, and people too.*

### Older Children and Adults

*We would like to acknowledge that the Discovery Centre is on the traditional land of the Dja Dja Wurrung clan of the Kulin Nation, and recognise that they are among the first scientists, astronomers, and engineers in human history. We pay respect to them, their culture and knowledge, and to the Elders, past, present & emerging. Through our work here, we promote scientific understanding in the hope that we can help tend to this land to keep it healthy for future generations.*

## **Our Business:**

The Discovery Science & Technology Centre is a not for profit incorporated association and was officially established on 31 October 1995.

Located in the centre of Bendigo, Discovery was Australia's first science and technology centre outside of a major metropolitan area.

We are governed by a Board of Directors and have approximately 20 Bendigo Science and Technology Museum members, 15-20 staff, and over 300 family memberships. We have over 32,000 visitors to our centre each year and host numerous educational programs for schools, kindergartens and community groups.

Our purpose at Discovery is to inspire and nurture scientific curiosity. We highlight diverse, rewarding Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) pathways and careers. We engage curiosity and boost the confidence of young children, their families, educators and community to explore STEM in our centre's relatable, uniquely regional context. Our work addresses educational disadvantages in regional Victoria.

Discovery delivers inspirational science education through fun immersive STEM activities. The philosophy that underpins our exhibit design and program development is to educate, entertain, and encourage an interest in the sciences for children, enlighten and capture the interest of older community members. We offer more than 100 individual exhibits, including our permanent star attractions:

- The Bendigo Planetarium
- Australia's first vertical slide
- Kaleidoscope – a dedicated early learning space, and
- The Lab, the space where engaging STEM workshops are run.

During school holidays, we run a daily scheduled program of science shows, maker activities and planetarium shows based around a different theme for each of the school holidays. We also offer parties, sleepovers and an exciting and varied annual program of events.

### **FOR LOCALS**

We offer individual and family memberships for local families who want to visit Discovery regularly. We run weekly 3-5year old literacy and

STEM sessions. We also are a place for parents to relax and catch up whilst children play, explore and learn.

To the broader community we offer:

- venue hire
- team building exercises
- community shows at fairs and festivals
- fun and educational evening events
- support for tertiary education institutions

Our retail space sell presents, experiments and art whilst playing host to a range of amazing creative works from local artisans.

FOR EDUCATIONAL GROUPS; Our education programs are designed, delivered and run by a highly passionate team, who have more than 40 years of combined experience in education and science communication.

SCHOOL VISITS AND WORKSHOPS; We offer in-centre, hands-on school programs which are designed with the Victorian curriculum in mind to develop skills in imagination, teamwork and resilience.

EARLY LEARNING VISITS; Our newly refurbished early learning space, Kaleidoscope, is a tactile, sensory and interactive space where young children can safely investigate, play and learn. Our range of specially designed workshops introduce scientific concepts in a fun and engaging way whilst meeting curriculum goals.

INCURSIONS; Not every school can come to Discovery, so we take our Discovery Challenge Workshops to them! These curriculum-based workshops provide the opportunity to exercise imagination, teamwork and resilience, combining creativity and problem solving.

VIRTUAL DISCOVERY; We offer weekly live online workshops where students engage, interact and perform experiments along with our science communicator. It is free for rural and regional government primary schools across Victoria thanks to the support of the Department of Education and Training. To support teachers, we also offer professional development, networking opportunities and advice on how to bring STEM into the classroom.

Currently our organisation has no known staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. While the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not known, we will work within the implementation of this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this information.

## **Our RAP:**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first peoples of Australia. First Nations Peoples are the first scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians, and the first practitioners of environmental sustainability and respectful community engagement, they are members of the oldest continuous living cultures, and continue to make tremendous contributions across all facets of society, such as economy, science, and more. Recognising these truths motivates this launch of Discovery's first *Reconciliation Action Plan*.

In March 2021 we formed our Reconciliation Working Group and began the process of drafting our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Across the team, we have undertaken staff professional development on understanding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and on how to establish strong, positive relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Through our Reflect RAP, we will lay the foundations and prepare our workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives. This Reflect RAP is our public commitment published on [Reconciliation Australia's website](#), as well as shared through our newsletter, social media, and website.

As we adopt the new Discovery Centre Strategic Plan, with a focus on *Discovery Renewed* and *STEM for All*, underpinned by values of inclusion, respect, community, and sustainability, it is a fitting time to make this commitment to reconciliation. Looking forward, Discovery Science and Technology Centre aims to shine a light, honouring the contributions that First Nations' ways of knowing make to understandings of the world. To do this we will continually foster mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and partners.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to Reconciliation and the actions outlined in the RAP, the RAP Working Group will report monthly to

the Board and will include Discovery staff and volunteers in activities and opportunities to engage, learn and reflect throughout the RAP process. This will also serve as an opportunity for all members of our organisation to provide feedback.

Discovery management and upper level staff will continue to work closely and foster relationships with Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises - the representative body for, in particular their Djandak Cultural Services arm, to continue to expand the knowledge and skill of staff and volunteers at Discovery.

**RAP Champion:** General Manager - Alissa Van Soest

**RAP Working Group Members:**

- Vice President of the Board - Scott Daniel
- General Manager - Alissa Van Soest
- Science Communicator - Kendal Fairweather
- Early Years Program Developer- Angela Holdaway

Currently our organisation has no known staff or volunteers that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a first step in establishing First Nations representation on our RAP Working Group, we will connect with the communities where we operate to establish relationships Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to ensuring First Nations peoples who provide their time and knowledge to our organisation are fairly remunerated.

## **Our Current Partnerships/Activities:**

In recent years, Discovery has been involved with a number of First Nations events and programs to support reconciliation. For example, Discovery has been part of NAIDOC week celebrations and Sorry Day Ceremonies to show our support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As part of the Central Victorian Indigenous Film Festival, we have hosted annual film screenings both online, under COVID, and in the Discovery Auditorium. We have adapted Curious Kids, one of our flagship workshop programs, to a First Nations audience and rebranded as Koorius Kids. This grant-funded program involved collaboration with local Elders and community Leaders to develop free activities that are culturally relevant and shared local knowledges. Koorius Kids provided opportunities for local families to engage with First Nations culture in the Discovery Centre and introduced 3-5 year olds and their carers from the broader Bendigo region to First Nations' ideas, knowledges, and skills.

One important way in which we've embedded reconciliation into our programs was through tailoring our Acknowledgement of Country to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands we operate on. This was carried out in consultation with a local First Nations person from the Mitchell Shire. As an organisation committed to communicating science and to reconciliation, our revised Acknowledgement of Country highlights how the First Peoples of Australia are both the first story-tellers, and the first scientists, astronomers, and engineers.

## Reflect

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Discovery will identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	November 2022	General Manager
	Discovery will research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	January 2023	General Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Discovery will circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May, 2023	General Manager
	Host an NRW week event at Discovery each year.	May, 2023	Science Communicator
	Register our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	April, 2023	Science Communicator

	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event	June, 2023	General Manager
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May, 2023	General Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2022	General Manager
	Discovery will identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey	November 2022	Science Communicator
	Discovery will identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	November 2022	Science Communicator
	Discovery will continue to celebrate First Peoples' knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering, Astronomy, and Mathematics by recognising those knowledges and stories in our Acknowledgement of Country	November 2022	General Manager
	Discovery will update our educational programs and media to highlight prominent First Nations STEM contributors/changemakers	July 2023	Science communicator
4. Promote positive race relations	Discovery will research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	November 2022	HR Board member

through anti-discrimination strategies.	Discovery will conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2022	HR Board member
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<b>Respect</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledges and rights through cultural learning.	Discovery's RAP working group will develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledges, and rights within our organisation.	December 2022	Science Communicator
	Discovery will conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation	March 2023	Early Years Program Developer
	Discovery will provide staff with professional development related to First Peoples knowledge, in Science Technology Engineering and Math education.	March 2023	Early Years Program Developer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait	All Discovery staff and board members will develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	January 2023	Science Communicator

Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Discovery will increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2023	Science Communicator
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Discovery will raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and our sphere of influence about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2023	Science Communicator
	Discovery will introduce our staff and community to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2023	General Manager
	The RAP Working Group will participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	General Manager

<b>Opportunities</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment,	Discovery leadership will develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	December 2022	General Manager
	Discovery will build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2023	General Manager

retention and professional development.			
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Discovery will develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	November 2022	Retail Manager
	Discovery will investigate Supply Nation membership or alternatives that otherwise support and uplift First Nations creators, makers and suppliers. <a href="https://supplynation.org.au/">https://supplynation.org.au/</a>	November 2022	Retail Manager
	Discover will procure the service of a First Nations artist to create an artwork Acknowledging Country for The Discovery Science and Technology Centre	July 2023	General Manager
10. Increase recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge throughout	Discovery staff will research and learn from examples of where other organisations have created science and technology classes that embed and or recognise First Nations knowledge	March 2023	Science Communicators
	Discovery will engage First Nations cultural experts/educators to develop an educational workshop for children that includes a culturally appropriate component on First Nations knowledge of biology and ecology	February 2023	Science communicators

educational content in science shows and workshops	Discovery will engage First Nations cultural experts/educators to develop an educational workshop for children that includes a culturally appropriate component on First Nations astronomy	February 2023	Science communicators
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<b>Governance</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Discovery will form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	November 2022	General Manager
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2022	Vice President of the Board
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2022	Science Communicator
	Review the effectiveness, enthusiasm and outcomes achieved by the Reconciliation Working Group and review, update and reaffirm processes and decisions made.	February 2023	General Manager
12. Provide appropriate support for effective	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November 2022	General Manager

implementation of RAP commitments	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	November 2022	General Manager
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally	November 2022	Vice President of the Board
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	December 2022	Vice President of the Board
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	November 2022	Early Years Program Developer
	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	Early Years Program Developer
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023	Early Years Program Developer
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	June 2023	Early Years Program Developer

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