Government of South Australia

Office for Early Childhood Development

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2026 – May 2028



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

OECD Acknowledgement of Country

From the heart

We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the First peoples of South Australia and as Custodians of the lands, waters, skies and Communities where we live, learn and raise children. We recognise Aboriginal peoples as having the longest living Culture, raising children safe and strong in their identity, Community, Culture, and connected to Country.

We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present, and their role as the first knowledge sharers for children. We follow in their footsteps.

Aboriginal peoples, working with and for children, are central in shaping our work. Their wisdom, advice, and guidance enriches our practices, creating a more inclusive and Culturally safe environment for children and families.

We respect Aboriginal peoples' ways of being, doing and wise practices guiding our continual learning. Together we walk and build stronger, more supportive Communities for all children.

Language

Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' respectfully applies to people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. We respect the preference to use the term 'Aboriginal' to acknowledge in written and spoken language both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also acknowledge that Torres Strait Islanders may refer to themselves as Zenadth Kes, which is an amalgamation of Torres Strait language names for the 4 winds that pass through the region. Where other terms have been used, such as First Nations, this reflects the terms used in a publication or work that has been summarised, referenced or cited.

Terminology

The terms 'Culture' and 'Community' are capitalised throughout this document to respectfully acknowledge the deep spiritual and social significance of Culture and Community. In doing so, we seek to emphasise the profound and holistic interconnectedness between Country, Culture and Community.

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Message from the OECD Chief Executive



Since our formation in August 2023, the Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) has made significant progress towards creating a Culturally safe and inclusive way of working internally and with the Early Childhood Education and Care sector.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) strives to build strong foundations, so that we can continue to build and expand on our relationships to engage in reconciliation meaningfully.

We have a strong ambition to be a leader in creating a Culturally safe, inclusive and forward-thinking organisation. We pride ourselves and feel privileged that truth telling, co-design and wise practice are at the heart of how we work.

Over the next 18 months, our Reflect RAP commits all staff of the OECD to not only understand the importance of reconciliation, but to create positive outcomes and social change. To ensure meaningful engagement and the adoption of wise practice, we have adopted an employee-led approach to developing and implementing our RAP. Central to this approach has been listening to the voices of our staff to shape our RAP actions and deliverables.

I look forward to continuing our reconciliation journey and building on the work our staff have achieved so far, highlighted in our partnerships and current activities section.

Kim Little
OECD Chief Executive

Message from Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Office for Early Childhood Development to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Office for Early Childhood Development joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 5.5 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

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

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

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

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

This Reflect RAP enables Office for Early Childhood Development to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Office for Early Childhood Development, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our Reconciliation Artwork

As part of the OECD's reconciliation journey, Ashleigh Bruza, an emerging artist and Wirangu, Kokatha woman on Kaurna Country was commissioned to create artwork for the OECD.

The artwork titled "Starting off strong" draws inspiration from the fundamental aspects required for Early Childhood Development. The artist approved the artwork and its story message to inspire our reconciliation journey and to be featured across our organisation.



Artwork by Wirangu and Kokatha artist Ashleigh Anne Bruza

"Building strong ties to Culture, Community, and customs is crucial for First Nation children, providing them with the optimal foundation to flourish during their formative years and as they continue on their life journey.

At its essence, the piece emphasises the child's path, while the surrounding elements symbolise the essential tools for their growth. These elements encompass connections to Culture, Community and customs.



The journey depicts Child's development and significant milestones. Colours are inspired by the core elements in the style guide – creative, taste, feel and nature.



Cultural elements that are essential influences to Child Development such as Community, food and customs."
- Ashleigh Bruza.



Our business

The OECD was formed with a clear mandate: to create a fairer and better future for all children in South Australia. Established in 2023, the OECD is South Australia's early childhood development system steward guided by the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

The OECD is a champion for transformative change to ensure every South Australian child has a flying start. The OECD partners with governments and departments, Aboriginal leaders, sector stakeholders, unions, the professions, parents and the Community to create a better and fairer future for all children across South Australia. The OECD is working systemically and locally to create the quality preschool supply needed for South Australia and to support service integration and connection for families.

As a steward, the OECD is leading and guiding initiatives to improve outcomes for children and families through:

- Expanded universal early childhood system service
- High quality preschool programs
- More support delivered for children who need it
- Deep system and service connections created
- Closing the Gap Priority Reforms embedded in early childhood.

The OECD works systemically and locally through a sector and regional-based engagement approach. A statewide network of Local Teams is bringing the early childhood reforms to life across diverse Communities of South Australia. Local Teams live and work in the Communities they serve, to create stronger, trusted relationships. The network is made up of 8 Local Teams dedicated to regions across South Australia and include:

- Adelaide CBD, eastern suburbs
- Western suburbs
- Inner southern suburbs
- Inner northern suburbs, Adelaide Hills
- Outer northern suburbs, Barossa Valley
- Outer southern suburbs, Fleurieu Peninsula
- Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, Outback
- Riverland, Limestone Coast.

The OECD is a new agency, committed to ensuring a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace that is rapidly establishing and building on its current workforce of over 160 employees where 4% of OECD staff identify as Aboriginal people (as at 30 June 2026).



Our RAP

The OECD is uniquely placed as a system steward of the early childhood development system to create positive outcomes and social change by championing equity, diversity, and inclusivity. Reconciliation is a core value of the OECD that has an integral impact on how we roll out preschool reforms. We endeavour to:

- Improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and families
- Increase Aboriginal workforce across the sector
- Decrease child development vulnerabilities
- Create positive social change through equitable opportunities
- Be a leader in creating a Culturally safe, inclusive, and forward-thinking organisation.

RAP Working Group

Central to our commitment to reconciliation was the establishment of the RAP Working Group (RWG), comprising employees from a diverse range of teams across the OECD; membership is extended to all Aboriginal staff. The RAP is championed by the Executive Director, Government Relations, Workforce and Quality, and monitored by our Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

RAP Development

The development of the OECD's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was guided by the views and insights of staff in relation to:

- why reconciliation and a RAP was important
- skills and knowledge needed to positively engage in reconciliation
- what a successful RAP looks like.

Staff views and insights shaped the development and implementation approach for this RAP. The RWG consolidated staff views and insights to develop this RAP, and provided their own input, advice, and review of our RAP.

Staff feedback has been themed in line with the principles of "Knowing, Being and Doing", a framework for Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training that has been co-designed by the Aboriginal Co-Design Governance Group (ACGG) established by the OECD.

Each of the content areas focus on building Cultural knowledge, safety and empowerment for all staff at all levels. The framework defines:

- **Knowing:** The practice of knowing refers to the development and incorporation of new knowledge into your practice. This includes having a broad overview of the histories, Cultures and languages of Aboriginal people, including employees, children and young people.
- **Being:** The practice of being focuses on self-awareness, personal values, and behaviours. This includes having a strong sense of self-awareness, recognising the diverse Cultural and linguistic needs of Aboriginal people, and building on relationships with Aboriginal employees, families, and Communities to develop a Culturally responsive environment.
- **Doing:** The practice of doing refers to practical application of the expertise to real situations and embedding Culturally responsive practices.

A summary of staff feedback guiding our Reflect RAP and its implementation is provided below.

Knowing: the OECD will increase what we know through historical acknowledgement and reconciliation centred around:

- Acknowledgement of history to create a stronger future together
- Historical injustices and promoting social harmony
- Reconciliation principles embedded in everyday practices, policies and programs
- Truth telling, respect and increased equity.

Being: OECD staff will foster positive engagement and respectful relationships, demonstrating individual accountability and leadership for:

- Strong, respectful and meaningful relationships and partnerships that create opportunities and promote equity
- Seeking Cultural advice from Elders and Aboriginal leaders
- Creating a Culturally safe environment for Aboriginal staff to share and talk about their experiences
- Embedding Cultural awareness, understanding, safety and inclusivity
- Embracing, supporting and learning from truth telling and Cultural activities, celebrations, events and education
- Living our shared understanding of what we do to support and facilitate reconciliation
- Establishing and role modelling Culturally safe norms, protocols and expectations.

Doing: the OECD is committed to progressing reconciliation and will achieve its RAP vision through:

- Buy-in and commitment from the whole organisation
- Applying a Cultural lens across our shared and individual commitments
- Investing in training, learning opportunities and RAP deliverables
- Strong corporate governance and executive leadership to monitor and address RAP progress
- Celebrating and promoting RAP progress.

Our partnerships and current activities

The OECD is committed to Closing the Gap Priority Reforms that are central to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Aligned to Closing the Gap Priority Reform One: Formal partnerships and shared decision making, the OECD has proudly demonstrated its commitment to collaboratively working to effect real change through:

- Establishment of the Aboriginal Co-Design Governance Group (ACGG) co-chaired by the OECD and South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC). The ACGG oversee the co-design of 3-year-old-preschool reform initiatives specific to Aboriginal children, families and Communities, and a complementary Aboriginal Workforce Strategy.
- Establishment of the Minister's Early Childhood Advisory Forum (MECAF), which engages sector voices and early childhood experts to advance the government's long-term ambition to help all South Australian children to thrive. Membership includes representatives from Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON), SAAETCC and Aboriginal professionals and organisations that work with Aboriginal children and families.
- The Office for Early Childhood Development Bill 2024 was one of the first pieces of legislation to utilise the South Australian First Nations Voice to Parliament ensuring that Aboriginal self-determination will be supported as part of the legislation.
- The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP), where the OECD uses its membership for transformative action to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children.

Increasing Aboriginal participation in the early childhood workforce demonstrates the OECD's commitment to Closing the Gap Priority Reform Two: Building the Community-Controlled Sector. South Australia's Aboriginal Early Childhood Workforce Strategy (2025-2027) was co-designed in partnership with the ACGG and underpinned by Community co-design with South Australian Aboriginal Communities to strengthen and grow the Aboriginal workforce within the Early Childhood Education and Care sector across South Australia. By embedding Aboriginal perspectives and leadership across early childhood education services, and in partnership with their families, Aboriginal children are supported to thrive from the very start of life. Key highlights of the Strategy include:

- Culturally safe, Aboriginal-specific early childhood taster courses delivered by Tauondi Aboriginal College with support from Aboriginal sector experts
- Financial support through paid placements and scholarships for early childhood education qualifications
- Embedding Aboriginal Cultural Safety in the sector and empowering services to grow their Cultural knowledge
- Aboriginal-specific career pathways, and career development scholarships
- Culturally-responsive recruitment practices.

The OECD proudly adopts Aboriginal Cultural considerations in the workplace encouraging all staff to participate in NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week events, investing in learning and education with Kaurna language sessions, and promotion of an Acknowledgement of Country that is from the heart.

The OECD Aboriginal Leadership Committee (ALC), conceptualised and established by Aboriginal staff, is a key mechanism to build a Culturally safe and responsive organisation as prescribed in Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three: Transforming Government Organisations. The ELT is committed to meeting with the ALC quarterly for strategic conversations relating to the Cultural safety and responsiveness of the OECD. Additionally, the coordinator of the ALC is a member of the ELT. The purpose of the ALC is to:

- Provide a strategic focus on increasing Cultural safety across the OECD
- Monitor the Cultural safety and appropriateness of the OECD and identify areas for improving Cultural safety
- Create a strong network of Aboriginal staff across the OECD in a Culturally safe way
- Create a mechanism to amplify the voice of Aboriginal staff in the OECD.

Relationships

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. **Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.**	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	November 2026	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	Establish an OECD centralised and approved register of Aboriginal organisations relevant to the early years.	November 2026	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	Develop internal relationship management guidelines to support coordinated engagement with stakeholders and maintenance of the stakeholder register.	March 2027	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	Develop and embed wise practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations[1].	November 2026	Executive Director, Participation, Integration and Inclusion
2. **Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).**	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2027	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2027	Chief Executive
3. **Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.**	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May, July, and December 2027	Chief Executive
	Build and expand our relationships with external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2027	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	Continue to drive Closing the Gap Priority Reform One outcomes through active participation and support in the Aboriginal Co-Design Governance Group (ACGG), Minister's Early Childhood Advisory Forum (MECAF), South Australian First Nations Voice to Parliament and the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP).	May 2027	Executive Director, Government Relations, Workforce and Quality
	Identify RAP and other like-minded government and Community organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
4. **Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.**	Research wise practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination[1].	March 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2027	Director, Enterprise Services

[1] Best practice is commonly accepted as a proven method or approach for a given situation. Wise practice centres Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being with an emphasis on local context, knowledge, Cultural considerations and diverse perspectives. Wise practice approaches harness local solutions to address local issues, where a single 'best' method might not be appropriate for every situation.

Respect

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
5. **Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through Cultural learning.**	Develop approach and gain internal budget approval for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal Cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Promote a calendar of significant Cultural dates and a schedule of activities that increases understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	February 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Conduct a review of Cultural learning needs within our organisation guided by Cultural awareness, understanding, safety and inclusivity training aligned to Early Childhood Education and Care sector Cultural safety training.	December 2026	Director, Enterprise Services
	Engage external Cultural advisory to provide truth telling, testing our Cultural safe norms, protocols and expectations.	February 2027	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Commence organisational-wide Aboriginal Cultural safety training program.	May 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
6. **Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing Cultural protocols.**	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	February 2027	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	Commence introduction of OECD induction and onboarding processes that are tailored to acknowledge and learn about the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	May 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Commence all staff training program that increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind Cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols through providing Kaurna language training, broader Aboriginal language training where available and listening to the Aboriginal Leadership Committee.	May 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
7. **Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.**	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week in consultation with the OECD Aboriginal Leadership Committee.	June 2027	Chief Executive
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area including attendance at the NAIDOC March and Family Fun Day.	June 2027	Executive Director, Change and Engagement
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2027	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group

Opportunities

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
8. **Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.**	Implement the South Australian Government commitment to increase the employment of Aboriginal people in the public sector by taking action within OECD to utilise the Aboriginal Employment Register, providing mentoring and leadership development opportunities for Aboriginal staff and sourcing strategic advice from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment on Aboriginal recruitment, retention and development.	March 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2026	Director, Enterprise Services
9. **Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.**	Develop approaches that ensure Aboriginal owned businesses are considered as part of procurement processes.	February 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Identify OECD's minimum target of contracted spend from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Develop a plan to achieve the OECD's minimum target of contracted spend from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses in consultation with the Aboriginal Leadership Committee.	December 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Investigate Supply Nation membership and requirements to embed a supplier diversity program within OECD.	February 2027	Director, Enterprise Services

Governance

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Formalise a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2026	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the RWG.	December 2026	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG as reflected in the ToR.	December 2026	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Call and appoint members to the RWG through expressions of interest process.	December 2026	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2026	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Allocate budget to support RAP implementation.	December 2026	Director, Enterprise Services
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February, July, October, December (annually)	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior leadership.	November 2026	Chief Executive
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments and OECD area of responsibility to manage these on behalf of the RWG.	March 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
12. 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 out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Director, Enterprise Services
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Director, Enterprise Services
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Director, Enterprise Services
	Communicate RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally twice per year (e.g. OECD all staff meetings) and externally once per year (e.g. MECAF), OECD newsletter spotlight.	July and December annually (internal), October annually	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2027	Director, Enterprise Services
	Commence engagement with staff on next OECD RAP.	August 2027	Executive Lead, RAP Working Group





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