



AUSTRALIAN
**CRIMINAL
INTELLIGENCE
COMMISSION**



Innovate

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN REPORT

Final report for 2018–20



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.



***We respect, value and celebrate inclusion
of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
peoples as the First Australians.***

—Excerpt from our Reconciliation Vision

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INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we operate. I pay my respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, acknowledging their history and continuing connection to Country.

I am proud of our reconciliation journey at the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). This report highlights our progress against the actions we outlined in our Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–20 (RAP).

At its foundation, our RAP aimed to present real and tangible changes not only to our business processes, but also to our cultural environment. It also aimed to improve our approach to strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people both within our organisation and in the broader Australian community. We extend our gratitude to those organisations and community groups that have generously shared their time, knowledge and culture with us.

I would also like to extend a special thank you and acknowledge the critical role of Reconciliation Australia, members of our RAP Working Group, our Senior Executive Service and our Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee members for guiding our intentions through to actions.

I commend this report and look forward to continuing our reconciliation journey at the ACIC.



Michael Phelan APM
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

Indigenous Australians are a unique group in the Australian workforce and I am committed to a culture that provides our Indigenous staff a workplace that is collaborative, curious, non judgmental and respectful.

—CEO Michael Phelan at the RAP launch

THE BEGINNING OF OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

The ACIC formally launched its Reconciliation Action Plan for 2018–20 (the RAP) with a Canberra all staff event hosted by the CEO, Michael Phelan on 19 April 2018. Ngunnawal Elder, Wally Bell gave a warm Welcome to Country on behalf of the Ngunnawal people.

Michael Phelan launched the RAP, encouraging all staff to make their own personal commitment to actively support the initiatives and actions to progress reconciliation in the agency.

‘Indigenous Australians are a unique group in the Australian workforce and I am committed to a culture that provides our Indigenous staff a workplace that is collaborative, curious, non judgmental and of course, respectful. Our Indigenous staff should feel confident that they are able to declare their heritage and be treated with dignity and respect, and to reasonably have their needs met and be satisfied in their jobs.’



Launch of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–20 to all staff. The event was hosted in Canberra by CEO Michael Phelan, Indigenous Champion David Richardson and Deputy Indigenous Champion Nick Wolanin.



Special event with Indigenous artist and healer James Baban and members of the Senior Executive blessing the new RAP artwork.

A second event included a special blessing of the original RAP artwork with artist and healer James Baban. James was born in Darwin in the Northern Territory and his mother's Country is Mutburra/Tjingili (NT), his father's Country is Limingan (NT) and his skin name is Janama. James has been painting since 1986 and predominantly uses dot style painting which follows his mother's lineage. All of his art emanate healing energies as each painting has been blessed by his totem animals, spirit helpers and the Creator.

The ACIC would like to thank the artist for his generosity in sharing his spiritual, creative and cultural knowledge.



RELATIONSHIPS

OUR LEADERS ARE ENGAGED

In August 2019, Executive Director Mark Harrison spent a week in remote Western Australia on Martu Country with Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa, a Martu organisation that works to build strong and sustainable communities.

The Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa on Country program is largely targeted at senior executives, magistrates and the WA police. This is to ensure the knowledge gained through the experience is put into action at the highest level and can be passed onto employees.

‘It’s an experience not for the faint of heart; involving sleeping in a swag under the stars and having the opportunity to hunt for your own food,’ Mark said.

Martu people are among the most traditional Aboriginal people in Australia, with many Elders living a completely traditional desert life up until the 1960s. While on country, Mark spoke to two people who were teenagers when they were forcibly removed from their land and were traumatised by the experience.

‘Despite all the things suffered by the Martu people, they still have such healing hearts and a deep connection to their culture,’ Mark said.

In 2002, the Martu people were awarded native title rights to over 13.6 million hectares of desert Country. This area includes parts of the Great Sandy, Little Sandy and Gibson Deserts of Western Australia and has significant biodiversity.

Mark learned there was a considerable difference between the Western criminal justice system and the Martu people’s law, where property and land rights are different. The concept of law for the Martu people is fixed and has endured for over 65,000 years, whereas Western law changes and adapts to the society of the time.

‘The disconnect can create a sense of mistrust. The program works to address this and instil improved cultural understanding,’ Mark said.

The Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa is developing a program with Martu people who are incarcerated and eligible for parole. This program provides the Martu people with an opportunity to be employed as rangers and allows them to reconnect to the land.

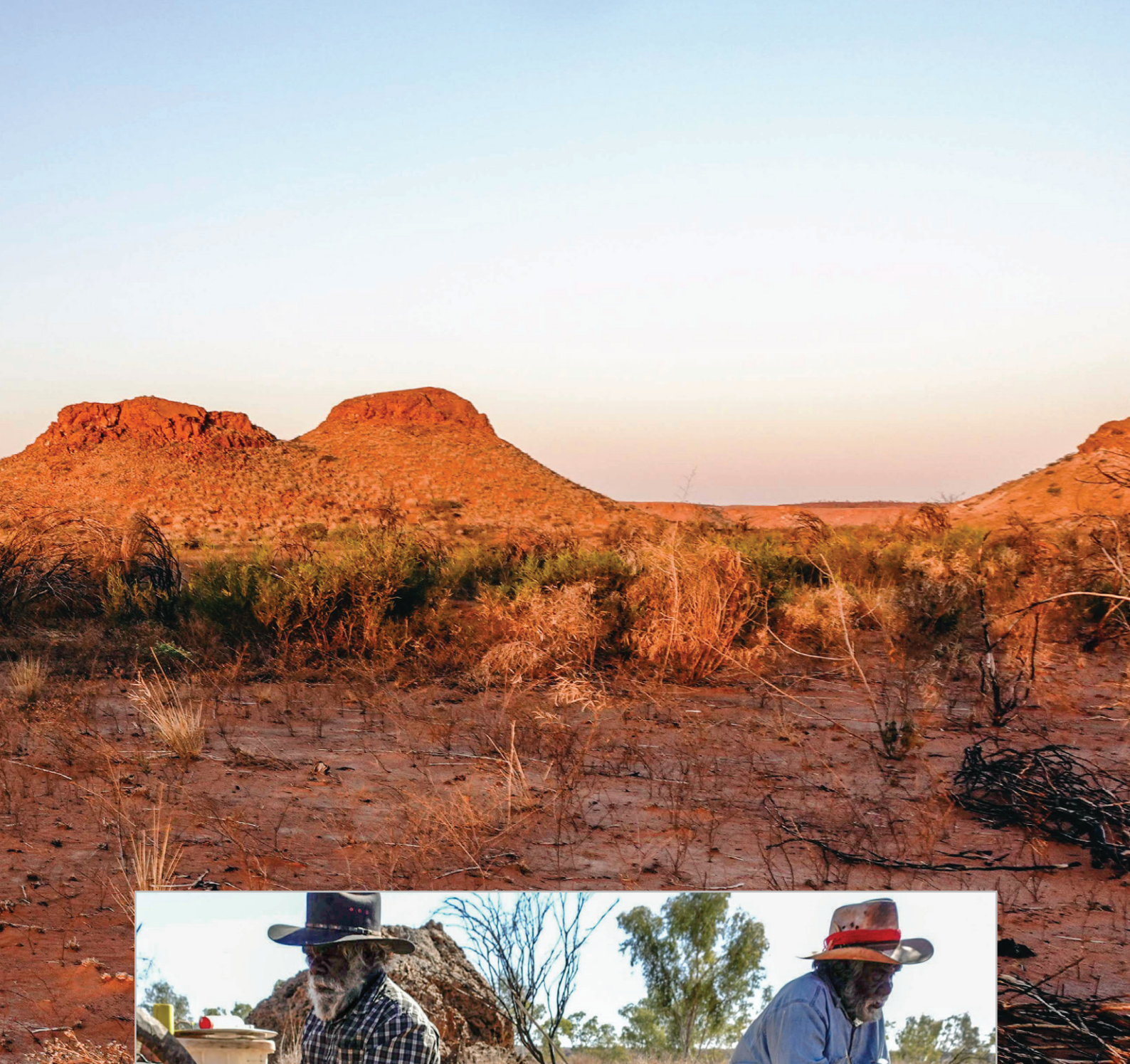
Mark’s story of his time on Country was published to all staff as part of the digital events series to celebrate National Reconciliation Week 2020, ‘In this together’.

Despite all the things suffered by the Martu people, they still have such healing hearts and a deep connection to their culture.

—Executive Director Mark Harrison



Dreamtime stories by the campfire.



Martu Elders crafting traditional items.

RELATIONSHIPS

PROGRESS AND LEARNING CHART

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Oversee the implementation, promotion, monitoring and reporting of our Reconciliation Action Plan.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our RAP was launched to all staff on 19 April 2018. ▶ Our Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee receive updates on the progress of reconciliation in the ACIC. ▶ Our RAP Working Group was established in 2019 and continues to meet monthly. 	We want to empower our staff to advocate and create change. We will continue to look at ways to increase engagement and accessibility.
Continue to promote our Reconciliation Action Plan to our stakeholders and provide guidance to employees about how they can participate.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A successful communication campaign was developed for the launch of our RAP. ▶ A dedicated intranet page for the RAP Working Group publishes the minutes for all working group meetings. ▶ Regular intranet news articles and profiles in the all staff newsletter celebrate staff stories and success. 	Engaging early and establishing trust are key for working collaboratively. We seek to support Indigenous voices to speak their own truths in a culturally sensitive context.
Celebrate and promote National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.		We celebrate National Reconciliation Week with all staff events, activities and guest speakers across our offices. Highlights include cultural immersion tours (2019), external speakers from community in Melbourne and Brisbane (2019) and an all staff lunchtime screening of 'The Australian Dream' in 2020.	Engaging with a wide range of members from the community in different event formats supports new perspectives and truth telling.

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Encourage attendance at APS wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives.		<p>Our staff were encouraged to attend events, conferences and symposiums including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sydney—Indigenous Women’s Leadership Summit ▶ Darwin—14th National Indigenous Legal Conference ▶ Melbourne—RAP Learning Circle ▶ Canberra—Culture and Policy Forum by AITASIS Nyiyanang wuunggalu! 	We support our staff to connect outside of the ACIC to continually develop our cultural capability within the organisation.
Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes internally and externally.		Our RAP Working Group encourages external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guests from APS agencies and community organisations to speak to our group to help shape guiding principles.	We will seek to increase our engagement with other APS agencies, RAP Working Groups, Indigenous staff-led networks and community organisations.
Participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander immersion secondment opportunities available to APS employees such as the Jawun program.		We continue to actively, promote, engage and participate in the Jawun secondment program with six staff participating since 2016. We publish news articles highlighting the learnings and insights from participants.	We will explore reverse mentoring opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to increase reciprocated, flexible development opportunities.



RESPECT

CULTURAL IMMERSION—WALKING ON NGUNNAWAL COUNTRY

Through the changing colours of autumn in May 2019 for National Reconciliation Week, and later through the frosty winter of NAIDOC week in July 2019, 49 of our staff participated in a full day of cultural awareness on Country. Tours were delivered by Ngunnawal Lore Keeper Richie Allan and Jason Allen who both descended from the Ngunnawal people of the Canberra region. The hands-on experience provided valuable local understanding and appreciation of the Ngunnawal land walked on, guided by Richie who shared his knowledge of the Ngunnawal sites.

The day started out with a bus ride from the Canberra office to Regatta Point, a traditional meeting place for the Ngunnawal people where clan gatherings and ceremonies were held along the banks of the Molonglo River. Richie explained the significance of these places for the Ngunnawal people before teaching the group some basic Ngunnawal language and showing staff how to throw a boomerang.

A morning tea of traditional Peppermint Gum ‘bush tea’ and damper was enjoyed at the Gubur Dhaura ochre pit in Gungahlin. The pit was used by Ngunnawal people to mine for coloured rocks which could be used in paintings and ceremonies and traded with neighbouring clans. Richie explained that, ‘to understand culture is to understand the history of the Aboriginal and Ngunnawal people,’ and stressed the importance of preserving such sites.

The next stop was to Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary where staff visited a scar tree used to make bark canoes, shields and shelters. Scarred trees are of high cultural significance to the Aboriginal community, providing physical evidence of past ancestral occupation and ownership of the surrounding land.

The group also walked through an Aboriginal stone site used to source stones of various types to make tools used to find food, prepare meat and vegetables for cooking and to make weapons used for hunting. Richie explained that some of the stones were so hard that heating the rocks by fire and then cooling them quickly made it possible to crack off smaller pieces.

The last stop took the group to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Everyone enjoyed slow-cooked kangaroo marinated in local Australian lime and bush herbs. The day finished off with a group discussion on how we all have a part to play in assisting with the acknowledgement and preservation of Australia’s precious Indigenous culture.



WHAT DID OUR STAFF SAY?

I realised how much culture and Indigenous history is all around us in Canberra and seeing how much culture is a part of our everyday lives.



Ngunnawal Lore Keeper Richie Allen explaining to the group about historical sites and the importance of preservation of cultural knowledge.

I have taken the artwork my team created and will display it on my wall. This will always remind us of the Walk on Country and what we learned on the day. I learned to be more appreciative of the land and I now look at nature differently.

A gentle reminder that the Stolen Generation was still in play until the early 1980s.






Local Aboriginal people were involved in the design and artworks at the Gubur Dhaura site which is of cultural significance and has been exempt from suburban development. The artwork (above) reveals layers of history related to the site.

Both Richie and Jason were great guides. Their knowledge of the local area and customs was strong, and their honest, but gentle approach to discussing challenges for Aboriginal people was valuable.

RESPECT

PROGRESS AND LEARNING CHART

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Engage employees in understanding and active use of the Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Acknowledgement to Country signs placed in meeting rooms and executive boardrooms. ▶ Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country wording and cultural protocols are provided on the intranet. ▶ Welcome to Country is a part of major all staff events. ▶ RAP email signature block launched in May 2018. ▶ Acknowledgement to Country permanently featured on internal and external websites. 	By acknowledging Country, we respectfully acknowledge over 65,000 years of the history and culture of Australia's First Nation's people.
Reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in all ACIC premises.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collections of artworks by Indigenous artists have been placed on walls around our offices. ▶ The Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags are placed at entry points to ACIC offices. 	Indigenous artwork increases cultural visibility and becomes a part of our story as an organisation. We will do more to display the artists and their artwork story.

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy for employees which defines cultural learning needs in all areas of our business.	Core Cultural Learning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia Program from AIATSIS eLearning available for all staff. Completed by 42 staff to date.	Cultural learning is at the heart of a strong and diverse workforce to encourage self-reflection and awareness. We will do more to increase engagement with learning platforms.
Provide opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.		We offer additional leave entitlements for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support cultural connections to Mob and Country for NAIDOC.	We seek to better equip our managers to understand that culture is complex and intrinsic. Supporting staff to connect with Mob, Country and culture is essential.



OPPORTUNITIES

COMING TOGETHER—INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEE FORUM

The inaugural Indigenous Employee Forum brought Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff together in Canberra on 21 November 2018.

Facilitated by the Building Indigenous Capability Group, the forum provided an opportunity to generate innovative ideas and be inspired about how ACIC can further support its Indigenous staff.

The forum's highlights were a Welcome to Country by Ngunnawal Elder Aunty Louise Brown and a yarning circle, which is a harmonious, creative and collaborative way of communicating to build openness, honesty and trust.

CEO Michael Phelan addressed the forum, outlining four key focus areas for improvement:

- ▶ increasing the representation of Indigenous employees
- ▶ expanding the range of Indigenous employment opportunities
- ▶ investing in developing the capability of Indigenous employees
- ▶ improving awareness of Indigenous culture in the workplace.

Our Senior Executive Indigenous Champion and Deputy Indigenous Champion also attended the forum to help drive meaningful discussion. Key themes highlighted throughout the day included leading powerfully in the workplace, managing change in the APS, and how language and conversations create culture, action and outcomes.

Forum participants said they enjoyed working through issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and appreciated the opportunity to hold robust group discussions with our agency's Senior Executive throughout the day.



Director Veronica Williams from the Building Indigenous Capability Group with CEO Michael Phelan.

OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRESS AND LEARNING CHART

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes.	Launch and implement the ACIC's Indigenous Employment Strategy.	Statements placed on all recruitment and job advertisements welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply.	We will continue to develop our engagement with universities to ensure our agency is at the forefront to attract new talent.
Participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entry level programs including the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program and Indigenous Graduate Program.		The ACIC continues to participate in entry level Indigenous programs including the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program (IAGDP) and the APSC Indigenous Graduate Pathway program. Three Indigenous graduates have successfully completed our program from 2018–20.	We will continue to support APS initiatives for entry level programs and look to provide increased bridging support for staff at the completion of their programs.
Revise and consider diversity suppliers to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business providers.		We have developed new commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, notably in the Information and Technology sector.	Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations supports better outcomes for all Australians.



From 2018–20, the ACIC established over 56 contracts with Indigenous owned businesses and suppliers valued at over \$8.34 million dollars.*

* Note that this statement covers the period of the ACIC's Reconciliation Action Plan from February 2018 to December 2020. Figures correct as of September 2020.

The background features three broad, diagonal stripes. A medium blue stripe runs from the top-left towards the right edge. A darker blue stripe runs from the bottom-left towards the right edge, intersecting the medium blue stripe. A third, lighter blue stripe is visible in the bottom-left corner, partially obscured by the darker stripe.

CONCLUSION

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

I am a Kamilaroi woman whose family is from Narrabri, New South Wales. I'm proud to represent my culture as a strong Aboriginal woman, through the many opportunities I've been given to show how we can excel academically and within the workforce.




—Former ACIC staff member Caitlin

I am looking forward to entering the workforce as a permanent full-time employee that will initiate my career in the law enforcement/intelligence field.

—ACIC graduate Lachlan, is a proud Noonuccal man of the Quandamooka people and graduated at the ACIC 2020 Graduation Ceremony

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

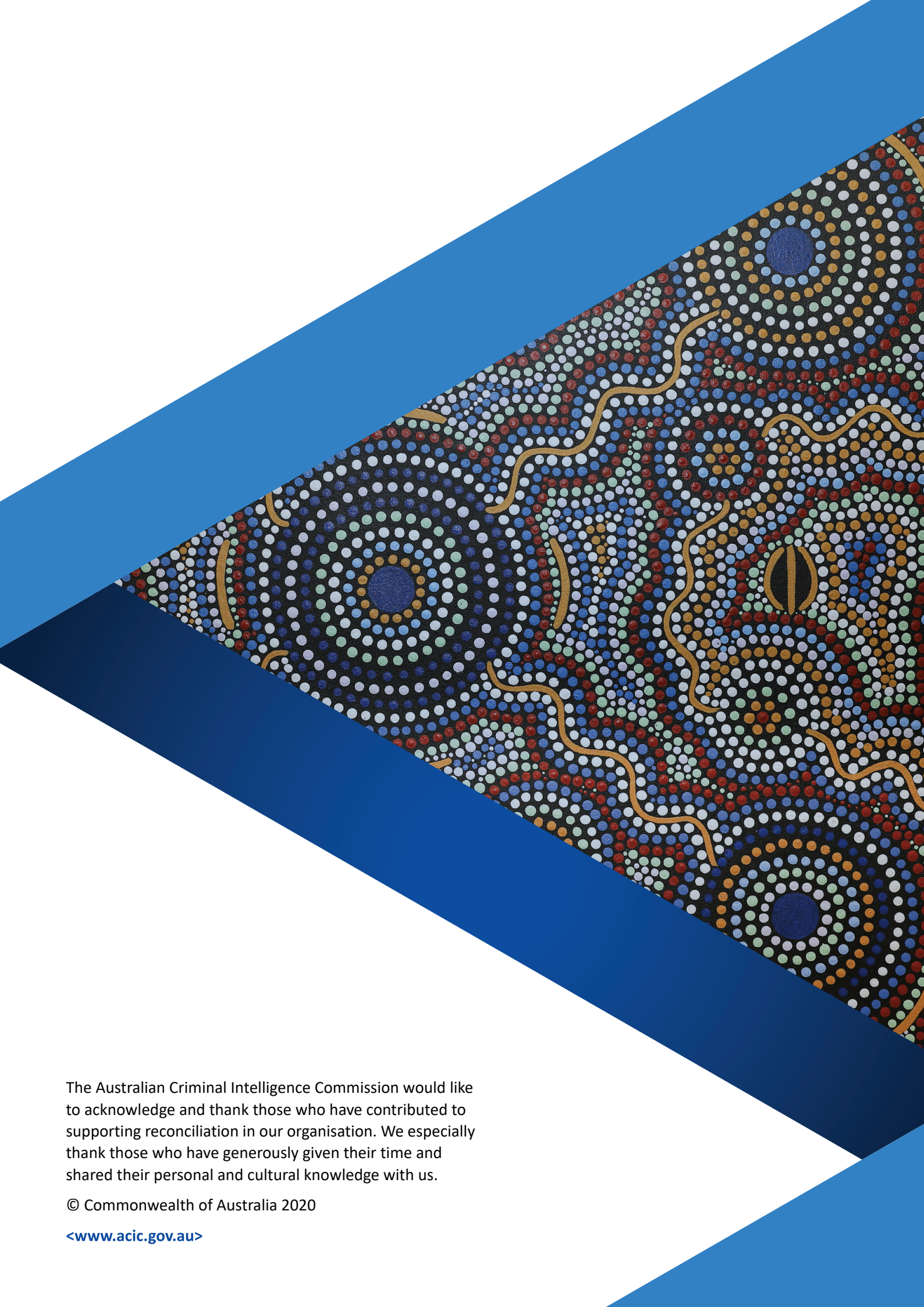
PROGRESS AND LEARNING CHART

Action	Progress	Highlights	Key Learnings
Review, refresh and update RAP.		Working together with our RAP Working Group to collaboratively establish a new RAP.	Reflection is key to ensuring that our communication, events and opportunities for staff are relevant and connected.
Report RAP achievements, challenges and outcomes.		Our Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee continues to engage, progress and support the initiatives in our RAP.	Engaged senior leaders increases visibility and demonstrates our agency values of inclusive, progressive leadership.
Annual review of RAP.		New feedback documents and yarning sessions established with the RAP Working Group to allow for increased communications outside of monthly meetings.	Regularly engaging with staff helps to maintain cultural integrity in developing new initiatives for the future.

WALKING FORWARD WITH WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

Throughout our RAP we have made key findings and observations and will use these to move forward. The ACIC is committed to the reconciliation journey and we understand that this journey is a continuous one in which we pause to reflect on what we have learned and what opportunities we can develop into the future. Key recommendations from this report to finalise our Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–20 are:

Recommendations	Evaluation and Reflections
The RAP will continue at the 'Innovate' stage.	We will continue to establish strong foundations and continue to improve, engage and connect with broader operational aspects of our business.
Enhance engagement in regional offices.	We will continue to establish clearer linkages for regional offices to communicate and engage with events, opportunities and initiatives outlined in the RAP.
Support staff voices in the RAP Working Group.	We aim to support more staff voices in our working group meetings. We will do this by reducing formality and allowing a sharing of experiences to encourage innovation to progress initiatives that are unique to our agency context and our staff.
Expand engagement with external networks.	We will promote networking with other APS Indigenous led staff networks, RAP Working Groups and APS Indigenous Champions networks to support a culturally connected APS.
Focus on learning.	We will look at ways to increase staff engagement with eLearning modules and cultural immersion opportunities.
Provide bridging support.	We will look at ways to increase support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff after completing entry level programs to enhance career development, growth and access to opportunities.



The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission would like to acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to supporting reconciliation in our organisation. We especially thank those who have generously given their time and shared their personal and cultural knowledge with us.

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