



# REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

OCTOBER  
2021 - 2022

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# A MESSAGE FROM **JAMIE O'CONNOR** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is with great pride that I introduce Touch Football Australia's inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Our Reflect RAP is an important stage in our commitment to respectfully recognise and celebrate our history and connection to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. While the sport is formally recognised as being founded on the Eora nation in 1968, variations of the sport can be linked back to traditional Indigenous games such as buroinjin; a ball game played by the Kabi Kabi people of south Queensland.

While it is important for us to recognise and celebrate our history, it is equally important that we look to the future; to make sure that we forge deeper connection with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and to make sure greater opportunity exists for Indigenous people to engage with our sport. That means more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people playing, refereeing, coaching, and administering our sport from grass roots to the boardroom.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a life expectancy that is 8 years shorter than non-Indigenous children, are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and have high rates of suicide. Sport is proven to have a positive effect on physical health and mental wellbeing; our sport can have a significant impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Together we can do our part in Closing the Gap.

Our Reflect RAP is the first stage in delivering on our commitment to being Australia's most inclusive team sport. I am honoured to be championing Touch Football Australia's Reflect RAP, leading the change and positively impacting our communities.

**Jamie O'Connor**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Touch Football Australia





# A MESSAGE FROM **RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA**

## **Reconciliation Australia welcomes Touch Football Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.**

Touch Football Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 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 2.3 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 Touch Football Australia 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 Touch Football Australia, 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 BUSINESS

## “Our Organisation – Touch Football Australia (TFA)”

Touch Football Australia (TFA) is the governing body of the sport of NRL Touch Football in this country. Our central focuses are to enhance the experiences of everyone involved in Touch Football so we can grow the sport. TFA has long been committed to providing a place on the field for everyone, delivering a sport that everyone can play. To ensure we are living up to these standards we work to provide a safe, fun and inclusive environment that is accessible to all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

TFA currently employ 40 staff across the country. These include 19 staff which would be deemed national employees and 21 staff who are located in our various Alliance states.

TFA are the recognised National Sporting Organisation (NSO) for Touch Football and are the recognised National Touch Association by the Federation of International Touch (FIT), we are widely recognised as the world leaders in the sport of Touch Football. Our national teams, the Emus are the current world champions in several age divisions, including all three Open categories. These national teams are connected to Country through the Emus and their uniforms reflect the story behind this. These international results are coupled with nearly 500,000 participants in the game of Touch Football across the country which are key to us delivering a sport that everyone can play.







# OUR RAP

The Touch Football Australia Reconciliation Action Plan (TFA RAP) and its subsequent implementation is a key focus for our sport in gaining a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. As a sport that everyone can play we are proud to lead the game forward in developing the TFA Reflect RAP to identify key areas which our sport can close the health and education gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. Currently, TFA provide the benefits from participation in physical activity and will use our RAP to provide education to our community through our RAP champions, events and other initiatives. The TFA RAP has been developed by our Reconciliation Action Plan Panel (RAPP) which consists of seven members, and is chaired by proud Waka Waka and Wangan man Phil Gyemore. Our RAP will be championed by our CEO, Jamie O'Connor.

#### RAP Panel Members:

- » TFA GM – Participation, Brad Mitchell
- » TFA National Education & Policy Manager, James Sharp
- » TFA National Inclusion Manager, Luke Heckendorf
- » Emus Men's Head Coach, Phil Gyemore (Waka Waka and Wangan man)
- » Emus Youth Assistant Coach, Mel Mitchell (Bundjalung woman)
- » Emus Men's Player, Justin Costello (Larrakeyah man from the Aargun mob)
- » Touch Football Administrator and Player, Jodie Clarke (Worimi country)

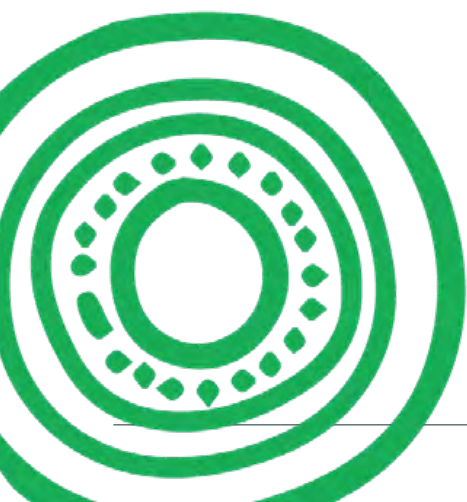
TFA's commitment throughout our Reconciliation journey is to be led by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to ensure that their lived experiences guide our sport to ensuring we implement strategies that achieve meaningful outcomes and progress towards closing the gap within our wider community.



# OUR PARTNERSHIPS/ CURRENT ACTIVITIES

TFA is committed to ensuring we provide opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in the game of Touch Football across Australia. TFA has a number of existing programs, events and partnerships with key stakeholders which seek to advance Indigenous Touch Football including:

- » Delivery of the yearly Indigenous Knockout Tournament in Dubbo in partnership with the Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Services.
- » Yearly participation in the NRL's Indigenous All-Stars event.
- » A current TFA coach is a member of the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council (ARLIC).
- » Our national teams were recently renamed, connecting the team to Country.
- » An Indigenous jersey was launched at the 2019 Touch Football World Cup and worn in competition, the first Australian sporting team to do so in a World Cup competition.
- » At the 2020 Youth Trans-Tasman Test series The Emus uniforms incorporated Indigenous artwork into all facets of uniform for the first time.
- » Delivery of the non-contact participation grant targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- » Acknowledgement of country live reads to be conducted at major national events.



# EMUS RATIONALE

THE WAY OF THE EMU : My design has the inspiration of the Emu in the bush. The Emu is our largest bird, but what it lacks in flight it makes up in speed on the ground. They can travel distances and run at fast speeds if needed. This gives me the connection to the Australian Touch Football team - the fastest amongst the players. The Emu has much wisdom and can read the land well, just as the players can on the field. Markings represent its travels on the land and waterholes. The meeting circles on the artwork have six symbols around to represent the six players on the field. Plus you can see their tracks throughout the art, representing their travels through land and communities, leading a way to goodness, strength and pride.

by **Elaine Chambers-Hegarty,**

Comes from a creative family, whose grandparents were taken to Cherbourg, Queensland, where both her parents grew up. Her links go back to the Koa people of Winton, and the Kuku Yalangi people.



## MARKINGS



Emu



Emu tracks



Gathering place with symbols to represent 6 players on the field



Dots around waterhole represent Emus drinking



Markings of the land and travels of the Emu



The emu sits beside the kangaroo on the coat of arms and takes pride of place on all Australian team shirts, over the heart.

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Sharing the coat of arms with the kangaroo reflects the partnership between the NRL and their national men's rugby league team, the Kangaroos, and TFA and our national touch football teams, the Emus. Working side by side, representing both sports, are the kangaroo and emu.

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Emus are athletic and fast; with long powerful legs, the bird can reach speeds of up to 50km/h and can travel hundreds of kilometres. Our athletes are fast and will run all day.

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The emu, as with the kangaroo, cannot take a backward step. Our Emus program will always look forward and evolve; we will continue to look for ways to improve. We will never go backwards.

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The adult male emu aggressively defends his young, teaching them all the skills they need to survive as an adult. Our program self-perpetuates – our senior players help develop the next generation, and on the field, protect them from the opposition.

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The emu has a long history with our Indigenous culture and is featured in many Aboriginal dreamtime stories and artworks. The emu reflects our respect for our past, current and future Indigenous athletes

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ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>1. <b>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> <li>» Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	<p>October, 2021</p> <p>February, 2022</p>	<p>GM - Participation</p> <p>National Education &amp; Policy Manager</p>
<p>2. <b>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> <li>» RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> <li>» Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> <li>» Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year.</li> <li>» Promote NRW through TFA social media channels to amplify the conversation.</li> <li>» Promote via NRW the 'Welcome to Country' social media campaign.</li> </ul>	<p>March, 2022</p> <p>27 May- 3 June, 2022</p> <p>27 May- 3 June, 2022</p> <p>27 May- 3 June, 2022</p> <p>27 May- 3 June, 2022</p> <p>27 May- 3 June, 2022</p>	<p>Digital Marketing Manager</p> <p>TFA RAPP</p> <p>National Education &amp; Policy Manager</p> <p>GM - Participation</p> <p>Digital Marketing Manager</p> <p>Digital Marketing Manager</p>
<p>3. <b>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</li> <li>» Publish our RAP on our website and make information about its progress accessible to internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>» Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> <li>» Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> <li>» Raise external awareness of our RAP through push communication.</li> <li>» Communicate and encourage other Touch Football entities to promote Reconciliation Australia.</li> <li>» Increase education and awareness of the Referendum Council's Report for a "Makarrata" and a voice to parliament as a platform to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's identity and increase positive participation in the game across TFA's business operations.</li> </ul>	<p>October, 2021</p> <p>December, 2021</p> <p>January, 2022</p> <p>November, 2021</p> <p>October, 2021</p> <p>October, 2021</p> <p>March, 2022</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>Digital Marketing Manager</p> <p>National Inclusion Manager</p> <p>National Inclusion Manager</p> <p>Digital Marketing Manager</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>National Inclusion Manager</p>



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. <b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	» Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager
	» Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November, 2021	CFO
5. <b>Increase education and awareness of the Uluru Statement across TFA's business operations.</b>	» Distribute the Uluru Statement from the Heart to all staff and senior leadership.	March, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Research Reconciliation NSW Uluru Statement from the Heart resources.	March, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Explore opportunities how our organisation can support the Uluru statement from the Heart.	March, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
6. <b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	» Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	November, 2021	Commercial Partnership Manager
	» Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation and identify roles within TFA that work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients or people for priority cultural awareness training.	January, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Investigate players and coaching staff participating in the cultural learning week leading up to All Stars.	February, 2022	GM - Participation
	» Investigate the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Touch Football and promote during NRW and NAIDOC Week.	January, 2022	TFA RAPP Chair
7. <b>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	» Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	September, 2022	GM – Participation
	» Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January, 2022	TFA RAPP Chair
	» Identify an appropriate and specifically designated time at the National Touch League and National Youth Championships events that either an Acknowledgement of Country or Welcome to Country can be performed.	November, 2021	TFA RAPP Chair



**RESPECT (CONT)**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>8. Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.</b>	» Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Calendar of Significant Dates.	December, 2021	National Education and Policy Manager
	» Promote dates of significance to staff and members.	January, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Encourage staff to attend events commemorating significant dates.	February, 2022	CEO
<b>9. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	» Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June, 2022	CEO
	» Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July, 2022	CEO
	» CEO to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2022	CEO
	» RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2022	TFA RAPP Chair

**OPPORTUNITIES**

<b>10. Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Touch Football.</b>	» Maintain awareness and where appropriate promote federal and state sports grant funding opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in Touch Football at any level of competition.	April, 2022	GM - Participation
	» Identify where there is high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in rural and remote communities.	April, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Scope pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players to elite levels.	April, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager
<b>11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	» Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	February, 2022	GM – Participation
	» Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February, 2022	CFO
	» Explore opportunities to create a program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander referees.	April, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager
	» Explore opportunities to create a program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coaches.	May, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager
	» Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships).	March, 2022	National Inclusion Manager

**OPPORTUNITIES**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	» Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March, 2022	Commercial Partnership Manager
	» Investigate Supply Nation membership.	January, 2022	GM - Commercial
	» Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	February, 2022	GM - Commercial

**GOVERNANCE**

<b>13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Action Group to drive outcomes.</b>	» Form a RAP Action Group to implement RAP outcomes.	October, 2021	National Inclusion Manager
	» Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Action Group.	October, 2021	GM – Participation
	» Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Action Group.	October, 2021	National Inclusion Manager
<b>14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	» Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November, 2021	National Inclusion Manager
	» Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	January, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Engage high profile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players outside the TFA RAPP to endorse the TFA RAP.	May, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
	» Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March, 2022	National Inclusion Manager
<b>15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	» Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager
	» Include RAP actions in the TFA Annual Report.	September, 2022	GM - Participation
<b>16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	» Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	March, 2022	National Education and Policy Manager





## CONTACT DETAILS

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