



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN





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OUR VISION

Our vision for reconciliation is one of a society and workplaces that support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We envision a nation that respects, protects and promotes the rights of all, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians live and work together with mutual respect and understanding. Working together in the spirit of reconciliation, we will create a fairer society by raising living standards, working conditions, and quality of life for all Australians.

This first Reconciliation Action Plan for Victorian Trades Hall Council will serve to guide us in our interactions with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters as strengthen our solidarity.

WHO WE ARE

The Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) was founded in 1856 and is the peak body for unions in Victoria. VTHC represents approximately 40 unions and over 400,000 workers in Victoria. These workers are members of unions that reach into every industry in the state, both in the public and private sectors.

Since gaining the Eight Hour Day in April 1856, VTHC has had a long history of fighting for and defending the rights of workers in Victoria. The importance of winning the Eight Hour day is significant not just in Australia but worldwide. Few advances in the quality of life for working people would have been achieved without the involvement of the Victorian union movement.

Over the last 150 years, VTHC and its affiliated unions have campaigned for and successfully won a range of important rights and entitlements for Victorian (and Australian) workers, including:

- Minimum wage
- Penalty rates
- Collective bargaining rights
- Freedom of association and the right to representation
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) protections
- Annual as well as Sick (and Carer's) Leave
- Maternity and Parental Leave
- Domestic Violence Leave
- Superannuation
- Protections from unfair dismissal and redundancy entitlements, and
- Long Service Leave.

VTHC will continue to campaign tirelessly for the rights, entitlements and protections of workers in Victoria, no matter their employment status, employer or workplace.





FROM THE SECRETARY

This year, Victorian Trades Hall Council is more committed than ever to being good comrades to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters.

We have a long and proud history of standing in solidarity with First Nations peoples from around the world in their struggles for justice. This is because of our shared values: unionists believe in equality, fairness and collective action.

I am proud of the work Victorian Trades Hall Council has undertaken but there is more to be done and this Reconciliation Action Plan is the next powerful step we take as a movement of workers fighting for justice.

We commit ourselves to this action plan not just because it is the right thing to do, but because all workers no

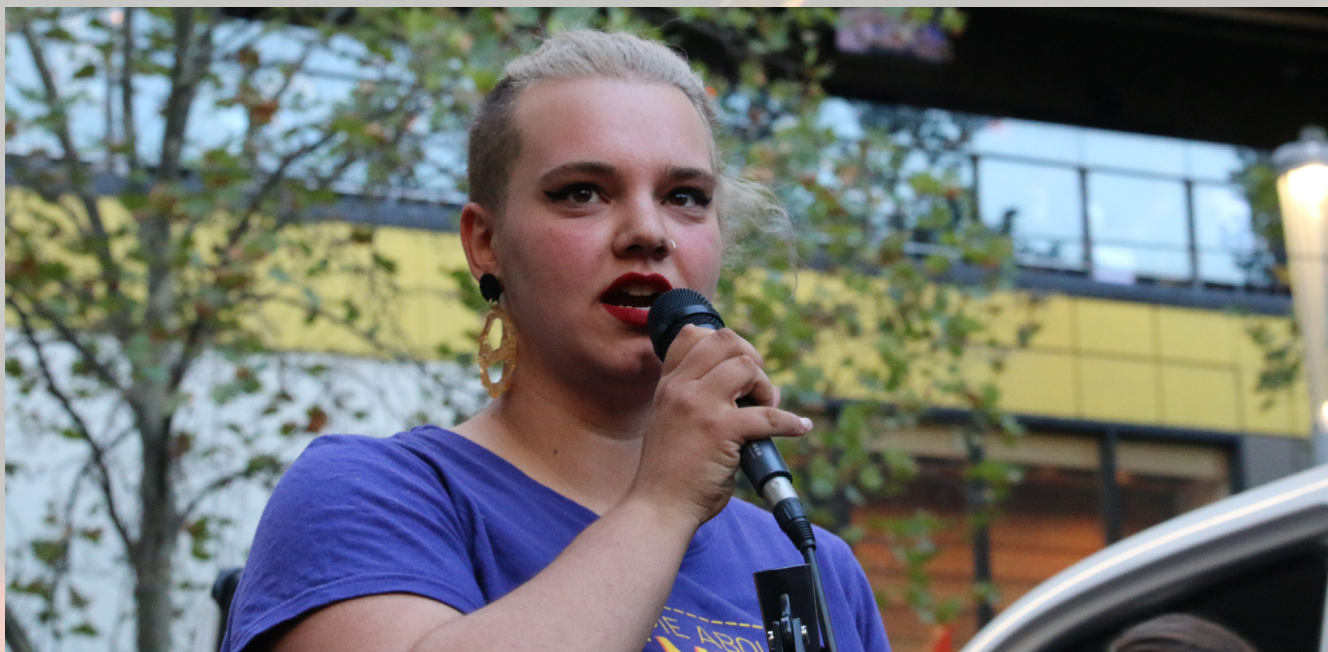
matter their age, race, gender or sexual orientation, deserve dignity at work.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters deserve better – payment for stolen wages, a life free of discrimination, treaties for stolen lands, as well as access to quality education and healthcare no matter where they live.

We live by the motto, touch one, touch all because we know an injustice to one is an injustice to all. Victorian Trades Hall Council will not rest until justice is achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Solidarity forever.

Luke Hilakari, Secretary.



FOREWORD FROM A&TSI ORGANISER

The story of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's is that of the longest continuous thread of human history. It is a story of communities who have nurtured and protected country for time immemorial. And for the last 230 years, it is a story of courage, resilience and strength.

The trade union movement has a long and proud history of support and solidarity with the struggles of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the rich history of solidarity and resistance, and the longstanding culture of fairness and equality for all within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These are values that we as a proud movement of workers share and enact through our actions as trade unionists each and every day.

We acknowledge the profound contributions that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comrades have given to our great movement. Our liberations are bound together, and today and every day, we commit ourselves to that collective struggle. And through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, the Victorian Trades Hall Council recommits ourselves to that shared fight.

Sovereignty in this country was never ceded. We are on stolen lands for which a treaty or sovereign agreement has never been negotiated.

This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

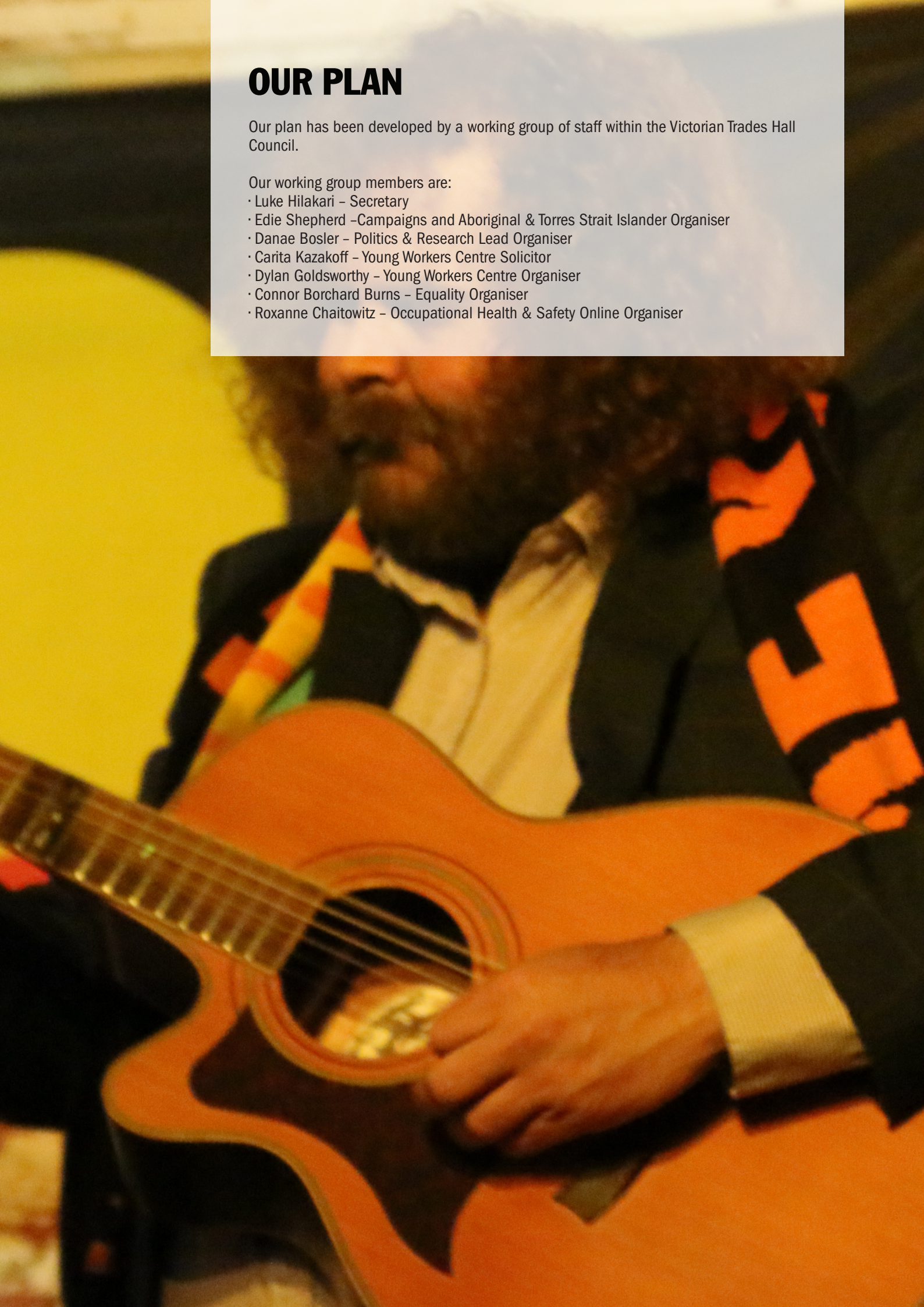
Edie Shepherd, A&TSI Organiser.

OUR PLAN

Our plan has been developed by a working group of staff within the Victorian Trades Hall Council.

Our working group members are:

- Luke Hilakari – Secretary
- Edie Shepherd – Campaigns and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
- Danae Bosler – Politics & Research Lead Organiser
- Carita Kazakoff – Young Workers Centre Solicitor
- Dylan Goldsworthy – Young Workers Centre Organiser
- Connor Borchard Burns – Equality Organiser
- Roxanne Chaitowitz – Occupational Health & Safety Online Organiser



RELATIONSHIPS

Our focus is to develop, foster and nurture relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters wherever we work, campaign and organise.

We will achieve this by dedicating time and resources to building connections with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations and Elders, as part of our organising and advocacy work.



Action	Measure of Success	Time	Responsibility
Identify existing relationships of VTHC staff with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations and leaders to better understand our connections	Complete mapping of relationships, including updating with new staff feedback	3 months	Politics & Research Lead
	Maintain a spreadsheet recording our relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisers and individuals across Melbourne and Victoria where we campaign		RAP Working Group
	Identify key Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations to partner closely with and build mutually beneficial working relationships	6 months	Secretary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
Identify opportunities for relationship building	Consider formalising or acknowledging our formal relationship with key Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations		Secretary
	Identify key Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander events for VTHC staff to participate in, such as Invasion Day and NAIDOC Week	3 months	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	Promote activities and events of VTHC among Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities	Ongoing	VTHC Team Leaders
	Engage with each team at VTHC to identify an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisation to strength ties with	3 months	VTHC Team Leaders
Promote our RAP internally and externally to raise awareness of reconciliation	Celebrate launch of our RAP with affiliates to promote reconciliation work	3 months	Politics & Research Lead
	Brief all staff and incoming new staff on our RAP so they are aware of their obligations and are encouraged to participate in reconciliation activities	Ongoing	VTHC Team Leaders
	Have copies of our RAP publically available online and in hard copy for union members to read	6 months	VTHC Communications Team
	Engage regional Trades and Labour Councils to encourage their participation	9 months	VTHC Assistant Secretaries



RESPECT

Our focus is to engage our employees on all levels to develop their understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. We will achieve this by providing opportunities for staff to learn about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages, and providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser unionists a platform to directly participate in decision making.

Action	Measure of Success	Time	Responsibility
Engage staff in continuous and ongoing education, training and professional development to increase understanding and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, as well as build capacity for culturally appropriate and safe frameworks of organising.	6 monthly sessions with all levels of staff including leadership	Every 6 months	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	Provide opportunities for staff to participate in further education sessions run by external Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander bodies such as the Koori Heritage Trust	6 months	Leadership
	Include cultural awareness introduction and materials for new staff inductions	3 months	Politics & Research
Investigate entering into shared and mutually negotiated compacts with Traditional Owner groups that Trades Hall conducts its business on	Explore ways in which these agreements have been struck within a union context in Australia, and assess viability	6 months	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser and VTHC Leadership
Engage staff in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning	Develop a shared understanding amongst all staff about the difference, the timing, and process for booking and performing Welcome and Acknowledgements of Country	3 months	Leadership
	Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country for all important internal and external meetings		
	Organise and display an updated Acknowledgement of Country plaque on the VTHC façade	6 months	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	All staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country as an email footer	3 months	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	A centralised point is established for all developed protocol, and all new staff receive training on protocols as part of induction	Immediately	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser



Provide staff with opportunities to engage with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander union members, culture and community	Official representation at the Victorian NAIDOC ball through booking a table at the Victorian NAIDOC ball	6 months	Leadership
	VTHC co-ordinated NAIDOC week event		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organiser
	VTHC to become an organisational member of the First Nations Workers Alliance	3 months	Leadership
	Implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award for the Labour Day Dinner Dance		Leadership
Raise awareness of VTHC's commitment to reconciliation through visible means	VTHC conducts research into significant Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander union struggles in Victoria, and prominent Victorian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander union figures	6 months	Politics and Research Team
	VTHC investigates renaming common meeting spaces within the building to reflect the Aboriginal history within the union movement	6 months	Politics and Research Lead
	Investigate Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artists for commission artwork in the newly refurbished New Council Chambers	6 months	Communications Team
	Fly a Torres Strait Islander flag atop VTHC	3 months	Building Manager
	Develop Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander VTHC imagery, and explore merchandising options	6 months	Communications Team
	VTHC explores options for translating materials into local languages	9 months	Communications Team



OPPORTUNITIES

We want to have a positive impact on reconciliation both internally, through our organisational policies and processes; and externally, by acting as a leader and role model for our affiliates and others in the union movement. As the peak body for the Victorian trade union movement, we have a responsibility and a desire to take action around reconciliation.

By working in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the labour movement, we hope to create opportunities for mutual understanding and deeper participation.



Action	Measure of Success	Time	Responsibility
Advertise job vacancies through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and groups. Add the words "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are encouraged to apply" to job vacancies	Advertisements are changed and will be promoted to communities	Immediately	Leadership
Educate Leads to better promote internal job opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	An education session is held with leads	6 months	Leadership
Develop a cultural leave clause for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the VTHC EBA	Cultural leave clause is developed and implemented in the new VTHC EBA	6 months	All employees
Identify ethical and union Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses for purchasing union gear and for promotion with other unions	A short list has been created for the strategic planning forum	6 months	Communications Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Caucus	The caucus has met, has regular meeting dates and an organising plan	3 months	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
Encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in Trades Hall programs like Union Summer, Anna Stewart, YWC Advocate positions	Advertising these programs has gone out through a variety of channels to different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These programs have been promoted through our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lists	Immediately, as positions arise	All team leads
Relationship is developed with FNWA to coordinate an organising agenda	Leadership and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Organiser has met with FNWA	3 months	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
Explore opportunities within our training programs for greater participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Advertising training opportunities as they arise through a variety of channels to different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These programs have been promoted through our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lists	3 months	All team leads
Leads are trained to look for opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to expand their organising and rights agenda, when participating in governmental and stakeholder meetings	This is discussed at a leads meeting A discussion is held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Caucus	Immediately	All team leads Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser Leadership
Opportunities are created at union conferences and events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to advance their organising agenda	Leads, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Organiser, Leadership hold a planning session to discuss where this can be done	6 months	All team leads Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser Leadership



TRACKING

Action	Measure of Success	Time	Responsibility
The RAP working group continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	Ongoing meetings are held in which measures of success are completed and we progress to our next RAP level	Every 3 months	RAP working group
Report back to internal stakeholders on our progress and seek feedback on additional opportunities or challenges.	Report back to Executive, VTHC Staff and VTHC Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Caucus at least three times per year	Every 4 months	Leadership Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organiser
Consult internally and externally to constantly improve, develop and build on our RAP	Consult with external parties about RAP targets	12 months	RAP Working Group
	Meet quarterly to reflect on current RAP targets and monitor implementation of RAP	3 months	
	Begin early work on second RAP “Innovate” in collaboration with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations	12 months	
Review and refresh the RAP	RAP actions have been measured against the targets and timelines outlined within this document	12 months	RAP Working Group





