



Rottnest Island Authority  
**RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**  
**September 2016 - August 2019**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this brochure may contain images of deceased people.

**ROTTNEST IS**





# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



*Paolo Amaranti*

It was eight years ago that the Rottnest Island Authority (RIA) launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This third RAP, at the 'Innovate' level, provides a framework for advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reconciliation on Rottnest Island (Wadjemup), as the RIA matures in its understanding and recognition of reconciliation.

The Noongar name of Rottnest is *Wadjemup*, which means 'place of spirits'.

Wadjemup is entering a historical period of reconciliation with the implementation of several significant reconciliation initiatives over the next three years. Phase 2 of the repair of the Burial Ground will be progressed to establish a memorial to the Aboriginal men and boys who died on Wadjemup.

The 'Quod' building, which was used to imprison Aboriginal men from all over the State for over

50 years, is currently under lease and will return to the RIA in 2018. An Aboriginal Heritage Plan will be developed to provide a reference for Aboriginal cultural heritage on the Island. The RIA will be guided in the implementation of these initiatives by an advisory group comprised of Aboriginal elders and leaders.

Since 2004 when the RIA conducted the first ground probing survey of the burial ground that confirmed the sad outcome of Aboriginal imprisonment on Wadjemup, the Board and I are personally committed to reconciliation and see the RAP as the blueprint for pursuing such reconciliation.

Through the RAP, the RIA is implementing various reconciliation policies, strategies and actions. We seek the support of our staff, stakeholders and contractors in this endeavour. Now is the time for likeminded people and organisations to make a genuine contribution to reconciliation for the social and economic benefit of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the community generally.

Our RAP comprises the following objectives:

- Build relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community through leadership, recognition of cultural differences and respect for Aboriginal history on Wadjemup.

- Develop respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history.
- With new employment and business opportunities, increase the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employment on Wadjemup.

On behalf of the Board I will monitor the implementation of this RAP to ensure that as much as practical, the various initiatives will be implemented to achieve the reconciliation outcomes as reflected in the suite of RAP outcome measures.

*Paolo Amaranti*  
Chief Executive Officer

The RIA is pleased to be publishing its third RAP on the cusp of significant reconciliation initiatives on Wadjemup.

## OPPOSITE:

Historic image of Aboriginal prisoners at Pinky's Beach, c1855.

(Courtesy of the State Library WA  
The Battye Library 3368B/17)

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN FOR THE YEARS 2016 - 2019

## Our vision for reconciliation

Together with the Government of Western Australia and Reconciliation Australia, the Rottnest Island Authority (RIA) is committed to the nation's goal of building better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Creating positive change through innovative ideas and actions will make a difference to the way RIA staff and visitors understand and respect the Island's Aboriginal past. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will also be given the opportunity to participate in social, cultural, spiritual and economic activities on the Island.

Wadjemup has a unique role to play in contributing to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples, and particularly Western Australian Aboriginal communities. Artefacts dated at over 20,000 years old have been discovered on the Island; evidence of an ancient history.

The Island is in Whadjuk Noongar country. Its history as a prison for Aboriginal men for almost one hundred years from the mid-19th century to the 1930s, places it in a unique position of shared significance. Around 3,700 men from all over the State were imprisoned on the Island during this time. Some 10% of those are believed to remain buried on the Island – and of those who lived, most never made it home. Scholars estimate that every Western Australian Aboriginal person alive today has an ancestor who was imprisoned on Wadjemup.

The RIA recognises the cultural significance and sad history Wadjemup holds for Aboriginal peoples. It accepts its position of responsibility to ensure the Island is both appropriately managed and contributes towards economic and cultural opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in Western Australia.

Through our Reconciliation Action Plan we commit to promoting awareness, education and action, both internally and externally, to help build relationships; develop respect and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Aboriginal artefacts found on Wadjemup contribute to our understanding of the history of use of the Island. (RIA)



Smoking ceremony during the celebrations to mark the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Burial Ground project. (RIA)

The RIA is the State Government body responsible for the management of Rottnest Island. Rottnest (Wadjemup) is Western Australia's premier family holiday destination and has been for over 100 years. The Island is an A-class Reserve, attracting approximately 600,000 local, national and international visitors each year. Its extensive coastline comprising 63 sheltered beaches and 20 bays, together with its diverse terrestrial habitats and significant heritage, provide a wide variety of recreational and learning experiences. Wadjemup is also popular for boat owners, with around one-third of visitors making their way from the mainland by private vessel.

The control and management of Wadjemup is vested in the RIA through the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987* for the purpose of providing and operating recreational and holiday facilities; protecting the

flora and fauna, and maintaining and protecting the natural and cultural heritage. The RIA does not deliver all the services alone; partners include the Rottnest Island Chamber of Commerce; volunteer organisations; facilities and maintenance contractors and various other Government agencies such as Western Australia, Department of Health and the Department of Transport.

The RIA comprises a six-member governing Board and a Chief Executive Officer who oversees the daily operations of the Island with a core permanent staff of 90 plus casuals to meet seasonal demand.

The RIA continues to actively encourage Aboriginal employment and involvement on the Island through a range of mentoring partnerships and initiatives including:

- In partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia developed and implemented Green Corps Aboriginal cadets which implemented various conservation initiatives which included tree planting as part of the Wadjemup Bidi project.
- Successful completion of Certificate III in Land Care Management by a trainee who gained employment within the RIA using skills learned.
- Employment of Aboriginal trainee as part of the Public Sector Commission's Certificate III in Government initiative.
- Various appointments for Aboriginal liaison related positions.

The RIA currently employs one Aboriginal Heritage Officer and plans to increase the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island employment through the next term of the RAP.

## Our RAP

In 2008 the RIA developed its first RAP to support the process of acknowledging and respecting the important connection of Aboriginal people with Wadjemup. The development of the RAP was seen as an opportunity for the RIA to formalise and recognise its contributions towards reconciliation and the increasing number of actions it had already been incorporating into planning and operational practices.

In the development of its Reconciliation Action Plans, the RIA sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- Build relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community through leadership, recognition of cultural differences and respect for Aboriginal history on Wadjemup.

- Develop respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through awareness of Aboriginal culture and history.
- With new employment and business opportunities, increase the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employment on Wadjemup.

The RIA's RAP working group consists of senior members from across the agency, including Aboriginal staff, and has included representatives from the Noongar Aboriginal community. The RIA is working towards the establishment of regular and meaningful discussions with representatives from the Aboriginal community on all RAP initiatives. The working group has worked effectively and enthusiastically to support the organisation to successfully deliver and progress most of the actions in the 2008-11 and 2012-15 RAPs.

The RIA moves forward with its third RAP with enthusiasm and commitment; with the benefit of important lessons learned and insights gained.

The RIA Board and CEO strongly support and champion the RAP both internally and externally, within their various networks.



Aboriginal weaving workshop on Wadjemup. (RIA)

OPPOSITE:  
Signage provides visitors with information on the history of the Island. (RIA)



## Relationships

The RIA is committed to building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the basis for reconciliation. Aboriginal people have connections to Wadjemup pre- and post-European settlement. It is important to work with Aboriginal people to recognise and acknowledge that history.



### FOCUS AREA: Reconciliation on Wadjemup.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>RWG oversees the development and implementation of the RAP.</li><li>Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (staff and contractors) to be represented on the RWG.</li><li>Meet at least four times a year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.</li><li>Review structure and membership of RWG to ensure all sections of RIA are represented.</li><li>Review RWG terms of reference to reflect new RAP.</li></ul>	January, April, July, October 2016-2019  December 2016	RAP Working Group Chair
2. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop an interim Aboriginal Reference Group in conjunction with the Whadjuk Working Party to guide work associated with the conservation and presentation of the Burial Ground and Quod.</li><li>Establish a Standard Noongar Heritage Agreement through the Whadjuk Working Party in relation to future programs on Wadjemup.</li><li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.</li><li>Develop protocols to ensure intellectual property and copyright for Aboriginal people are respected in relation to their works, oral histories, etc.</li></ul>	December 2016  June 2017  December 2016  December 2016	Heritage Conservation Manager
3. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our organisation and the Island's stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a communications plan including the preparation and dissemination of information on RAP projects and significance for RIA stakeholders including the RIA's contractors, business community and volunteer groups.</li><li>Implement the RAP Communication Plan to major internal and external stakeholders such as the Rottnest Island Chamber of Commerce and Volunteer Forum.</li><li>Prepare material for visitors regarding Aboriginal culture and history on Wadjemup.</li></ul>	September 2016  December 2016  November 2016	Corporate Communications Manager  Manager Planning and Governance  General Manager Destination Marketing

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year.</li> <li>Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.</li> <li>The Reconciliation Working Group to participate in internal and external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> <li>Create an inclusive environment that supports and celebrates Aboriginal peoples, cultures and committees.</li> </ul>	July 2016-2019	Heritage Conservation Manager
5. Other unique relationships, actions and targets related to our core business and vision for reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorialise the Wadjemup Burial Ground. An amount of \$1.15 million is being expended for this purpose. \$650,000 has been spent to date.</li> <li>Facilitate access to the Island for Aboriginal people/groups for formal and informal events and activities.</li> <li>Organise public programs/events with an Aboriginal focus associated with natural heritage values through the Wadjemup Bidi project and similar to give visitors a better understanding of Aboriginal history on Wadjemup.</li> <li>Research programs including oral histories and training in oral history techniques for Aboriginal volunteers to add to the RIA oral history archive for use in research and interpretation projects.</li> <li>Prepare an Aboriginal Heritage Plan to identify and recommend governance options and address reconciliation issues for consideration by the Board.</li> </ul>	July 2016-2019 June 2017	Heritage Conservation Manager General Manager Destination Marketing Heritage Conservation Manager

Installation of *Mamong Djoorots* (Whale Track) by Aboriginal artist Peter Farmer as part of the Wadjemup Bidi Trails program.  
(Courtesy Peter Farmer)



## Respect

The RIA has a desire to respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, lands, waters, histories, rights and cultural heritage as the nation's first people. Through understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal history and culture the RIA will be more respectful and provide a more inclusive visitor experience.



### FOCUS AREA: Respect, acknowledge and conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage on Wadjemup.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion).</li> <li>Implement ongoing cultural awareness training for the RIA Board.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training.</li> <li>Display of Aboriginal art and reconciliation information in RIA offices and public areas where practical.</li> </ul>	September 2016-2019	
7. Engage employees 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an inclusive environment which supports and celebrates Aboriginal people, culture and communities.</li> <li>Develop, maintain and communicate cultural protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</li> <li>Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.</li> <li>Explore a number of initiatives to recognise Aboriginal significance including dual naming where appropriate, education programs, and innovative interpretation.</li> <li>Ensure significant events include a Welcome to Country by a Traditional Owner.</li> <li>Promote Aboriginal cultural heritage on Wadjemup through the RIA destination marketing activities.</li> </ul>	December 2016 December 2016 June 2017	Heritage Conservation Manager
8. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.</li> <li>Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	July 2016-2019	Manager Human Resources



Kezia Jacobs-Smith and Cedric Jacobs at the announcement of State Government funding through Lotterywest for Phase 2 of the Burial Ground project. (RIA)

## Opportunities

Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities including employment, procurement, professional development and retention in order to facilitate reconciliation.



### FOCUS AREA: Increase employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal people.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention strategy.</li><li>Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.</li><li>Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.</li><li>Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.</li><li>Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.</li><li>Encourage all businesses on the Island to pursue Aboriginal employment and internship options.</li><li>Maintain an Aboriginal Heritage Officer role at appropriate level for decision making and advice.</li></ul>	August 2019	Manager Human Resources
10. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services.</li><li>Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.</li><li>Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.</li><li>Add Aboriginal content requirement to tenders and Expressions of Interest.</li><li>Develop joint ventures, partnerships, pro bono support or secondment and community capacity opportunities.</li><li>Develop a database of Aboriginal people who can be engaged/contracted for a range of programs on the Island, including cultural site management and education.</li></ul>	August 2019	Manager Finance and Procurement
11. Include other unique opportunities actions relating to core business and vision for reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitate access to employment and internships through a range of mentoring, partnerships and HR programs (e.g. Green Army – Aboriginal program).</li></ul>	December 2016	General Manager Destination Marketing



Wadjemup Aboriginal  
Burial Ground. (RIA)

## Tracking progress and reporting

The RIA will monitor the implementation of this RAP on a regular basis at both an operational and executive levels and report to the wider WA community on progress and achievements.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.</li><li>• Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.</li></ul>	30 September June 2018	Manager Planning and Governance
13. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings in Annual Report and report internally in staff CEO Newsletter.</li></ul>	30 September 2016-2019	Manager Planning and Governance
14. Review, refresh and update RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.</li><li>• Facilitate the development of a new RAP for the next period and seek formal feedback and endorsement from Reconciliation Australia.</li></ul>	30 January 2019	Manager Planning and Governance

## Outcomes Indicators

1. **Cultural Learning:** Number of staff undertaking cultural awareness training (including e-learning).
2. **Employment:** Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff currently employed.
3. **Business:** Dollar value of contracts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
4. **Pro bono:** Value (hours or dollar value) of pro bono services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations or communities.
5. **Partnerships:** Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations formed with whom a partnership is maintained.
6. **Education:** Dollar value of contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships, direct or through organisations supporting students.

Note: These indicators are based on Reconciliation Australia's annual reporting requirements.



Whadjuk Wadjemup, 2015, Kevin Bynder, Acrylic on canvas. (RIA collection 2015.210)

**All Aboriginal artwork contained in this publication is by local Nyoongar artist Kevin Bynder.**

**For further information about our RAP  
and its progress, please contact:**

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**OCTOBER 2016**