



Reconciliation Action Plan 2011

Australia Post's commitment to:

- employment of Indigenous Australians
- services for Indigenous communities
- recognition of the First Australians.

Our vision for reconciliation

Australia Post's vision is to play a part in creating a better future for Indigenous Australians so that they may fully participate in, and benefit from, the advantages enjoyed by all Australians.



Australia Post has been promoting Indigenous art, culture and history through its stamp issues since 1968. Some of these stamps are shown in this action plan.

Advice: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images of people who have died.

Reconciliation and Australia Post

Ahmed Fahour, Managing Director



When you see a publication such as this, it can often be easily dismissed or just skimmed through. But if you take the time to read the stories in this our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), I am sure you will see the strong ties that bind Australia Post with Indigenous Australia.

Indigenous Australians have been making a valuable contribution to our business, as members of our workforce, for well over a century. For Australia Post, the employment of Indigenous Australians is, therefore, a tangible expression of our commitment to reconciliation.

Another way we seek to demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation is by providing access to services in many remote Indigenous communities. Our presence throughout regional, rural and remote areas of Australia is important to sustaining the social and economic interests of those communities.

The provision of employment and services are, therefore, at the heart of Australia Post's commitments in this our first RAP. To these two elements we have added a third: recognition.

Recognition is all about how you act – and that is why it forms a critical part of our actions around reconciliation. There is no sense in saying you believe in something without the actions and commitment to back it up.

To put it another way, in this RAP we are continuing our commitment to reconciliation by:

- providing sustainable employment backed by experience and respect
- being a part of Indigenous communities through the services we provide, particularly in remote Australia
- recognising the culture of Indigenous Australians and their role as the First Australians.

This document is very much a reflection of what we stand for – and who we are as an iconic Australian business. On behalf of Australia Post, I am very proud to see our first Reconciliation Action Plan signed off and underway. I look forward to sharing our progress with you in the future.

The next step in a long history with Indigenous Australians

David Mortimer AO, Chairman



Our organisation has a long and distinguished history in providing employment for Indigenous Australians, and our new Reconciliation Action Plan continues to build on this established foundation.

The 1988 Australia Post Indigenous Employment Strategy was our first formal commitment to a policy that sought to provide real jobs and real opportunities to Indigenous Australians. It was the first of six consecutive Indigenous Employment Strategies, with each one seeking to expand and improve upon the achievements of the preceding strategy.

But acknowledging our formal commitment to Indigenous employment since 1988 only partially addresses the opportunities that this great Australian institution has provided to Indigenous Australians over a long period. Witness the appointment in 1874 of Mary Helen Cuper as postmistress at the mission station at New Norcia, Western Australia, as an example of our longstanding relationship with Indigenous Australia.

The release of the Australia Post RAP is therefore consistent with our long-held values of promoting employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians and offers a new platform on which the organisation can further develop its contribution to this effort.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to commend the Australia Post management team and the diversity team for their insight and dedication in taking on this important task in the reconciliation process. I believe it will position Australia Post exceptionally well in the pursuit of reconciliation in the future – and I hope that it gives all Australians an opportunity to see the commitment of their postal service to the important task of closing the gap.



The archives of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia

Overview of the Australia Post RAP

The Australia Post RAP is built on three foundations of what we can do to close the gap between the disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians and the rest of Australia's population.

Employment

Australia Post will provide sustainable employment opportunities and training that is backed by experience and respect.

Services

Australia Post provides a connection between many very remote Indigenous communities and the rest of Australia.

Our organisation has connections to more than 180 Indigenous communities and we will play our part by ensuring Indigenous Australians have access to our services.

Recognition

Australia Post will increase its efforts to recognise the culture of Indigenous Australians and their role as the First Australians. As an example, we will have an "acknowledgement of traditional owners" in all of our major postal outlets across the nation.

Our actions under this RAP support the key program areas of Reconciliation Australia – relationships, respect and opportunities.

Relationships

It will be through respectful relationships with Indigenous Australians that Australia Post will identify how it can address the needs of the First Australians.

Respect

Australia Post understands that respect for Indigenous Australians and their culture is consistent with the continued growth and prosperity of the organisation as a whole.

Opportunities

Creating business, employment and career opportunities for Indigenous Australians will enable Australia Post to deliver practical outcomes to close the gap and build diversity in our workforce.



For the record: 23 years of commitment at Australia Post

Australia Post's first Indigenous Employment Strategy was launched in 1988. This long-term commitment has ensured that Australia Post remains at the forefront of the recruitment, retention and development of Indigenous Australians into mainstream employment.

The commitment to empowering Indigenous Australians by encouraging them to join our workforce continues to expand and develop.

There have been setbacks and many success stories. More than 4,000 Indigenous employees have worked at Australia Post since that first employment strategy was introduced.

We have learnt much along the way. For example, one of Australia Post's roles has been to provide work experience for Indigenous Australians to build confidence and capability. We have learnt to build in the flexibility to allow employees to participate in important community or cultural activities. We also now know of the importance of role models and mentoring.

Above all, we have learnt that if you want to employ Indigenous Australians, then get the right policies and strategies and the right people involved ... and let them show you how. With the support of Australia Post, Indigenous Australians now occupy influential roles across the business.

Australia Post's Indigenous employment consultants operate with a dual understanding of Australia Post's business and the multitude of issues facing the Indigenous community today. Typically, they have worked tirelessly to elevate the standing of Indigenous Australians by promoting employment and business opportunities in their own communities. Many non-Indigenous Australia Post employees have also supported and been closely involved in this work.

The 2011 Australia Post RAP therefore builds upon the existing foundation of the Indigenous Employment and Business Strategy and will draw heavily on our organisation's track record and experience of providing employment opportunities to Indigenous Australians.





What does it mean ...

to see these commitments in writing?

Graham Jetta, Outdoor Postal Delivery Officer, Bassendean Delivery Centre, Western Australia

I grew up in Kellerberrin – a wheatbelt town in WA – and many of my family were a part of the stolen generation. Most of my family has re-established its links and this helps me to devote my time and energy to my football career.

I came to Australia Post through a joint program run by the Swan Districts Football Club and Australia Post. To be able to play at the footy club you're required to have a job, so when I saw an advertisement in the paper for a position as a postie, I jumped at the chance.

I went through the normal interview process, which encouraged me because it meant that Australia Post was hiring me on my merits.

My employment at Australia Post has helped me to be a good role model for my younger brothers as I know they look up to me. I want to show them how important it is to get a job and how you can feel good from working full time.

I love working for Australia Post – and what they do around reconciliation makes me feel very good about the future. To see this gives me pride for my own culture.

Employment – experience and commitment

Australia Post has a long record of providing and advancing Indigenous employment opportunities in all areas of our business. Our Indigenous Employment and Business Strategy signifies a formal commitment by Australia Post to the improvement of employment and career prospects for Indigenous Australians since 1988.

Australia Post has implemented a unique employment strategy that seeks to increase the representation of Indigenous Australians in our workforce by preparing them to be the best candidates for the position they want to hold.

Our employment program actively trains Indigenous applicants so they are prepared and fully qualified. Any appointment is made on the basis that the successful candidate is genuinely the most appropriate person for the role.

Our commitment to increasing Indigenous employment is now reinforced in Australia Post's inaugural RAP. From practical experience, we know of the possibilities and sense of empowerment delivered to Indigenous Australians through gainful employment and how this has a critical role to play in Australia's reconciliation ambition.





What does it mean ...

to have a job at
Australia Post?

Rose Ogden, Payroll Officer,
Heathwood Delivery Facility, Queensland

It is important for me and my family to know that I have a stable, secure job in an environment in which I am very well cared for. This is the reality of working at Australia Post and my family is proud that I have a job that's going to help me plan for my future.

I know that my family are very proud of me, especially as I'm working for a company that recognises what it means to be Indigenous. The formal recognition of our culture through the RAP is right with what we see as our real contribution to the Australian community.

The sense of accomplishment I get from knowing that I'm helping to provide important services through Australia Post is really quite satisfying. This is one aspect of Indigenous Australians and the contribution they make that many people don't understand.

I'm excited that the RAP will explain this and endeavour to improve the lives of our Indigenous employees by formally acknowledging the important contribution we make to the Australian community.

Out in the community – keeping Indigenous Australians posted

Our role in the community as a valued and trusted service provider extends far beyond the products and services we offer in our outlets and through our delivery network. For Indigenous Australians living in rural and remote areas of the country, postal services fulfil a vital part of their communications needs.

Australia Post is a vital part of the community and has been for more than 200 years. Our people live and work in the communities they serve and they understand the unique needs of their customers and communities, wherever they are located.

Australia Post has a presence in over 180 regional and remote Indigenous communities across Australia.

Every day, and in almost every Indigenous community, Australia Post provides products and services that help communities function and stay connected with the rest of Australia and the world.

Australia Post in my community

Leon Yeatman, CEO Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

When we think of Australia Post in Yarrabah, we think of the place where pay cheques arrive and letters to our loved ones and families are sent. With the advent of new technology, however, it has adapted to include other services.

The service in Yarrabah has a limited range, however our employees use the Australia Post shop in Cairns and recognise the place as more than just a provider of postal services – they also recognise it as another specialist retail outlet.

The Yarrabah Postal Service forms part of our Queensland Government Agent program so, working off the adaptability model, we have tried to add further meaning to our local service.

At Australia Post you are always met with a friendly face and you can be sure that your postal needs will be met.



What does it mean ...

to be given a chance?

Jamara Maza, Indigenous Employment
Consultant, People and Community,
Retail & eServices

I started working at Australia Post nine years ago – my first job after finishing my VCE. As a shy young Indigenous person, Australia Post provided me with the support and skills to help me gain confidence and do my job to the best of my ability.

When I was working in a post office, I felt it was important for other Indigenous people to see an Indigenous face behind the counter. It definitely made them feel more welcome and more inclined to come in, which is really important as our post offices play a vital role in helping people stay connected.

Australia Post gave me the chance to work for an organisation that is willing to employ you purely on your merit. Now that I'm working as an Indigenous Employment Consultant a key part of my role is to act as the link between Australia Post and the Indigenous community. I enjoy promoting our strategies and sourcing new talent from the community and recruitment agencies.

My experience working with Australia Post has given me both financial security and leadership skills – enabling me to be a positive role model to Indigenous communities.

Recognition of the First Australians

As an extensive and respected business that interacts on many levels with Australian communities, we believe that Australia Post is ideally placed to foster a renewed level of recognition of Indigenous Australians and their stories.

Through our RAP we have committed to a visible “acknowledgement of traditional owners” by placing an acknowledgement statement in major Australia Post facilities around the country as an important symbol for our organisation. We understand that acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land is important to Indigenous culture. It is therefore a critical aspect in our pursuit of reconciliation.

Underpinning recognition is shared knowledge and it is through learning about the rich culture and heritage of Indigenous Australians that the importance of acknowledging traditional owners becomes relevant. Australia Post will expand our depth of knowledge of Indigenous Australian culture and history across all levels of the organisation through shared cultural experiences and formal learning exchanges.





What does it mean ...

to be recognised?

Warren Yorkshire, Mail Officer,
Perth Mail Centre, Western Australia

I grew up in Esperance, Western Australia, and from an early age I identified very strongly with my heritage and cultural background. The spiritual link that I have to my heritage and culture gives me power and pride and is representative of my identity and the role that I play in society today.

Australia Post provided me with the training and employment that I needed. The people who introduced this program were the heart and soul of the effort to give Aboriginal people employment opportunities within the company.

Personally, it is important to me to know that Australia Post is establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). It is essential that we show the Australian community the constructive input that Aboriginal workers have within the organisation – this will present us with a strong opportunity to promote our identity.

I see the launch of the RAP as a chance to promote the reconciliation program to the wider public, particularly as the size and scope of Australia Post's business will expose a large number of Australians to it.

The release of the RAP is a way for us to explain our role in the community so that non-Aboriginal people can listen to and feel our sense of image and culture. It gives me a sense of pride to know that a formal recognition of our people is being developed by an organisation as respected as Australia Post.

The business of Australia Post

Australia Post is a Government Business Enterprise, with the Commonwealth of Australia as its sole shareholder.

Our business covers postal services, retail services, express distribution and eservices (ecommerce and secure digital communications).

We employ more than 34,000 full- and part-time employees and support an indirect workforce of privately owned and independently operated small businesses – including 2,934 licensees, 29 franchises, 642 community postal agencies and 5,068 mail contractors.

Australia Post is a fully self-funding business – we receive no taxpayer funding. The profits we earn are returned as dividends to the Commonwealth Government or reinvested into the business to improve service standards, broaden our revenue base and reduce costs.

Our business renewal program Future Ready puts customers at the centre of everything we do. We will provide our customers with new and improved products, better service and greater value for money.





What does it mean ...

to have worked at Australia Post?

Kylie Kinsela, founder, Indigenous Careers
and Employment, Melbourne

I was born in Sydney but I've lived in Melbourne for the past 25 years. I began my career as an accountant and now run a successful recruitment agency that focuses on Indigenous employment.

I look back on my time as an employee of Australia Post with great affection. I was accepted for a cadetship and worked in the finance department, which taught me a great deal about working in a corporate environment. It also exposed me to activity-based costing and established strong credentials on my CV.

There is no doubt that the friends I made and the networks I established during my time at Australia Post have helped me get to where I am today. I was able to use those networks to help me make better decisions about the next steps of my career.

There are two key points that I would make about my time at Australia Post. First, I had exceptional support from the management team. Second, the work experience that I gained is an integral aspect of who I am today and what I have achieved.

The business that I established in February 2010 is now very successful and a recent interview with *BRW Magazine* is testament to this fact.

In short, the lessons that I learnt at Australia Post have enabled me to achieve my successes and I think the RAP will further enhance the organisation's ability to help even more young Indigenous Australians in the future.

Tracking our progress

In recognition of the knowledge and experience of Australia Post's current RAP working group, they will become the Indigenous Steering Committee which will incorporate members of Australia Post's executive council and Indigenous employees. The Indigenous Steering Committee will meet quarterly to:

- monitor the outcomes of the RAP and the Indigenous Employment and Business Strategy
- advise the organisation on the facilitation, promotion and distribution of business opportunities for Indigenous communities and organisations.

Progress and outcomes of RAP activities will be discussed by the Indigenous Steering Committee and reports will be tabled with Australia Post management for review and adjustment where appropriate. Reports on the progress of our RAP will be submitted to Reconciliation Australia annually and reported publicly.

Where we have failed to achieve desired results, then Australia Post will revisit and, where appropriate, adjust those actions to reflect what we have learnt. We will also report these learnings as part of our next RAP.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Relationships | Communication is the key to developing relationships with and understanding the business, consumer and employment needs of Indigenous Australians to ensure they are part of our business enterprises and partnership arrangements.

Relationship building internally and externally

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
1. Create an Indigenous Advisory/Steering Committee – a central point for advice for the organisation – to ensure a fair distribution of Indigenous business opportunities across communities.	Diversity & Inclusion	February 2012	Terms of Reference established and circulated to all staff.
		July 2012	Formal reporting and response mechanisms in place.
		July 2012	A minimum of four meetings per year.
2. Conduct a national Indigenous employment forum for companies interested in employing Indigenous staff to share experiences and promote ongoing progress in this area.	Diversity & Inclusion	February 2012	Masterclass sessions developed and event(s) scheduled.
		July 2012	The number of organisations invited and assisted.
		July 2012	The number of organisations attending forums.
3. Provide support and advice to other Commonwealth Agencies to enable them to participate in reconciliation activities.	Diversity & Inclusion	July 2012	Provide advice and support to a minimum of two Commonwealth Agencies.



Reconciliation Action Plan

Respect Celebrating the history and culture of Indigenous Australians allows us to build respectful relationships and develop knowledge and skills to better meet their needs as consumers, employees and business enterprises.

Demonstrating respect and participating in cultural activities in our communities.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
1. Implement appropriate cultural education and awareness training to support people management policies.	Diversity & Inclusion	February 2012	Audit conducted on current cross-cultural training offered across the organisation.
		July 2012	Cultural awareness sessions scoped for senior management team.
		July 2012	Cultural diversity training developed and included in national training programs for supervisors.
2. Develop and distribute protocols on the appropriate use of, and wording for, an acknowledgement of traditional owners.	Diversity & Inclusion	February 2012	Protocols distributed to all managers and included in appropriate manuals. An online resource will also be generated.
3. Endorse arrangements for Indigenous employees to take NAIDOC leave as per the Human Resources policies and procedures.	Indigenous Employment and Business Consultants	July 2011	All Indigenous employees advised of NAIDOC events and leave arrangements by the Indigenous Employment Consultants each year.
		July 2011	Monitor take-up rates of NAIDOC cultural leave.
		July 2012	Seek feedback from employees on take-up rate of NAIDOC leave.
4. Encourage the participation of Australia Post facilities and work areas in NAIDOC celebrations across the organisation.	Diversity & Inclusion All managers and staff	July 2011	All facilities and work areas provided with information on NAIDOC celebrations and encouraged to participate.
		February 2012	A minimum of 20 facilities/work areas participating in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week activities each year.
		July 2012	A minimum of four positive news stories published in Australia Post internal publication(s) each year.
5. Engage a keynote speaker from the community to build awareness and understanding of topics relating to "closing the gap" on Indigenous disadvantage at Australia Post Indigenous functions or forums.	Indigenous Steering Committee/Indigenous Employment Consultants	July 2012	A minimum of two Indigenous keynote speakers engaged per year. Number of employees attending the function. Level of interest from the public and senior management.
6. Australia Post to place an "acknowledgement of traditional owners" statement in the public space of major postal facilities in each state and territory.	People and Community Retail Services	June 2011	Every major postal facility in the country to display a statement acknowledging the traditional owners of the land.
7. Review the Australia Post policy on intellectual property for references to the appropriate use of Indigenous intellectual property. This may include artwork and cultural knowledge.	Diversity & Inclusion Legal Services Group	February 2012	Review conducted by Indigenous Steering Committee.
		July 2012	Number of recommendations made and actioned.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Opportunities

Creating business and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians enables Australia Post to contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and build the diversity of our workforce.

Creating business and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
1. Create an Indigenous Employment and Business Consultants Advisory Committee that advises Indigenous Australians about business opportunities as they arise.	Diversity & Inclusion	July 2011	Communications strategy developed and implemented.
		February 2012	Number of tender applications from the Indigenous community for Australia Post contracts and franchised/licensed post offices.
		July 2012	Number of opportunities identified by the advisory committee which are communicated to Indigenous Australians.
2. Participate in the development and operation of a national Indigenous small business education program for contract delivery that supports the development of Indigenous enterprises.	Diversity & Inclusion	July 2011	Course materials developed.
		July 2012	Number of participants completed and/or nominated for course.
3. Explore employment and development options for Indigenous Australians across the organisation.	All areas of Australia Post	July 2015	Maintain our current Indigenous employment representation of 1.7 per cent. Provide employment and/or career development opportunities to a further 600 Indigenous Australians.
4. Implement an annual Indigenous Student Scholarship (secondary and tertiary level) to support higher education in collaboration with our Indigenous Employment and Business Consultants.	Indigenous Steering Committee	February 2012	Scholarship program developed and promoted to schools.
		July 2012	Number of nominations received from across regions. Promotion of successful scholarship recipients. Progress payments to successful candidates in place.
5. Sponsor events that encourage youth participation in education.	Indigenous Steering Committee	February 2012	Sponsor School Excellence Awards during National Literacy and Numeracy Week. Forward all applications for Indigenous sponsorship to the Indigenous Steering Committee for consideration in collaboration with the Australia Post Sponsorships group.
		July 2012	Number of applications received and outcomes recorded in the Steering Committee minutes.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Opportunities	Creating business and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians enables Australia Post to contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and build the diversity of our workforce.
Creating business and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.	

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
6. Develop and maintain business partnerships with Indigenous organisations.	Indigenous Steering Committee Diversity & Inclusion	February 2012	Create a database to capture the existing partnerships in each state and territory, including the purpose and outcomes achieved. Develop protocols for communication and engagement to ensure that services are procured to meet the needs of the business and the community.
		July 2012	Issue protocols to all relevant managers dealing with procurement and Indigenous programs.
7. Sponsor and/or participate in events that encourage the development and promotion of Indigenous future leaders through sport.	Indigenous Steering Committee	July 2012	Seek options for supporting or partnering sporting programs that focus on Indigenous youth development through sport. Participate in the SANFL Indigenous development program in 2011.
8. Expand the Indigenous traineeship program to include more school-based and vocational traineeships.	Diversity & Inclusion Indigenous Employment Consultants Hiring Managers	July 2012	Increase the number of school-based traineeships to 100. Increase the number of vocational (adult) traineeships to 15.



Reconciliation Action Plan

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
1. Monitor the progress of the RAP regularly.	Indigenous Steering Committee Diversity & Inclusion	July 2012	RAP Committee to meet quarterly. Interim internal reports to management and/or Indigenous Steering Committee six-monthly. Reports to Reconciliation Australia annually.
2. Report on RAP and publicise results.	Executive Steering Committee Diversity & Inclusion	July 2012	Report submitted to management and Reconciliation Australia for uploading on websites. RAP results included in the annual report.
3. Develop a refreshed RAP, in consultation with Reconciliation Australia.	Indigenous Steering Committee Diversity & Inclusion	July 2012	Refreshed RAP approved and uploaded on both Australia Post and Reconciliation Australia websites.



How we developed our RAP

The Australia Post Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been developed through consultation with our network of Indigenous employees, senior managers, members of the People & Community Team and Reconciliation Australia.

A working group was formed comprising Australia Post's national Indigenous employment and business managers and state Indigenous employee consultants. The members of the RAP working party have established themselves within Australia Post as leaders in Indigenous employment and business strategy and operational activities over a long period.

After development of draft actions, the RAP was forwarded to Reconciliation Australia for review and endorsement. The RAP was then reviewed by the Australia Post Senior Executive Group and finally the Australia Post Board of Directors.





What does it mean ...

to work on something
so important?

Michael Richardson, National Indigenous
Business Consultant,
Melbourne head office

I am a Djabugay–Meriam Mir man and was born in Giramay country (Innisfail, North Queensland) in the late 1950s. In the early 1970s, having successfully completed year 12, I was offered one of only a few jobs in the Commonwealth Public Service under the National Employment Scheme for Aboriginals as a clerk class 1. The program wasn't at all successful given very few Indigenous people had completed year 12 at the time and it was very clear from day one that the program wasn't genuine in its attempts to find Indigenous people work.

When appointed National Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator in 1993, I set about developing pre-employment and industry-based training programs as a counter to the high educational requirements of Australia Post at the time. It pushed the barriers of what was accepted employment practice at the time but the fact is that many of those candidates who were "experience rich" but lacked educational qualifications are now working in management roles and are highly regarded employees of Australia Post.

It has been a long and hard journey to maintain the quality of Indigenous talent entering the company, so I take great satisfaction from knowing that our customers and the company have greatly benefited from the experience.

What does it mean ...

to have Australia Post
in my community?

Pedro Stephen, Mayor, Thursday Island,
Queensland

The Post Office was built here in 1934 as part of the Postmaster-General's services to the people. Australia Post has continued to provide our people and families with access to the rest of the world. The organisation currently offers a wide range of services and products to our families living in remote and isolated communities. We know that these important services will always be provided by Australia Post.

Australia Post has brushed away the cobwebs of isolation from our communities and has provided new opportunities for our people to connect with global markets.



Australia Post Reconciliation Action Plan 2011

Find out more at auspost.com.au/working-with-us/supporting-indigenous-australians.html