

Indigenous Reconciliation Statement of Intent

Performance Report - May 2023

About this report

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap, updated in 2020, enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

FRDC acknowledges that to achieve reconciliation and beneficial outcomes for Indigenous Australians we must embed and involve Indigenous Peoples and culture in all relevant research activities and structures. To do this effectively, FRDC and the Indigenous Reference Group worked together to create the Indigenous Reconciliation Policy, and an Indigenous Reconciliation Statement of Intents and Actions (IRSIA). This first of an annual series of reports shows our progress with the actions that have been set out in the IRSIA.

This year, some of our key achievements have included:

- Providing the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Core Cultural training program to all staff
- Beginning to embed key best practice engagement documents and processes within our evaluation and contracting processes.
- Committing to the message of Reconciliation through all of our communications, documents, and protocols
- Working towards employment and capability and capacity building opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people within FRDC and in Australian Fishing and Aquaculture

In this year, FRDC has had the opportunity to learn about what we are doing that is working, and how we can adapt in future to create more impact as we mature. With this growth, some key aspirations for the coming year include:

- A deeper program of cultural education for staff, including closer engagement with key national and international documents and decisions
- Continuing to consult with best practice experts to incorporate additional system changes to enable us to become strong practitioners of best practice
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan which focuses on impact
- Increase our partnerships and expand impact

FRDC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Our progress at a glance

<p>INTENT 1</p> 	<h2>Respect</h2> <p>5 Completed 4 Underway 0 Not yet started</p> <p>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p> <p>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>
<p>INTENT 2</p> 	<h2>Relationships</h2> <p>0 Completed 13 Underway 1 Not yet started</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and FRDC</p> <p>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</p> <p>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</p> <p>Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</p>
<p>INTENT 3</p> 	<h2>Opportunities</h2> <p>5 Completed 14 Underway 3 Not yet started</p> <p>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development</p>

INTENT 1

Respect



- Completed
- Underway
- Not yet started

ACTION 1

Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.

FRDC has facilitated a 'Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment' to establish baseline learning requirements, identify cultural learning needs and determine future priorities.

ACTION 2

Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for all staff including a commitment to on country engagement by staff with communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

FRDC engaged with AIATSIS to provide their Core Cultural Learning online training course, with weekly opportunities provided to learn and discuss learnings together. Staff are committed to engaging on Country. Staff also undertook cultural learning at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, where different plant uses practiced by the Nggunawal peoples were shown.

ACTION 3

Facilitate within our work conversations and learning between Indigenous and nonIndigenous people to improve two-way learning in the cultural space related to fishing and aquaculture.

FRDC invested in the following projects;
2021-024: 'Development of an Indigenous Engagement Strategy for fishing interests with a focus on Commonwealth fisheries',
2021-050: 'Maintaining cultural practices and building knowledge and capacity to support sustainable fishing of the Gynburra on Narungga Sea Country', and
2021-090: 'Developing an Indigenous-led governance blueprint for collaboration in sea country processes'.
Additionally, 2020-120: 'Assessing the effectiveness of IRG R&D projects to deliver change' was delivered and will be extended to ensure that FRDC's consultation practices and capabilities continue to improve.

ACTION 4

Maintain a contemporary understanding of the activities and documents which provide an understanding of value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

FRDC engaged with AIATSIS to provide their Core Cultural Learning online training course, with weekly opportunities provided to learn and discuss learnings together. This training includes a history of important rights movements and decisions, and the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the nation before and since colonisation.

ACTION 5

Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.

In the previous year, many staff came to AIATSIS for an all day tour which included talks about the significance of protocols. Additionally, protocols and their importance are a part of the education provided in the AIATSIS Core Cultural Learning which was provided to staff this year.

ACTION 6

Ensure all FRDC communications including documents and presentations include a relevant Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.

All communications, documents and presentations include an Acknowledgement to Country. Formal Welcomes to Country are provided by appropriate traditional owners at large events such as the annual stakeholder workshop.

ACTION 7

Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.

Kaurna man Uncle Mickey Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien welcomed the participants of FRDC's 2022 Annual Stakeholder Workshop to country and engaged people in the stories and approaches of his people and country. In particular, Uncle Mickey was able to relate an Aboriginal story about sharing knowledge and resources in a community setting, building understanding, empathy and collaboration to overcome shared obstacles.

ACTION 8

Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of all meetings.

At every FRDC meeting with all staff and with all meetings led by FRDC which also include external collaborators, an acknowledgement to country is made at the beginning. Many staff also make a practice of acknowledging the countries from when they may be joining meetings remotely using the chat functions, and have included similar acknowledgements in their email signatures.




ACTION 9

Build an appropriate library (eBooks or links) that help to explain cultural protocols and first nation's literature.

AIATSIS Core Training modules with additional learning resources have been added to the IRSIA Working Group library which will continue to be available to All Staff after training concludes.

INTENT 2

Relationships

-  Completed
-  Underway
-  Not yet started

ACTION 10

Meet with regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.

FRDC conducts regular meetings with key partners such as the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, with whom we have a formal MOU. A comprehensive list of partners is included within this report.

ACTION 11

Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

FRDC has worked this year on the development of a map of relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in Australia, which will be used to expand our network and leverage capacity for greater impact. We regularly engage with current partners and are working to expand our partnerships through the IRSIA working group, and with the help of new staff who have specific focuses on stakeholder engagement including the Extension Officer Network, Strategic Partnerships Manager, and General Manager of Stakeholder Engagement.

ACTION 12

Ensure a process is in place to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation on Committees and Boards and in employment opportunities

Project 2021-024: 'Development of an Indigenous Engagement Strategy for fishing interests with a focus on Commonwealth fisheries', which is reviewing how FRDC currently engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for strategic purposes has been extended. FRDC has also developed an affirmative traineeship position which is on offer following a wide consultation process to inform its development.

ACTION 13

Ensure opportunities exist in Fishing and Aquaculture Research and Development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

A full list of FRDC projects is included with this report. Additionally, we work to ensure that we partner with other organisations who share this aim such as The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation. We are currently working to expand our partnerships and impacts.

ACTION 14

Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.

Staff have been continuously invited to engage in reconciliation activities through our sharing of important topical news and developments, our weekly Core Cultural Learning opportunities, and our on-country learning opportunities. Additionally, many staff are engaged through their work with relevant FRDC projects, the IRG, external partners, and the delivery of the FRDC IRSIA.

ACTION 15

Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.

FRDC's Communications team and Extension Officer Network are coordinating to gather a NAIDOC Week story from each jurisdiction. Additionally, FRDC documentation, emails and websites prominently feature our Acknowledgement to country. We also ensure that we include formal Welcomes to country where possible.

ACTION 16

Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.

FRDC regularly publicly shares our work and actions which actively promote reconciliation, particularly through our monthly newsletter.

ACTION 17

Collaborate with other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation

FRDC have been working to expand our partnerships and collaborative opportunities, starting with the development of a map of relevant operators in Australia.

ACTION 18

Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify appropriateness of existing antidiscrimination provisions, and future needs.

FRDC has recently engaged an external HR consultant to further review policies and procedures. Additionally, we are in the process of finalising a draft Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

ACTION 19

Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.

A draft Diversity and Inclusion Policy is currently being finalised.

ACTION 20

Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff.

FRDC does this every year, encouraging staff to use collateral such as Reconciliation Week email signatures, meeting banners, and social media badges. Staff are also encouraged to attend local Reconciliation Week events, and are provided time to do so.

ACTION 21

Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW

FRDC internally circulates the NRW events list at least one week prior and encourages people to participate in their local areas.

ACTION 22

Organise at least one NRW event each year.

Staff undertook cultural learning at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, where different plant uses practiced by the Ngunnawal peoples were shown.

ACTION 23

Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.

FRDC did not have any NRW events in 2022 to register.

FRDC Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander Representation

Board members

0

Research Advisory Committee members

6





INTENT 3

Opportunities



- Completed
- Underway
- Not yet started

ACTION 24

Implement short term graduate or secondment opportunities for Indigenous people to participate and learn about the FRDC

We developed and advertised a position but were unsuccessful in securing a candidate. We are continuing work to understand what would increase our likelihood of future success, potentially including an opportunity with the DAFF Indigenous Apprenticeship Program. We also have an Indigenous person who is a graduate working with us in a different core FRDC position.

ACTION 25

Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.

FRDC undertook a consultative process to understand what is needed to ensure that the workplace is safe and supportive for employees in development of an Indigenous Traineeship position.

ACTION 26

Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

FRDC worked with a recruiter to connect with Indigenous recruitments channels but were unsuccessful. We still have a knowledge gap in understanding which channel or approaches are the most likely to be successful. This year we will coordinate with the DAFF Indigenous Apprenticeship Program to look for more opportunity.

ACTION 27

Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.

FRDCs policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure that no direct barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation at the FRDC workplace were present. Reconciliation Working Group members have also been in and will continue discussions with external organisations to build our understanding and capacity to ensure that our recruitment processes have appropriate reach and appeal to more actively encourage diverse participation in our workplace.

ACTION 28

Champion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment in organisations the FRDC works with, including Agencies, Universities and Industry groups.

FRDC is currently developing our own knowledge of how to do this more successfully for our internal hiring purposes. We will work to advance this action when our maturity in this space is greater.

ACTION 29

Have the AIATSIS language map in the FRDC meeting room as a means to make this issue present in our activities, rather than an afterthought or something separate.

The AIATSIS language map is present in the Canberra meeting room, the Adelaide Office, and one Coffs Harbour home office.

ACTION 30

Work with our partners to have Indigenous fisheries/Australian Indigenous Peoples/communities first in sentences rather than at the end.

FRDC works to order sentences where stakeholders are listed, but there is a need to increase the practice internally.

ACTION 31

Ensure Indigenous Australian Peoples are acknowledged as the traditional custodians in areas where the FRDC undertakes activities on our various communications platforms: website, social media, annual report etc.

All communications, documents, the FRDC website and presentations include an Acknowledgement to Country. Formal Welcomes to Country are provided by appropriate traditional owners at large events such as the annual stakeholder workshop.

ACTION 32

Empower the Indigenous Reference Group and build a more comprehensive section on the FRDC website.

The FRDC website has pages dedicated to the purpose, membership, activities and relevant documents for the Indigenous Reference Group (www.frdc.com.au/indigenous-reference-group-irg). Additionally, we have added a page dedicated to Indigenous Fishing and relevant FRDC projects (www.frdc.com.au/about-indigenous-fishing).

ACTION 33

The Indigenous Reference Group will continue to meet in a variety of locations around Australia with an open forum policy to meet and network with as many Indigenous Peoples as possible, to share what they are doing and hear from Indigenous Peoples about their needs and aspirations in regards to fishing and aquaculture.

IRG is under extensive review process and has had limited capacity in 2022.

ACTION 34

The Indigenous Reference Group will also invite guests from industry and Agencies to meetings to expand shared knowledge.

Project 2021-024: 'Development of an Indigenous Engagement Strategy for fishing interests with a focus on Commonwealth fisheries', which is reviewing how FRDC currently engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for strategic purposes has been extended. In the interim, the IRG has had a lowered capacity to engage formally on the knowledge expansion activity.

ACTION 35

Ensure that a prior informed consent form is used in research projects when dealing with Indigenous Peoples and communities by ensuring that the application process has an explicit step to consider the need for this form and process.

FRDC's application Evaluation stage incorporates a new question asking whether project has relevance and should refer to Our Knowledge Our Way. Where relevant, Our Knowledge Our Way is then referenced as a special condition in the contracting process.

ACTION 36

Ensure that all research adheres to relevant ethical guidelines when dealing with Indigenous peoples and communities. Make ethical guidelines part of research agreements, for example AIATSIS ethical guidelines.

FRDC's application Evaluation stage incorporates a new question asking whether project has relevance and should refer to Our Knowledge Our Way. Where relevant, Our Knowledge Our Way is then referenced as a special condition in the contracting process.

ACTION 37

FRDC to adopt the Our Knowledge Our Way in caring for Country: Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing our knowledge for land and sea management. Best Practice Guidelines from Australian experiences to ensure that all those working on FRDC funded research and other activities follow the correct manner of engagement and are aware of the underlying principles.

We have taken the first steps in increasing knowledge of these best practice guidelines through the incorporation of its consideration as part of our application evaluation and contracting processes. Advancing this further requires that we increase prominence in our guideline documentation for service providers. Additionally, there is scope to increase internal knowledge and familiarity to ensure that during the application evaluation process and project management processes our capacity to identify and support best practice is continually improving.

ACTION 38

Where relevant, align our research activities with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets

FRDC's Indigenous Reference Group supported projects have been aligned with Closing the Gap targets.

ACTION 39

Recognise and protect traditional knowledge as intellectual property (in line with the Our Knowledge Our Way guidelines) under FRDC's policy and management of project IP.

Although FRDC is working to increase our capacity to facilitate Our Knowledge Our Way guidelines in its investment and management practices, and is currently exploring policies and procedures in depth with external consultation, there is a need for additional consultation to ensure that best practice capacity is also extended to relevant IP management.

ACTION 40

All research projects funded through the Indigenous Reference Group are to at least have an Indigenous co-investigator with budget to cover this involvement, and all projects to have considered the possibility and appropriateness of including an Indigenous partner. This is done to ensure two-way capacity building within projects.

All active IRG projects have been audited to check current levels of compliance, and one non-compliant project found. There is an opportunity for FRDC to investigate mechanisms to more fully integrate this action in the project application and development stages.

ACTION 41

All research projects funded are conducted to achieve outputs which are of benefit and applicable to as many communities, including Indigenous Peoples as primary custodians of our natural resources, as possible.

For every new project, Extension Officers now have a formal process where end users are reviewed and their involvement in project process and outcomes is developed.

ACTION 42

The FRDC seeking to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart. A statement that sets the stage for our communities to come together and move forward on the same journey.

Under development for 2023/24

ACTION 43

Seek to further use the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to assess areas which FRDC activities or research areas can have a positive impact on some of the targets such as: social and emotional wellbeing; cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters, and strong economic participation.

Under development for 2023/24

ACTION 44

Ensure that there is an understanding of the issue of constitutional recognition within the FRDC board and the broader organisation.

A webinar was held during Reconciliation Week to familiarise All Staff with the Voice to Parliament referendum using resources provided by Reconciliation Australia.

ACTION 45

Consider the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to inform the direction and manner of FRDC activities.

Under development for 2023/24

Projects active

Relevant Closing the Gap targets

- 1 Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives**
Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.
- 6 Students reach their full potential through further education pathways**
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.
- 7 Youth are engaged in employment or education**
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent.

- 8 Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities**
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 per cent.
- 15 People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters**
By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.
- 17 People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives**
By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.

Indicates project started after 27 May 2022 (previous Reconciliation Week)

Project	Key Targets	Indigenous/Torres Strait Investigators(s) or key project consultants
2022-076	8 15 17	
Integrating indigenous fishing: extending adoption pathways to policy and management		Principle investigator is a Torres Strait Islander from Erub, consultation with FRDC IRG
2022-045	15 17	
Measuring non-commercial fishing catches (traditional subsistence fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable livelihoods		Traditional Owner staff to support project team and participate in/assist in conducting Torres Strait Island community consultations
2021-115		
Pipi hatchery production techniques and optimal restocking strategies		N/A
2021-107	15 17	
Two-Eyed Seeing – a framework for cultural fishery assessments supporting equitable and sustainable access to shared resources in NSW Inland Rivers		Co-investigator is a member of the Gomerioi Nation. Consultation will take place with a project-specific Aboriginal Advisory Group in each confirmed region with the assistance of Local Aboriginal Land Councils, and other relevant organisations.
2021-098	17	
Incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into fishery management review processes, using the Northern Territory Barramundi Fishery as a case study		Traditional Owner consultation, PI is Kaurna and Narungga man, Indigenous co-researchers
2021-090	7 8 17	
Developing an Indigenous-led governance blueprint for collaboration in sea country processes		Consultation and operations with Joonga Aboriginal Land and Water Corporation, 3 Yuin-representative research staff and AISTSIS staff participation
2021-060		
Analysis of historical sea urchin research for improved management of nearshore fisheries in NSW		Consultation with AIASTIS

Project	Key Targets	Indigenous/Torres Strait Investigators(s) or key project consultants
2021-050	7 15	
	Maintaining cultural practices and building knowledge and capacity to support sustainable fishing of the Gynburra on Narungga Sea Country	Consultation with FRDC IRG, Sea Country Research Working Group, PIRSA Indigenous fishery managers and elders of Pt Pearce community. PI is a Narungga man from Guuranda.
2021-024	17	
	Development of an Indigenous Engagement Strategy for fishing interests with a focus on Commonwealth fisheries	Consultation with FRDC IRG and AFMF Indigenous sub-committees, and self-selecting Indigenous participant.
2020-120	8 17	
	Assessing the effectiveness of IRG R&D projects to deliver change	FRDC IRG consultation, Indigenous project team member (Graduate researcher), Indigenous project participants
2020-121		
	Indigenous Branding in the Fishing and Seafood Industry - Economic Creation and Capture	Consultation with FRDC IRG and with Indigenous fisheries and aquaculture business owners
2019-143	1 6 8 15	
	An investigation of Indigenous knowledges and nutritional health and wellbeing benefits and values of seafood for supporting Indigenous fisheries development	Consultation with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Maningrida community with assistance from interpreter. Principal investigator is a Larrakia and Wadjigan man.
2019-127	15	
	Developing a traditional fishing harvest strategy to support the sustainable harvest of Quampie (<i>Pinctada albina</i>) in Moreton Bay	Consultation with Quandamooka Land and Sea Management Agency. Project advisory committee comprising Quandamooka and Torres Strait leaders, FRDC IRG members, and an additional Indigenous advisor. PI is a Quandamooka leader.
2019-124	6	
	Shared science and Indigenous knowledge to support fisheries capacity building in Torres Strait	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants will be selected to participate.
2019-032	8	
	Seaweed production as a nutrient offset for Moreton Bay	Co-investigator representing Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation
2018-135	15	
	Sharing and preserving knowledge through story	Consultation with FRDC IRG. Participation of Indigenous fishers to produce media. Co-investigator is Ernie Dingo, from the Yamatji people.
2018-005	8	
	Where should I farm my oysters? Does natural Cadmium distribution restrict oyster farm site selection in the Northern Territory?	Consultation with Kenbi Rangers, Tiwi Land Council, Yirralka Rangers, Aninsilyakwa Land Council, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Thamarurr Development Corporation, Gumarr Marthakal Rangers and Crocodile Islands Rangers. Developed with Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation. The PI is a Kaurna and Narungga man.

