



Australian Government

Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency



**ASBESTOS AND
SILICA SAFETY**



**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

REFLECT



Implementation period – March 2026 - September 2027



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Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Inaugural Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Asbestos and Silicia Safety and Eradication Agency to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Asbestos and Silicia Safety and Eradication Agency joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 5.5 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables the Asbestos and Silicia Safety and Eradication Agency to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Asbestos and Silicia Safety and Eradication Agency, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer

Reconciliation Australia



Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (March 2026 – September 2027)

Message from the CEO of ASSEA,

I am delighted to present the Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2026 (RAP) of the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency.

Since the inception of the agency in 2013, the agency has been dedicated to forming strong relationships with First Nations communities to facilitate the mandate of the agency to protect the health of Australians by eliminating asbestos, and more recently also silica, related diseases, but more generally as an act of reconciliation. We have valued and cultivated relationships with a number of First Nations organisations, including NIAA and NAACHO.

First Nations Australians are at risk of being disproportionately affected by diseases associated with asbestos and silica. In this context, it is particularly important that we focus on spreading information among their communities about the hazards of these materials and the management of these hazards, and both understanding and being responsive to the needs of the people. The RAP demonstrates our commitment and active efforts to promote reconciliation, this being underpinned by a genuine desire of the agency to bring about change to the lives of First Nations peoples in contemporary Australia. We believe that the agency, and all Australians, must pursue reconciliation with determination, with the view that it can be achieved, and such an achievement is fundamental to a better and more equitable nation. If we achieve the goals outlined in our RAP, we feel that at the very least, we have made a worthwhile contribution to reconciliation.

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone involved in the agency who has been responsible for the development of our RAP.

Jodie Deakes
Chief Executive Officer



Our business

The Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA) is a statutory authority established in 2013 to coordinate, monitor and report on national efforts to eliminate asbestos-related diseases in Australia, and support those affected by these diseases; in December 2023, our mandate was expanded to include silica-related functions, reflecting the growing recognition of silica's health risks.

Our core responsibilities include:

- Developing and administering national strategic plans: Overseeing the implementation of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan (ANSP) and the Silica National Strategic Plan (SNSP), which aim to eliminate asbestos- and silica-related diseases, respectively, through coordinated national actions.
- Promoting awareness and best practices: Enhancing public and industry understanding of asbestos and silica risks, and promoting safe management, removal, and disposal practices.
- Coordinating national efforts: Working with state and territory governments to ensure consistent and effective approaches to asbestos and silica safety across Australia.
- Monitoring and reporting: Tracking progress against strategic plan targets and reporting findings to relevant ministers and stakeholders.

As a micro-agency, we employ up to 21 people, one of whom is a First Nations person.

We operate across Australia, collaborating with all levels of government to implement national strategies and initiatives. Our efforts encompass urban and regional areas, ensuring approaches to asbestos and silica safety are consistent nationwide. We also engage internationally, in particular undertaking capacity-building activities in South-East Asia and the Pacific, as well as collaborating with organisations across the globe to progress bans on asbestos and policy shifts to address the re-emergence of silicosis and other silica-related diseases.



ASSEA has two offices:

- In Sydney, on Gadigal land, and in Canberra, on Ngunnawal and Ngambri land.
- We also have staff working remotely in: New South Wales – on Awabakal land (Lake Macquarie/Newcastle area) and Bundjalung land (mid-north coast); Queensland – on Turrbal and Jagera land (Brisbane) and Kombumerri land (south-east of state); South Australia – on Kurna land (Adelaide).

We use the term 'First Nations' throughout our RAP, guided by the voice of our team member who identifies as being a First Nations person.

First Nations artwork

ASSEA is aiming to commission artwork for the RAP by a First Nations' artist, incorporating a theme that relates to our work, and both acknowledging the artist and providing a short biography of that person. This is to be further discussed in an agency wide planning day that we have scheduled for later this year.

Our RAP

The reasons for developing our RAP


We are developing a RAP to enable us to engage with First Nations peoples, when this arises during our work, in a culturally appropriate and respectful way. In many remote First Nations communities there are high levels of asbestos-containing materials, together with the absence of an understanding of the risks to human health posed by asbestos and silica, these communities also being disproportionately affected by asbestos- and silica-related diseases. Thereby, we unreservedly believe we have a responsibility to support reconciliation. This responsibility is one of the fundamental pillars of our ongoing work and principles of our staff.

In this context, we note the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, a strategy of the Commonwealth and state and territory governments in Australia that aims to reduce the disparity in health and life outcomes between First Nations peoples and non-indigenous Australians. Taking into account the role and responsibilities of ASSEA, we aim to facilitate the progress towards Target 1 (Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives).

In addition, as a research-heavy Agency, we are aware that First Nations communities are sometimes the subject of research and analysis that often fails to provide direct outcomes or benefits. We believe it is important for us to work with communities to co-design research to achieve goals and outcomes developed and agreed on together. Developing a RAP will enable ASSEA to act in accordance with its values and demonstrate genuine commitment to the strategic objectives of the Agency. More than this, we recognise that trust-based relationships are key to our aims, and we cannot build that trust without a focus on actions and tangible outcomes. A RAP is therefore the first step towards ensuring ASSEA creates and conducts its defined tasks within a culturally-safe environment. We hope to ensure that 'self-determination' and 'data-sovereignty' do not become empty terms in our vocabulary, but are instead embedded in our ways of working.

Implementation of our RAP

In March 2025, a RAP Working Group (RWG) was established, led by our CEO and RAP Champion, Jodie Deakes. As a micro-Agency, we have chosen to promote a whole-of-organisation approach by including all our people in the RWG. We note that the usual size of a RWG is between 10 and 15 people would mean excluding a small handful of others. We note that our approach may need to change as our Agency does, and we will make space to alter our RWG should ASSEA grow to a size that makes this unfeasible in the future. The RAP Champion is the ASSEA CEO (Jodie Deakes).



In its current form, our approach enables us to share and discuss regular updates on the development and implementation of the RAP via a standing item in our all-staff meetings.

Our reconciliation journey to date


We are committed to reconciliation and empowering First Nations' voices in decisions that affect their own communities. Beginning in 2014 (one year after we were established), we developed culturally sensitive signs in-language to communicate the dangers of asbestos. This work continued in 2016, as we engaged with communities to develop awareness campaigns. In more recent years, we have been proactive in engaging and working with both the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to prevent asbestos-related diseases in First Nations communities, and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), endeavouring to map legacy asbestos containing materials in remote First Nations communities and to allow for evidence-based planning for ongoing asbestos management.

However, prior to beginning our RAP process, ASSEA's reconciliation journey was characterised by an ad-hoc, 'start-stop' approach. In developing a RAP, we have begun a more coordinated, consistent effort towards sustainable reconciliation which involves the whole Agency, and investigating the best way to support different communities.

Our partnerships/current activities

Our previous partnerships or current activities:

- JAWUN program participation by ASSEA CEO in 2022
- IAGDP participation in 2022–2023
- Direct engagement with NIAA, NAACHO and MIWATJ Health Aboriginal Corporation in 2023–2024
- Working towards cultural safety in the workplace
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement
- Use of Supply Nation



Some of the more general activities we have undertaken on this journey included:

- Acknowledgement of Country at each all-staff meeting
- Whole-of-Agency discussions about the need for reconciliation
- Participation in National Reconciliation Week activities, with further celebrations for NAIDOC week
- Executive and communications staff members undertaking the course 'Working with First Nations'

Key to 'responsibilities' in table below:

CEO – Chief Executive Officer of ASSEA

Four teams managed by the Executive directors:

- Awareness and Engagement (A&E)
- Coordination, Policy & International (Coordination)
- Corporate and Finance (C&F)
- Research, Evaluation and Data (RED)



Relationships

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. | May 2026 | Director Coordination |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | June 2026 | Director RED |
| 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | May (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May-3 June (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May-3 June (annually) | CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. | May (annually) | CEO |

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| 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | May 2026 | Director Coordination |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | March 2026 | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff to contribute to the development of our RAP (ASSEA is a small agency (21FTE). Rather than form a committee to lead the RAP, ASSEA has engaged as a 'whole agency' in the development of the RAP, and will continue to participate in all actions) | Until September 2027 | CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing Community Reference Panels in the regions in which we're collaborating* | June 2026 | Director RED |
| 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | December 2026 | Director C&F |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | December 2026 | Director C&F |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review our policies and procedures for culturally appropriate language* | December 2026 | Director C&F |



Respect

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|------------|----------------|
| 5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning. | • Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. | June 2026 | CEO |
| | • Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. | March 2026 | Director A&E |
| | • Undertake face-to-face cultural competency training* | June 2026 | CEO |
| 6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols. | • Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. | March 2026 | Director RED |
| | • Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | June 2026 | CEO |
| | • Invite local elders to speak to the Agency at each of our office sites, to learn about the community and lands* | March 2026 | Director A&E |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite local elders to Council and committee events to welcome members to country and learn about the lands on which they meet* | March 2026 | Director C&F |
| 7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. | June – July (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. | June – July (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July (annually) | Director RED |



Opportunities

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|----------|----------------|
| 8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. | Dec 2026 | CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | Dec 2026 | CEO |
| 9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. | Dec 2026 | Director C&F |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate Supply Nation membership. | Dec 2026 | Director C&F |



Governance

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation. | May 2027 | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG. | May 2027 | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | Review May 2027 | CEO |
| 11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | March 2026 | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | March 2026 | CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. | March 2026 – September 2027 | CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | March 2026 | Director RED |
| 12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. | June (annually) | Director RED |

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| <p>achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. | 1 August (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. | 30 September (annually) | Director RED |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate RAP progress to internal and external stakeholders. | June (annually) | Director RED |
| <p>13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | June 2027 | Director RED |

Contact details

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