

Establishing and maintaining an effective RAP Working Group

The RAP Working Group (RWG) is considered the governing body of the RAP. The RWG is ultimately responsible for the development, implementation and reporting phases of a RAP. It is therefore important to establish an effective RWG in order to develop a RAP.

RAP Working Group requirements

For RAPs to receive Reconciliation Australia's endorsement, they must include the following minimum requirements with respect to their RWG.

Mandatory RAP Working Group requirements for RAP endorsement	
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional to establish a RAP Working Group to oversee development of the RAP. Must commit to establishing a RWG as an action within the RAP.
Innovate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must establish or have an existing RWG to oversee development of the RAP. Must demonstrate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented. Must commit to identifying a RAP Champion/s as an action within the RAP. Must commit to meet <u>at least</u> four times per year as an action within the RAP. Must commit to develop a Terms of Reference as an action within the RAP.
Stretch & Elevate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have an existing RWG to oversee development of the RAP. Must demonstrate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented. Must have an identified RAP Champion/s from senior management. Must have representation from senior management across different areas of the organisation. Must commit to meeting <u>at least</u> four times per year as an action within the RAP. Must commit to reviewing and maintaining a Terms of Reference as an action within the RAP.

RAP Working Group structure

Membership

Beyond the minimum requirements of the RWG for RAP endorsement, it is important that a RWG consist of employees from across an organisation, including senior leadership and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The ideal members for a RWG will vary according to your organisation's size, geographic reach and core business, however, broadly membership should comprise of:

RAP Working Group membership	
Who?	Why?
Staff that represent a wide range of departments, locations and levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a whole-of-organisation approach to the RAP. To ensure the RAP does not sit with a single team (e.g. the HR department). To ensure the responsibility for implementing the RAP does not fall to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff or departments. Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives (staff or external).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the RAP is guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives. To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in decision-making. To build a culturally appropriate approach to RAP development, implementation and reporting. To assist the RWG and organisation work through areas that can be complex or sensitive. Demonstrated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation is a minimum requirement for Innovate, Stretch and Elevate RAPs. <p>NB: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and RWG representatives should not be expected to drive the RAP, but rather guide the RAP.</p>
Key decision makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the RWG can resolve roadblocks to RAP implementation.
RAP Chair/Co-chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To coordinate RWG meetings and take responsibility for holding other members of the group accountable and on track. To provide a primary contact for other staff, community members, organisations and Reconciliation Australia when they have enquiries about the RAP.
RAP Champion/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise the profile of reconciliation as an organisational priority internally and externally. To lead by example by actioning the commitments in the RAP.
No more than 10 – 15 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure a manageable, and hence sustainable, sized group.

Roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference)

Many organisations find it useful to consolidate RWG membership, roles, responsibilities, meeting details, agendas and reporting requirements in a set of guidelines such as a Terms of Reference (TOR) document.

A typical RWG terms of reference document should include:

- Overarching purpose and outcomes of the RWG.
- The term the RWG will operate for i.e. from [month, year] to [month, year].
- Membership requirements of the RWG, including the size of the group, how often membership will be reviewed and the process for selecting members.
- Roles and responsibilities of members, including expected time commitment from members and expected input i.e. providing ideas, reviewing and commenting on drafts, assisting with implementation of RAP deliverables.
- Meeting requirements, including how often meetings will be held, who will chair the meetings, and who needs to be present to make decisions.
- Meeting agenda requirements, including how the agenda will be collated, when the agenda will be distributed and who will take minutes of the meeting.
- Reporting requirements, including who the RWG reports to—i.e. Executive Leadership or Board—how often the RWG will report and the various reporting products i.e. RAP Impact Questionnaire, internal reporting, and public reporting.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committees

Although not required for RAP endorsement, another way to facilitate ongoing input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the planning and governance processes for your organisation is to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory committee or reference group.

This committee or group could be made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, business partners, local Elders, and key representatives of the local community.

The role of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory committee is generally to provide advice, as requested by your organisation, on matters including (but not limited to):

- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into operations.
- Locally appropriate reconciliation initiatives.
- Policy and consultation strategies.
- Ensuring better access and engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, clients and community members.

Appropriate remuneration

If you are considering establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory committee, it is important to be sensitive to the commitment involved for advisory group members and the cost of their time. Appropriate remuneration for travel and time should be a central part of any discussion when establishing and inviting members to join your advisory group. If you are regularly inviting community members to provide advice or assist with delivering RAP actions, you could consider engaging a community member in an ongoing paid role, such as an Elder-in-residence or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officer.

Still unsure?

Please email us at rap.team@reconciliation.org.au.