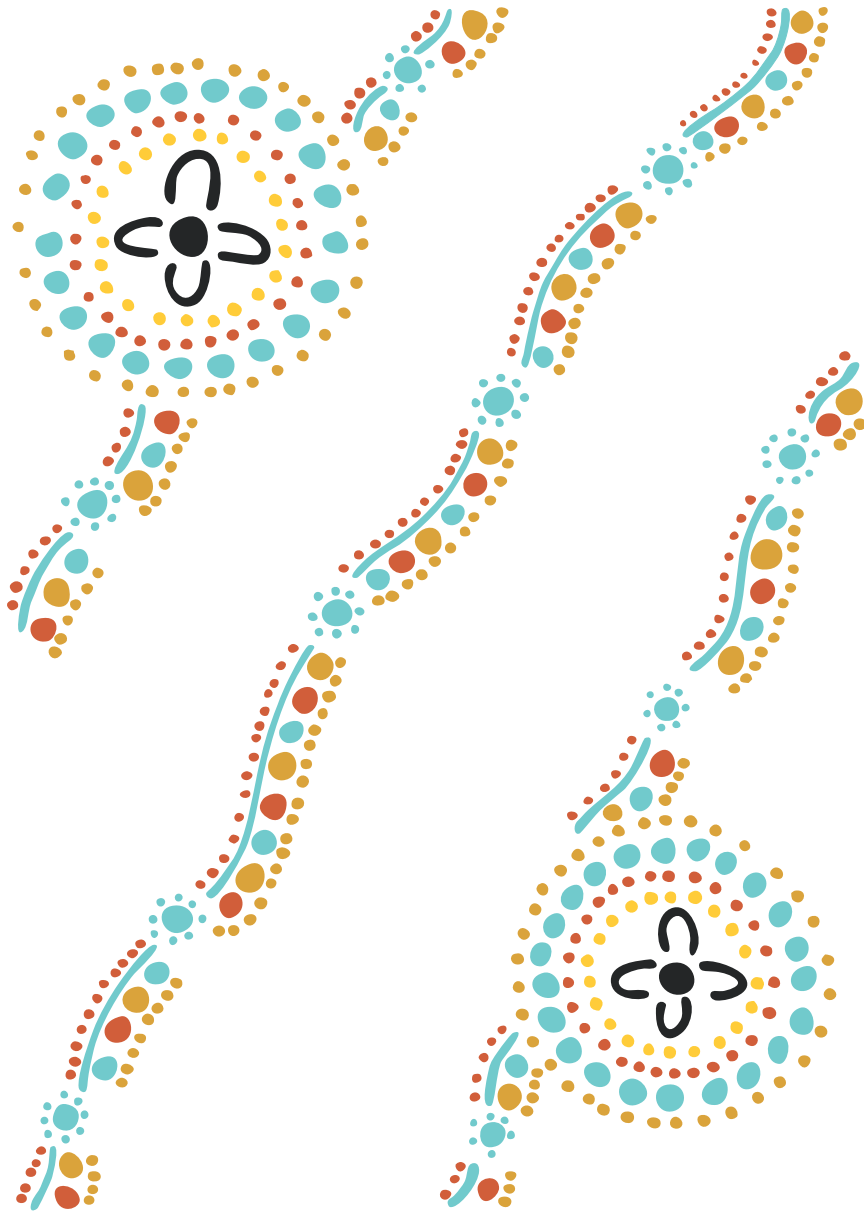




GERALDTON
UNIVERSITIES
CENTRE

REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2020 – November 2021



ARTIST

Shanae Tesling (Martu woman)

The Martu are the traditional owners of a large part of central Western Australia which extends from the Great Sandy Desert in the north to around Wiluna in the south. Shanae has lived in Geraldton since she was 12 years old.

TITLE

Journey through Education

The artwork describes the journey through education and the connections that are made with people along the way. The circles represent groups of people coming together to share knowledge. The pathway between is to show that journey.



RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Karen Mundine - CEO Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Geraldton Universities Centre to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Geraldton Universities Centre joins a network of more than 1,100 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 2.3 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 Geraldton Universities Centre 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 Geraldton Universities Centre, 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





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Cover Photo:

Ashlee McEwan (B. Nursing)
2019 University of Southern Queensland
Faculty Medallist - Faculty of Health, Engineering & Sciences



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Geraldton Universities Centre respectfully acknowledge the Yamatji Nation Peoples who are the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of the land on which we live, work, and learn. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Yamatji Nation Peoples.



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION (foreword)

Geraldton Universities Centre's (GUC) mission is one of inclusivity, to provide opportunity **for all** to a range of high quality, supported university programs that build regional capacity.

With such a mission, GUC has strategic objectives and actions to support access and retention of Aboriginal students in higher education, provide outreach in the community, and raise cultural awareness amongst staff and the broader GUC student cohort, and community.

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides an opportunity to formalise current strategies, identify gaps, and provide practical actions to drive our contributions to reconciliation.

The GUC Board passed a resolution at its June 2019 meeting to commit GUC to a Reflect RAP and nominated two board members, Yvonne Messina and Bert Beevers, to establish the **Geraldton Universities Centre Reconciliation Working Group** (the Working Group) with management, staff, Aboriginal students and a community representative to map out the process and drive actions.

The Working Group has been instrumental in preparing the Reflect RAP. The Working Group underpins the Reconciliation Australia framework for reconciliation action – providing the governance, reporting on progress, and showing the leadership in reconciliation at the GUC.

The GUC acknowledges and thanks the Working Group for their contribution and on behalf of the Working Group, we are pleased to present the **Geraldton Universities Centre Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan**.

For the purpose of this document, use of the term Aboriginal is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Jody Beven
Chair, GUC Board

Natalie Nelmes
GUC Director

Tiambra Calvin
Chair, GUC Reconciliation Working Group



OUR BUSINESS

Established in 2002, The GUC is an independent, not-for-profit community based organisation, supporting more than 300 local university students on behalf of partner universities CQUniversity, the University of Southern Queensland and Curtin University. The higher education awards our students receive are offered and conferred by our university partners.

The GUC has 11 permanent staff members which include the following

- Director
- Academic Coordinator – *Education*
- Academic Coordinator – *Nursing*
- Clinical Placements/Clinical Coach – *Nursing*
- Academic Learning Coordinator
- Projects and Communications
- Administration Coordinator
- Finance Officer
- Student Support/Aboriginal Student Support (*dual role*)
- Student Administration Officer
- Administration Assistant

GUC students study by mixed mode. This means they are enrolled as distance students with our university partners and access their curriculum online while receiving face-to-face administrative, pastoral and academic support from GUC. Academic support includes two hour tutorials for each unit of study each week or an intensive block of tuition, delivered by local, industry based tutors. Approximately 8% of students studying at GUC are Aboriginal. GUC provides purpose built study facilities, text books in a closed reserve library, access to laptops and Wi-Fi, and a 24/7 student study hall with a dedicated, culturally safe space for Aboriginal students.

Additional to permanent staff, the GUC employ approx. 40 sessional (casual) tutors each semester. Indigenous Tertiary Assistance Scheme (ITAS) tutors are engaged as needed in support of Aboriginal students.

Since inception, the GUC has seen twenty four Aboriginal students graduate from degree programs, including Ashlee McEwan, the 2019 University of Southern Queensland Faculty Medallist winner, Faculty of Health, Engineering, and Sciences.

GUC is located in Geraldton but services the Mid West region, predominantly within a two hour radius of Geraldton. Students can drive in and out for tutorials and GUC also provides the ability for students living in the hinterland to web conference into tutorials. GUC also have a small number of students studying in the North West of Western Australia, and in agreement with the Carnarvon Shire, GUC offers the opportunity for students to study in Carnarvon at the Carnarvon Library.



THE YAMATJI NATION PEOPLES

Yamatji (or Yamaji) is the name used to identify Aboriginal people in the Murchison and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia. 'Yamatji' comes from the Wadjarri (or Wajarri) language and means 'man' or 'human being', so it is often used throughout this region to refer to 'Aboriginal person'. Yamatji has come to be used almost universally throughout the region, probably because Wadjarri is the widest spoken remaining language.

Yamatji Country is in the Mid West region of Western Australia and stretches from Carnarvon in the north to Meekatharra in the east, to Jurien in the south. The Yamatji area covers nearly one fifth of Western Australia and includes coastal, regional and remote areas. Yamatji Country is known for fishing, farming and mining industries, tourism and recreation.

The Yamatji region in Western Australia contains many Aboriginal groupings. Approximately 10% of the total population of the region are Yamatji people, who live mostly in Geraldton and Carnarvon. Many Yamatji people also live in the smaller towns of Mt Magnet, Shark Bay, Mullewa, Cue and Gascoyne Junction, as well as in remote communities such as Meekatharra, Burringurrah, Yulga Jinna, Barrell Well, Wandanooka, Mungullah, Buttah Windee and Pia Wadjarri.

YAMATJI LANGUAGE

Today these are the main language groups of Yamatji people and their locations:

- **Nanda people** in the northern coastal part of the region
- **Naaguja people** in the southern coastal part of the region
- **Amangu people** located in the Geraldton and Greater Geraldton region including the north midlands around Morawa
- **Wadjarri people** located in the Murchison around Mullewa and as far north as Meekatharra
- **Badimia people** further inland from Yalgoo, Paines Find and Mt Magnet areas
- **Western Desert** people who are further east around Wiluna on the edge of the Gibson and Little Sandy Deserts
- **Malgana people** located in the coast region surrounding Shark Bay



Source: Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation
http://www.bundiyarra.com.au/index.php?page=mid_west_languages



DEVELOPMENT OF OUR REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The GUC's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a strategic document to support the GUC's Strategic and Operational plans and includes practical actions to drive our contributions to reconciliation both internally and externally.

In preparation for the development of the Reflect RAP, the **Working Group** was established in August 2019 with members representing the Geraldton Institute Incorporated (GII) Board, GUC Staff, GUC Aboriginal students and a local community member.

The GUC acknowledges and thanks the **Working Group** for their contribution to this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Working Group is to monitor and progress the GUC Reconciliation Action Plan. In addition, the Reconciliation Working Group is established with the following objectives:

- Build relationships between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the wider community that will enable GUC to work together to close the gaps and to achieve a shared sense of fairness and justice.
- Demonstrate and exemplify a commitment to building a sustainable, supportive, cohesive and inclusive community.
- Recognise the value and strength of culture, families, and beliefs within the Mid West of WA
- Make decisions about and advise upon the RAP
- Develop a RAP within the context of GUC's Strategic Plan

MEMBERSHIP

The Reconciliation membership will consist of:

- Director of the Geraldton Universities Centre
- 2 x GUC Board Members
- Up to 4 x GUC Student Representatives
- 1 x Community Member
- 2 x GUC Staff Members

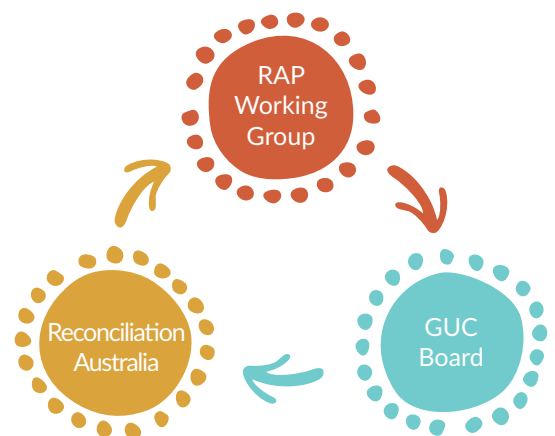
REPORTING PROCESS

Committee:

- Advise and recommend to GUC Board on all matters relating to the progression of the RAP
- Report on progress to Reconciliation Australia

GUC Board:

- Oversee, monitor progress and provide resources to support the RAP and review and approve updates to the RAP as required.





ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

The GUC has a long, and strong history of engagement with our Aboriginal community, and works in partnership with the following Aboriginal organisations/corporations within the Mid West region:

- Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation (Bundiyarra)
- Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS)
- Midwest Aboriginal Organisation Alliance (MAOA)
- Mulga Mail
- Radio MAMA
- Aboriginal Learning Centre - Central Regional TAFE

With these partnerships GUC has been able to implement the following actions:

- Bundiyarra have provided cultural guidance and assistance to GUC staff and students over many years. Bundiyarra provide students the opportunity to speak with Elders in the region to have a better understanding of past issues and their impact on Aboriginal people within the region. (Truth-telling).
- Central Regional TAFE Aboriginal Learning Centre provide tutorage to GUC students in core units of Aboriginal Studies. This prepares students to better understand Aboriginal cultures, and how this impacts on the delivery of Health, Education and Community Services to Aboriginal peoples.
- Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS) – GRAMS provides a culturally rich environment for nursing placements. This enables nursing students to gain firsthand experience of the complexities of Aboriginal Health.
- Mulga Mail and Radio MAMA - Local media stories promoting GUC Aboriginal student success and GUC courses.
- Midwest Aboriginal Organisation Alliance (MAOA) – The alliance has 16 Aboriginal Organisations that work within the Aboriginal community of the Midwest. MAOA are key to providing information and assistance to Yamatji people. GUC and MAOA work together to provide higher education opportunities for Aboriginal people in key areas of need, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.





GUC INITIATIVES

With the support of the GUC Board, a garden was designed to highlight the achievements of our Aboriginal graduates. Named Birndu Nyina (means to sit quietly in Wajarri language) the garden celebrates the success of Aboriginal Graduates, and Aboriginal students who have received scholarships provided via the Hollomby Foundation (a charitable trust in support of GUC students).

The garden has been open for the last 4 years and provides a place of accomplishment within the Aboriginal community.

The Hollomby Foundation Scholarship Program provides a number of scholarships for Aboriginal students.

Scholarship donors include:

- Sinosteel Midwest
- St John of God Hospital Geraldton
- Mumbida Wind Farm
- Yagahong Alliance
- and previously Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation

Champion Bay and Geraldton Senior High Schools – Follow the Dream (FTD) Program - GUC Aboriginal Student Services Officer is a member of the local FTD Steering Working Group and meets with FTD students to increase awareness, and aspiration for completing high school, and assisting with further post school education opportunities.

Curtin University Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) –Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course (ITEC) – GUC in partnership with CAS, piloted delivery of this course in Geraldton and facilitated community consultation, information sessions, course delivery, and one on one student support.

Dedicated Aboriginal student study space – Completed in January 2020, the GUC sought cultural guidance and advice on the establishment of this space from the Aboriginal community, GUC Aboriginal student cohort, and GUC university partners.

Aboriginal Graduates sashing ceremony – Formal campus event recognising GUC Aboriginal graduands in their graduating year. This event is attended by our partner university representatives, student's families and friends, and the wider Aboriginal community.

GUC host an annual NAIDOC activity each year for students, staff, board members and stakeholder organisations, including local school children.

GUC participate in external NAIDOC activities.



GUC RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The **Working Group** has been guided by Reconciliation Australia in developing the framework for this Reflect RAP.

The framework has three core pillars:

1. RELATIONSHIPS

At the heart of reconciliation is the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that are free of racism.

2. RESPECT

Understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, rights and experiences underpins progress toward all five dimensions of reconciliation.

● race relations ● equality and equity ● institutional integrity ● unity ● historical acceptance

Without respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of doing things, respectful relationships cannot be built. Without pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage, we cannot foster a shared national identity. Without understanding the wrongs of the past, we cannot prevent these wrongs from being repeated.

3. OPPORTUNITIES

Equal participation in a range of life opportunities is crucial for the well-being of all peoples, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Large and unacceptable gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians exist on all social, health, education and economic indicators.

The three pillars are underpinned by governance and reporting practices to ensure good intentions are turned into actions in support of reconciliation.





Relationships

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TARGET	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	1.2 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. https://www.reconciliation.org.au/national-reconciliation-week/ https://www.reconciliation.org.au/resources/	June 2021	Projects and Communications Officer / Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	June 2021	Projects and Communications Officer / Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	June 2021	Projects and Communications Officer / Aboriginal Student Support Officer / GUC Board
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	June 2021	GUC Director/ Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	3.2 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	April 2021	GUC Director / Projects and Communications Officer / Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	3.3 Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / GUC Director / Projects and Communications Officer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / GUC Director
	4.2 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / GUC Director
5. Promote aspiration and access to higher education for Aboriginal people through schools engagement strategies.	5.1 Increase participation in higher education through actively engaging with stakeholders in the school sector, facilitating initiatives and programs which inform and build aspirations and provide successful transitions for Aboriginal students	February 2021	Projects and Communications Officer / Aboriginal Student Support Officer



Respect

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TARGET	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	6.1 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	May 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	6.2 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	7.1 Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	July 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	7.2 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2021	GUC Director/ Aboriginal Student Support Officer
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	8.1 Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer/Project and Communication Officer/GUC Director/
	8.2 Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	8.3 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
9. Demonstrate respect for the achievements of GUC Aboriginal Students	9.1 Acknowledge the achievements of our Aboriginal students.	October 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer
	9.2 Develop a unique GUC visual identity that respects, and represents our local Aboriginal culture and history.	October 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer



Opportunities

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TARGET	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	10.1 Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	October 2021	GUC Director/GUC Board
	10.2 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2021	GUC Director
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	11.1 Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	October 2021	GUC Director/GUC Finance Officer
	11.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2021	GUC Finance Officer





Governance

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TARGET	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.	12.1 Review and Monitor a RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation.	June 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / GUC RAP Working Group
	12.2 Review and Monitor Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group	June 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / Director / Project and Communication Coordinator
	12.3 Review and Monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group.	June 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / Director
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	13.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November 2021	GUC Director
	13.2 Review and Monitor engaged senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2021	GUC Director
	13.3 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2021	GUC Director
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	14.1 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer / Project and Communication Coordinator / Director / GUC Rap Working Group
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	15.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2021	Aboriginal Student Support Officer

For public enquiries about our RAP, please contact;

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Position: Chair GUC RWG
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reconciliation Australia

Geraldton Universities Centre *Working Group* Members:

Student Representatives;

Malcolm Maloney
Alison Morgan
Meg Gibson

Community Member

Nola Gregory

GUC Board Representatives

Yvonne Messina
Bert Beevers

GUC Staff Representatives

Tiambra Calvin (*Chair*)
Natalie Nelmes
Natasha Colliver

Indigenous Artist

Shanae Tesling (*Martu woman*)

REFERENCE

Yamatji Nation Peoples

Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation

http://www.bundiyarra.com.au/index.php?page=mid_west_languages

