

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2025 - September 2026





Housing Trust acknowledges the people of the Dharawal and Yuin nations, Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and provide homes. We recognise their deep connection to the coastal areas stretching from south of Sydney Harbour to beyond the Shoalhaven River and over the escarpment into the highlands.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, acknowledging their continual care and stewardship of these lands and waters throughout generations. Housing Trust extends a warm invitation to all First Nations people, as we work together towards reconciliation on lands that were never ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Contents

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia	04
A message from our CEO	06
JS Koori Designs	09
Who we are	10
Our vision for Reconciliation	11
Our journey to date and moving forward	12
Our partnerships and current activities	14
A message from our RAP Working Group	17
A word from our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG)	19
Relationships	20
Respect	22
Opportunities	24
Governance	26



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Karen Mundine
CEO Reconciliation Australia
Image provided by Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes The Illawarra Community Housing Trust Ltd to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Illawarra Community Housing Trust Ltd 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 close to 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 The Illawarra Community Housing Trust Ltd 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 The Illawarra Community Housing Trust Ltd, 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

A message from our CEO



Amanda Winks
CEO Housing Trust
Photography by Powder Puff Photography

As the CEO of Housing Trust, it is with great humility and a profound sense of responsibility that I present our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan is not just a document, it's a commitment, a pathway towards deeper understanding, respect, and collaborative action.

Our journey towards reconciliation is both a moral and social imperative. It acknowledges the past and shapes a future where First Nations peoples' cultures, histories, and rights are respected and celebrated. At Housing Trust, we understand that providing affordable housing is not just about the bricks and mortar. It is about creating future communities that embrace diversity, foster inclusiveness, and promote equality.

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan illustrates our dedication to listening, learning, and growing alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It outlines our steps to ensure our services are culturally appropriate and accessible, and it reinforces our commitment to building relationships and opportunities that contribute to reconciliation.

Our actions, guided by this plan, are steps towards a future where the values of equity, partnership, and respect for the world's oldest living cultures are woven into the fabric of our organisation.

Together, with open hearts and minds, we embark on this journey towards a more inclusive and equitable Australia.

Amanda Winks
Chief Executive Officer
Housing Trust





Artist: Jasmine Sarin (Dharawal, Kamilaroi & Jerrinja)

JS Koori Designs

Jasmine Sarin, a proud Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman, is the founder and creative mind behind JS Koori Designs. Her business is part of the Boomalli Aboriginal Artist Co-op. Growing up in Jerrinja and Yuin Country on the South Coast near Nowra, and in Dharawal Country near Wollongong, Jasmine has always held her culture close to her heart.

Over the past decade, Jasmine has worked extensively with local councils, government departments, corporate and non-profit organisations, schools, and community groups.

Through JS Koori Designs, she focuses on delivering high-quality and meaningful First Nations creative art projects. Her work reflects the deep significance of her cultural heritage, showcasing the vibrancy and richness of Aboriginal art and traditions.

"I am a self-taught visual artist and graphic designer. My artwork tells the story of my experiences growing up and my ongoing journey in this world. This allows me to bring contemporary methods and concepts to the oldest cultures on earth."

"In this piece of art specifically designed for the Housing Trust Reconciliation Action Plan, I have used the symbols created by each Housing Trust employee as a repeating motif pattern in the background. The overall theme is about providing meaningful connection and support to different people in different places, with the centre being the Housing Trust as an organisation which has a diverse range of people working towards a common goal."

- Jasmine Sarin

Who we are

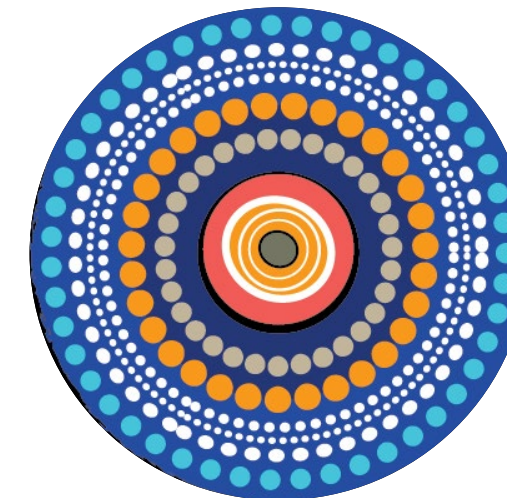
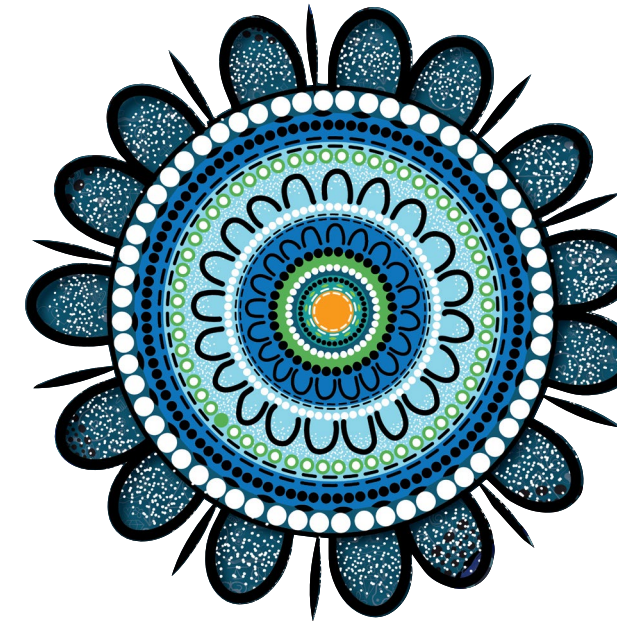
Housing Trust is a Tier 1 registered Community Housing Provider and for-purpose organisation. We have been an integral part of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven communities since 1983. Operating from our head office in Coniston on Dharawal Country, we are committed to providing safe, secure, and affordable homes to over 2,500 residents, 17% of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our fundamental values of respect, integrity, support, and empowerment shape our operations. With a dedicated team of 48 staff, two of whom identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we are driven by our vision of a decent home for everyone. Central to our strategy is the use of innovative partnerships and funding approaches to build more homes. We are currently progressing a development pipeline of several hundred new affordable housing properties, addressing the urgent need for housing in our community.

Beyond offering shelter, Housing Trust is dedicated to building sustainable, inclusive communities. We partner with a range of agencies and organisations who provide comprehensive support if it's needed, facilitating opportunities for our customers to grow, connect, and thrive. We recognise housing as a fundamental human right, essential for maintaining health, educating families, securing employment, developing skills, and participating in the economy.

Our vision for Reconciliation

At Housing Trust, our vision for reconciliation is a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live in homes that are not just safe, secure, and affordable, but are also part of thriving, supportive communities. It's about ensuring equal access to health, education, and opportunities for everyone to participate in social, economic, and cultural activities. Through collaboration with our customers, contractors, suppliers, and the wider community, we are dedicated to deepening our understanding and creating an organisation that truly values inclusivity and respect for all.





Commissioned Artwork by Wanita Lowe



Pictured Sonia Squires, Dr Jodi Edwards, James, Nakiah, Selai, and Andrew Storer (left to right)
Photography by Tim Bauer, Housing Trust 40th Anniversary Photographic Exhibition Pieces

Our journey to date and moving forward

We believe that to progress towards true reconciliation, practical solutions must be steered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations and peoples.

In this light, Housing Trust engaged Two Point Co, a 100% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned consultancy firm specialising in genuine

engagement through strategy, design, consultation, research, and social impact assessment. This collaborative approach commenced with a series of workshops, beginning with the Housing Trust Executive team, to ensure authenticity of our reconciliation goals and secure accountable leadership of this plan.

Housing Trust's Board of Directors are supporting our RAP initiative. This demonstrates a top-down commitment to reconciliation. The Board will receive quarterly progress reports to monitor RAP initiatives, ensure accountability, and provide strategic guidance.

A working group was established, overseen by our RAP Champion, Housing Trust's Executive Manager of Communications and Engagement, Rachel Foster, to craft the RAP for endorsement by Reconciliation Australia. After establishing the goals, the working group focused on gathering and organising the specific objectives. They then communicated the plan for implementing and achieving those objectives throughout the entire organisation.

Housing Trust commissioned local Aboriginal artist Jasmine Sarin of JS Koori Designs to create an original artwork which features symbols of personal importance for each Housing Trust team

member. The process of creating the artwork was deeply emotional and impactful, overlaying our own vulnerability and precious life moments within the context of colonisation for First Nations peoples.

Our RAP Champion and working group will continue to monitor progress with cultural advice and guidance from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers, stakeholders, and our broader communities. We will report on outcomes and successes to the Housing Trust Board, Executive, and all staff, ensuring transparency and an avenue for assessment from a broad range of stakeholders, as well as Reconciliation Australia.



*Pictured Kaylee Donald-Hardes, Janaya Donald-Hardes, Kallani Donald-Hardes, Selina Donald, Atticus Donald-Hardes and Aliyah Donald-Hardes.
Photography by Mark Newsham Photography*

Our partnerships and current activities

Over our 40-year history, Housing Trust has formed numerous relationships with Aboriginal organisations and local Elders, and our staff have actively participated in various events over the years. However, we acknowledge that our activities have not been driven by a cohesive, community-led strategy, something we are now keenly focused on developing.

At the commencement of our RAP journey, we engaged the local University's Woolyungah Indigenous Centre for advice and guidance. Our commitment to fostering positive relationships is demonstrated through active participation in National Reconciliation Week events, including walking alongside First Nations peoples, flag raising ceremonies, and yarning circles. Housing Trust proudly participates in culturally significant events such as NAIDOC Week as well as sponsoring the Annual Local School Deadly awards.

Since 2016 we have provided scholarship opportunities to our customers. Named in honour of an Aboriginal trainee who worked for Housing Trust, and with permission from her family, the Tylah West Education Scholarship has supported 172 recipients in achieving their education and training goals, providing over \$200,000 in assistance. This is made possible with sponsorship from major partners and fundraising activities such as our annual Golf Day Fundraiser.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is currently in place with a local Aboriginal Customers Advice and Advocacy Service to help improve housing outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. This relationship has been active for many years, and the MoU will seek to formalise it.

Driven by our team, we have begun the process of engaging with local First Nations community members to consult on names for our projects, ensuring we pay our respects to the Custodians of the lands where we work and deliver homes. We incorporate ceremonies such as Welcome to Country and smoking rituals into our celebrations and milestone events, learning more from each experience.

We utilise First Australians contractors, encouraging our procurement team to support the rapidly

evolving First Nations Business Sector. We aim to meaningfully increase our trading with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local contractors and suppliers, confident in the knowledge that businesses recommended through organisations such as Supply Nation are regularly audited for changes to company structure and ownership, ensuring authenticity. Housing Trust's ongoing commitment is to support the growth of economic independence and empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, fostering sustainable and inclusive communities.



*Pictured Joanne Reed, Wendy Woodford, Angie Milthorpe, Rachel Foster and Holly Ebb (left to right)
RAP Working Group, Photography by Isabella Joannou*

A message from our RAP Working Group

Housing Trust's RAP Working Group was established to assist with the development of Housing Trust's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. We will guide the organisation on the actions in the plan and are responsible for monitoring and reporting outcomes. Our group's efforts are championed by the Housing Trust Executive Team who have offered support and resources where and when needed.

This plan is the product of our collective dedication to good governance, and commitment to working towards a more just and equitable society for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the communities in which we serve.

Members include:

Wendy Woodford
Manager, People and Culture

Angie Milthorpe
Property Services Officer

Holly Ebb
Accounts Officer

Rachel Foster
Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement

Joanne Reed
Community Engagement Officer

*Pictured Dean Mongta
Photography by Tim Bauer, Housing Trust 40th
Anniversary Photographic Exhibition Piece*



A word from our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG)

'I am a proud Aboriginal man with Indian and Scottish heritage. I believe that coming together to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan is a critical step towards not only recognising and honouring our contributions to this nation but is vital to start the healing for the deep wrongs of the past. We need to create meaningful dialogue, foster mutual respect, and build a future where our voices are heard, and our communities are empowered. I welcome Housing Trust's ongoing commitment to this process.'

- TAG Member Dean Mongta

Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: RAP Working Group
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: RAP Working Group
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2025 April 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Communications & Engagement Team and People & Culture Team
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	27 May - 3 June 2025 27 May - 3 June 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team and RAP Working Group
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	27 May - 3 June 2025 27 May - 3 June 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: RAP Working Group
	Identify other RAP partners, in the RAP network, we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. Look for opportunities to share knowledge, challenges and collaborate.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Build engagement with Housing Trust's network of peak bodies, professionals, and contractors to promote reconciliation and call to action.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Review: June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs to support a culturally safe workplace.	October 2025	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence and achievements.	Continue sponsorship of annual Illawarra Primary School Deadly Awards.	June 2025 June 2026	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Ensure Senior Leadership attendance at the annual Illawarra Primary School Deadly Awards.	October 2025	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: Executive Leadership Team

Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation for all staff and contractors.	March 2025 March 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Create an Induction Learning Program for all new staff.	June 2025 June 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Ensure commissioned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art works are displayed in welcoming areas such as reception areas.	June 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Conduct a review of information brochures to ensure inclusivity and respectful language of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	June 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in reception.	June 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area, as well as some of the history of this region. Present this information to all staff on a weekly Teams Meeting.	January 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: RAP Working Group
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. Embed into all Housing Trust meetings.	June 2025	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: RAP Working Group

[Continued from previous...]	Change the address in our email footer to state the Indigenous name of the lands we work on.	June 2025	Responsible: Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement Support: Community Engagement Officer
	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	June 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	June 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Ensure attendance at external events and celebrations by all employees by embedding attendance in individual Performance Plans.	May 2025 May 2026	Responsible: Executive Leadership Team Support: RAP Working Group



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment agencies to assist in recruitment and attract talent.	March 2025 March 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Reaffirm understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2025 June 2026	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Ensure culturally sensitive wording on website, job advertisements, and position descriptions.	June 2025	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: Executive Leadership Team
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Research effective procurement strategies in similar organisations to understand best practice for our future First Nations procurement strategy	October 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group and Assets Team Leaders
	Utilise the Supply Nation website to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' owned businesses and develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers in the local area.	June 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group and Assets Team Leaders
	Attend First Nations Business Expo's in the local area.	October 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group and Assets Team Leaders

Build education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of all ages.	Effectively communicate the Housing Trust Tylah West Education Scholarship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers to increase applications.	October 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
	Provide extra culturally competent support to scholarship recipients where required.	October 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: Executive Leadership Team
Build and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices within the organisation's governance.	Research best practice for embedding Aboriginal governance in organisations.	October 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Actively recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Tenant Advisory Group.	June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Contribute to safe, secure, and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Explore opportunities for grants and programs that support housing specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsible: Executive Leadership Team Support: Community Engagement Officer

Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation.	March 2025	Responsible: Executive Leadership Team Support: Community Engagement Officer
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	March 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group.	March 2025	Responsible: Manager, People & Culture Support: RAP Working Group
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	March 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2025	Responsible: Executive Manager Communications & Engagement Support: Community Engagement Officer
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	March 2025	Responsible: Executive Leadership Team
	Ensure staff have a deep understanding of our reconciliation commitments and continuously work towards actioning them.	March 2025	Responsible: Executive Manager Communications & Engagement Support: RAP Working Group
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure, and report on RAP commitments.	March 2025	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group and Executive Leadership Team

[Continued from previous...]

	Report progress against RAP commitment to Board of Directors.	June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026	Responsibility: Executive Manager Communications & Engagement Support: Community Engagement Officer and RAP Working Group
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	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.	1 August (annually)	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	July (annually)	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey.	July (annually) (portal closes 30 September annually)	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2027	Responsible: Community Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group and Executive Leadership Team

Contact details

Rachel Foster

Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement

Joanne Reed

Community Engagement Officer

Housing Trust

Dharawal Country

Address: 7/5 Bridge Street, Coniston NSW

Ph: 02 4254 1166

Email: info@housingtrust.org.au



Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan March 2025 - September 2026
© The Illawarra Community Housing Trust Ltd. (Housing Trust)

