



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2025 – December 2026



The background of the page is a solid teal color. It is decorated with white, hand-drawn style wavy lines that flow across the top and bottom of the page, framing the central white area where the text is located.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians across Australia. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, and their deep knowledge of and connection to Country. We celebrate the diversity of First Nations peoples and their wisdom of disaster, recovery and renewal.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) uses the term 'First Nations peoples' throughout this Reconciliation Action Plan to respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. This term recognises the enduring connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with land, sea, culture and community. It also reflects an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach, consistent with NEMA's existing language.



Contents

Acknowledgement	2
First Nations artwork	4
About the artwork	4
About the artist	5
Coordinator-General's foreword	6
First Nations and RAP Champion foreword	7
Reconciliation Australia foreword	8
Our vision for reconciliation	10
Our business	12
Collaboration with the National Indigenous Australians Agency	13
Our RAP	14
Engaging with the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Program	16
Fostering resilience and sustainable recovery through Grants Programs	18
Old practices rekindled in new firefighting partnership	20
Improving consideration of First Nations communities in planning and training	22
Our Reflect RAP commitments	24



First Nations artwork

About the artwork

‘Danbang’ (dun-bung), the Wiradjuri word for *alive, fresh and strong*, is a vibrant and intricate depiction of the diverse range of emergency scenarios that occur across Australia. It emphasises the profound impact these events have on both our environment and our communities. The piece captures the resilience and strength of communities as they navigate through the challenges caused by emergency scenarios. It shows them emerging stronger and more connected in the aftermath.

The National Emergency Management Agency is represented at the heart of the artwork, symbolising our central role in disaster response and recovery. The artwork also shows the essential connections we foster between communities, state and local governments, and various organisations during emergencies. These connections are shown by meeting places around the edge of the disasters. These signify the collaboration and unity that emerge during crisis situations.

The colours in the artwork are chosen to show each element visually, and to evoke the emotional and environmental impact of each disaster. Many symbols in the artwork represent common themes. Some symbols are traditional (used by First Nations groups), and some are interpretive (created to represent specific themes, based on traditional styles and symbols).



'Danbang' artist
Rebecca Salcole

About the artist

Growing up on Country along the Murrumbidgee River in Wagga Wagga, southern New South Wales, instilled in

Rebecca Salcole a deep connection to Country and a profound respect

for the environment. Rebecca is now living and creating on Kombumerri Country.

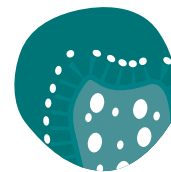
Danbang is deeply personal for Rebecca, rooted in her own experiences with the realities of disasters in Australia. She lived through bushfires in Canberra and cyclones in Townsville. This exposed her to the far-reaching impacts of these disasters on all communities, particularly First Nations peoples.



River



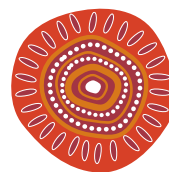
Meeting



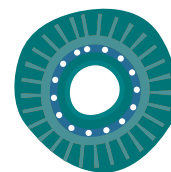
Germs/
viruses



Cyclone



Sun



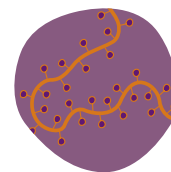
Thriving
plants



Waterways



People



Cyber
networks

Coordinator-General's foreword



NEMA
Coordinator-General
Brendan Moon AM

I am pleased to present the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Before I go any further, I would like to acknowledge that none of this important work would be possible without the efforts

of First Nations peoples, who have advocated tirelessly for reconciliation and self-determination.

This Reflect RAP is an important step forward in our diversity and inclusion work. It's an opportunity to continue to establish and embed reconciliation in NEMA's strategy and operations, and to strengthen relationships and outcomes with, and for, First Nations peoples.

I am particularly pleased to be launching our RAP during National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 2025, and observing the theme, 'Bridging Now to Next', which encourages us to continue pushing forward, as past lessons guide us. This year's NRW artwork symbolises collective strength, and opportunities for renewal—themes particularly relevant to the work we do, and the communities we support.

Since our inception in 2022, we've worked hard to build partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and communities, but we recognise there is always room to improve. We prioritise advocating for First Nations interests and needs across government, and with states and territories, to ensure national emergency management leadership, recovery policies and practices, and longer-term risk reduction and resilience efforts include First Nations unique perspectives and experiences.

The evidence shows disasters disproportionately impact First Nations peoples. While NEMA needs to be there to support First Nations peoples and communities, there remains an opportunity for governments to learn from First Nations innate knowledge, strength, and ability to rally in response to major disasters.

Notable achievements in the past 12 months include the launch of Wiradjuri artist Rebecca Salcole's First Nations artwork, Danbang. Rebecca, or Bec, worked closely with employees across NEMA to create an artwork that tells a powerful story of resilience, adaptation, and interconnectedness in the face of disasters—something that correlates closely with our work and this year's NRW theme.

In 2024, we were humbled to co-sponsor and attend the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering, held on Bundjalung Country in Lismore, New South Wales. Engaging in opportunities to hear and learn from First Nations peoples' perspectives and experiences of disasters such as this are crucial in building our understanding and ensuring approaches to disaster resilience are more inclusive.

This RAP would not be possible without our First Nations Champion, Joe Buffone, and our very own RAP Working Group, who have worked in the spirit of reconciliation by collaborating across the agency to bring our staff and stakeholders together to create strategies that will further our reconciliation journey.

I look forward to implementing this RAP and continuing to work closely with First Nations stakeholders over the next 18 months to embed a culture that actively encourages reconciliation for all Australians.

Brendan Moon AM
Coordinator-General

First Nations and RAP Champion foreword



First Nations
and RAP Champion,
Joe Buffone PSM

As First Nations and RAP Champion and member of NEMA's Leadership Group, I am proud to chair and support our RAP Working Group (RAPWG) to implement NEMA's inaugural RAP.

I am committed to implementing a cohesive approach to

stakeholder engagement, promoting diversity and inclusion, enhancing cultural competency and safety, and uplifting NEMA's approach to working with First Nations staff and communities.

Our Reflect RAP is an opportunity for the agency to document and continue to foster our commitment to reconciliation and acknowledge First Nations peoples, cultures and contributions to building resilience throughout Australia.

Our national footprint allows NEMA the privilege of working on the traditional lands of First Nations communities, including over 250 different language groups. This gives us firsthand insights into the unique impact that hazards and disasters have on First Nations lands and communities.

These experiences are shaping the agency approach to collaborating with and supporting First Nations communities. We have begun embedding these learnings in our operational activities and policies. Our RAP will not only lay the foundation to ensure our people are equipped with the skills, knowledge and cultural competency to achieve this—it will help to ensure we play a leadership role at all levels of government in advocating for partnership and the inclusion of First Nations peoples across the emergency management continuum.

To succeed in fulfilling the agency's vision of building Australia's capacity for disaster resilience and supporting our communities when they need it most, we must have meaningful relationships with First Nations communities. I am honoured to lead our reconciliation initiatives, to continue strengthening our relationships with First Nations communities and stakeholders, and to continue building this capacity and resilience throughout Australia.

Our agency already has a strong commitment to reconciliation through various cultural learning offerings, as well as fostering a safe and inclusive workplace for First Nations staff and stakeholders. I am passionate about continuing this reconciliation journey with our Executive Group, the RAP Working Group and broader NEMA community to deliver on our commitments set out in this plan.

Joe Buffone PSM

Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response Group

Reconciliation Australia foreword

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the National Emergency Management Agency to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The National Emergency Management 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 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 National Emergency Management 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 National Emergency Management 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



The sunset view of the countryside
in Gunaikurnai Country.



Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is a future of unity between First Nations peoples and all Australians, built on equality, equity, mutual respect, and the acceptance of our shared histories, while addressing and overcoming racial disparities.

In the context of NEMA, this vision drives our commitment to helping all Australians, through what we do and how we do it. Our vision focusses on advocating for and undertaking meaningful engagement and partnership with First Nations peoples and communities across Australia through the emergency management continuum—reducing risk, preparing for disaster, responding effectively, and supporting recovery for all Australians.

We strive to create a safe, inclusive, and diverse workplace that honours and respects First Nations cultures, heritage and knowledge.



The Emergency Management and Response Group Senior Leaders on a Cultural Walk with Ngunnawal Elder Uncle Tyronne Bell at Black Mountain, ACT.

Our business

NEMA is the first of its kind in Australia: an end-to-end, enduring national crisis management agency. We play a national leadership role in supporting the states and territories and our communities to manage disaster and emergency events. We help them reduce risk and prepare before an event, respond during an event, and recover after an event.

Strategic Objectives

1. Leading and coordinating national action and assistance across the emergency management continuum.
2. Building scalable, coordinated emergency management capability for nationally significant, cross jurisdictional and international crises.
3. Building evidence, intelligence and insights to empower communities, leaders and stakeholders to make effective decisions.
4. Contributing to saving lives, reducing harm, and maintaining public trust to mitigate the consequences of disasters and build back better through investment in people, capabilities and communities.

Vision




Working through meaningful partnerships, we will build Australia's capacity for disaster resilience and support our communities when they need it most.

Purpose



To enable more secure, stronger and resilient communities before, during and after emergencies.





Our strategic objectives are achieved through four key activities. These guide our decisions and connect our purpose and vision to action:

Preparedness

Lead and coordinate national preparedness, build national capabilities and lead policy to support the Australian Government, jurisdictions and the Australian community in responding to and recovering from all hazard crises.

Respond

Lead and coordinate Australian Government response and support international response when required.

Recover

Lead and coordinate effective Australian Government recovery support to disaster impacted states, territories, local governments and communities.

Risk Reduction and Resilience

Lead reforms and activities to reduce Australia's disaster risk in line with national and international frameworks, and through targeted investment in people, capabilities and communities.

As published in NEMA's 2023–24 Annual Report, we employ 374 ongoing employees across Australia, with 2.1% (8) of employees who identified as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Our geographic footprint extends across Australia. We have eight offices in metropolitan city locations (largely Canberra and Brisbane) as well as a dispersed network of staff operating in regional, rural and remote areas.

Collaboration with the National Indigenous Australians Agency

In 2024, to improve coordination, collaboration and engagement, Coordinator-General, Brendan Moon, invited the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to second a Liaison Officer to NEMA.

The NIAA Liaison Officer joined NEMA in October 2024 on a 12-month secondment to facilitate relationships, establish systems for inter-agency collaboration, and strengthen First Nations representation in disaster resilience, management and recovery. The Liaison Officer is not a First Nations person, does not speak on behalf of First Nations peoples, and the position is not a designated affirmative measures role.

NEMA and the NIAA recognise the importance of establishing and maintaining connections based on trust, sustained effort, and consistency. The collaboration also highlights that complementary action across NEMA is essential to strengthen First Nations representation, and perspectives throughout the disaster management continuum.

Our RAP

NEMA has been involved in activities and partnerships with First Nations peoples, businesses and communities since our inception. This RAP demonstrates our reflection and identification of improvements that can be made to build on our existing efforts and provide a clear and coordinated approach to reconciliation.

It also demonstrates our commitment to the reconciliation journey, strengthening relationships with First Nations staff, stakeholders and communities, and creates the foundations that will help us deliver our commitments in a meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable way.

Some key steps in our journey towards reconciliation include:

Championing reconciliation in our workplace


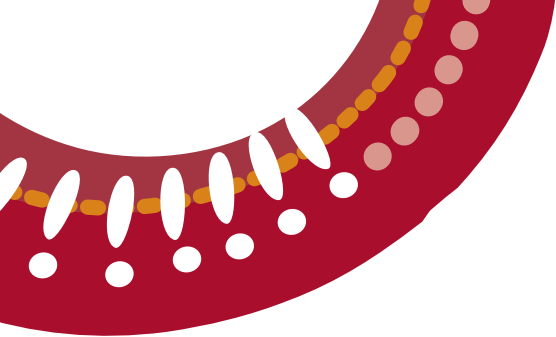
Appointing a First Nations Champion and establishing RAP governance demonstrates our commitment to reconciliation and collaboration and provides a forum to ensure effective oversight and implementation of our RAP and related activities.

- Appointed Joe Buffone PSM, Deputy Coordinator-General, as our First Nations and RAP Champion (not an affirmative measures position) – October 2024.
- Established a RAP Working Group (RAPWG) to lead the development and implementation of our inaugural RAP – November 2024.
- To ensure a whole-of-agency approach, the RAPWG is comprised of dedicated staff brought together by a mission and commitment to advance the experience of First Nations staff and stakeholders at NEMA.

The members of our RAPWG are:

- Deputy Coordinator-General – Emergency Management Response (EMR) Group
- Executive Officer – Office of Coordinator-General
- Director – People, Governance and Integrity Branch (x2)
- Assistant Director – People, Governance and Integrity Branch
- Senior Advisor – People, Governance and Integrity Branch
- Assistant Director – Media, Communications and Engagement Branch
- Assistant Director – Social Policy Branch (x2)
- Assistant Director – National Governance and Reviews
- Program Manager – Emergency Response Fund/Disaster Ready Fund Implementation
- Director – Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Branch
- Assistant Director – South Australia Coordination and Planning Branch
- Director – Strategy and Coordination Branch
- Manager – National Messaging System Operations Stream
- Senior Planning Officer – Crisis Planning Branch
- Assistant Director – Coordination and Planning Branch
- Coordination and Planning Officer – Coordination and Planning Branch (x2)
- NEMA-NIAA Liaison Officer – Strategy and Resilience Branch

Our First Nations and RAP Champion, Joe Buffone, is the Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response Group, and one of our most senior officers. He is a keen advocate for diversity and inclusion and is committed to progressing the actions in this RAP.



The RAP was developed by the RAPWG and supported by the Executive Group. Progress and implementation of our commitments will be monitored by the First Nations Champion and RAPWG and responsibility for individual deliverables will be assigned to relevant business areas.

Increasing cultural understanding, value and recognition in our workplace

Strengthening the use of cultural protocols in our workplace and providing staff learning opportunities increases cultural understanding, value and recognition of First Nations peoples and reinforces our commitment to reconciliation.

- Observed National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week through a range of staff activities, including a presentation by Dr Bhiamie Williamson, a Euahlayi man and program lead at National Indigenous Disaster Resilience – July 2024.
- Launched revised Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Guidelines – December 2024.
- First Nations Champion and senior executives attended a cultural tour on Ngunnawal Country with Uncle Tyronne Bell to learn about Aboriginal interpretation of the landscape, bush foods and artefacts and their tradition uses – December 2024.

Strengthening advocacy and partnerships

Building and formalising partnerships with First Nations peoples, stakeholders and communities and incorporating their voices in our planning and decision-making promotes understanding, advocacy and leadership.

- Commenced activities to build consideration of First Nations peoples, stakeholders and communities into [Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning](#) Guidelines and templates for use across government – June 2024.

- Attended, co-sponsored and participated in the 2024 National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering – September 2024.
- Held a breakout session on best practice engagement with First Nations communities before, during and after crises at the [National Higher-Risk Weather Season \(HRWS\) Preparedness Summit](#) – September 2024.
- Continued to administer and provide grant funding for activities that address the needs of First Nations peoples before, during and after crises – round 3 of the [Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund](#) opened in January 2025.


Incorporating culturally appropriate imagery

Incorporating First Nations artwork and culturally appropriate imaging in our workplace and assets supports First Nations artists and consistently promotes our commitment to inclusion and reconciliation. Works were developed in collaboration with First Nations artists, ensuring cultural integrity and alignment with ethical practices.

- [Incorporated the work of proud Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri woman LaToya Kennedy in branding and promotional materials](#) for the National HRWS – August 2024.
- [Unveiled a commissioned First Nations artwork, 'Danbang', by Rebecca Salcole](#), and began incorporating it through our workplaces, website and other communications artefacts – October 2024.

Our current activities and partnerships

The following case studies provide an overview of some of the key activities and partnerships NEMA is currently undertaking as part of our commitment to reconciliation.



Engaging with the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Program

NEMA attended, co-sponsored and participated in the 2024 National Indigenous Disaster Resilience (NIDR) Gathering, held on Bundjalung Country in Lismore. This marked a significant milestone in fostering First Nations leadership and collaboration in disaster resilience. This event, delivered by the NIDR Program and Monash University, was a platform for First Nations voices to share information and shape the future of disaster response and recovery in Australia.

The Gathering brought together representatives from disaster resilience and emergency management sectors, government, researchers, non-government organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Indigenous ranger groups, Native Title groups, and other land and water management organisations to build awareness, share knowledge, connect, and support a First Nations-led conversation on disaster resilience.

Our involvement and sponsorship of the Gathering underscored the agency's commitment to integrating First Nations knowledge and practices into disaster resilience strategies and policies. We reiterated our dedication to fostering continued conversations with First Nations communities to improve outcomes in emergency management, based on their feedback, insights and ongoing participation.

The National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Program: A foundation for First Nations leadership

By engaging through initiatives like NIDR, NEMA is taking meaningful steps towards more inclusive and effective disaster resilience approaches.

NIDR is a research program based at Monash University. Established in 2022, the program recognises the disproportionate impact natural hazards have had, and continue to have, on First Nations peoples and communities. The Program champions First Nations leadership in disaster resilience through research conducted in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, emphasising the need for culturally informed and locally relevant approaches to disaster preparedness and response.

A path forward

The 2024 NIDR Gathering showcased the vital role of First Nations knowledge, practices, and leadership in disaster resilience. By bringing together policy makers, community leaders, and researchers, the event facilitated critical dialogue on how to better support First Nations communities in the face of increasing natural hazards, as well as showcasing the significant expertise which is currently underrepresented in national risk reduction arrangements.

Our involvement in the Gathering reflects a broader commitment to building partnerships with First Nations communities, drawing on their strengths and expertise to inform emergency management arrangements, from mitigation and risk reduction to response and recovery.



NEMA participating in the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering on Bundjalong Country.

Photo credit:
Heidi Carolan

Fostering resilience and sustainable recovery through Grants Programs

The devastating Black Summer bushfires of 2019–20 highlighted the urgent need for First Nations engagement on community-driven recovery initiatives and effective land management practices across Australia. [Through the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program](#), NEMA has been pivotal in fostering resilience and sustainable recovery efforts in affected regions.

First Nations leadership in land management

A cornerstone of our investment has been providing Gladstone Regional Council with a grant of \$354,000 to support establishment of a First Nations Bushfire Officer role. Michael Willmot, a proud Wakka Wakka man, serves in this role and collaborates with Traditional Owners to integrate cultural knowledge into bushfire prevention and land management strategies.

Mr Willmot's work emphasises the importance of Cultural Burns, a traditional practice used for healthy ongoing management of Country. His contributions include:

- educating community volunteers on how to walk safely and respectfully on Country
- training stakeholders on landscape management strategies and the appropriate conditions for conducting cool burns
- highlighting the role of cultural burning in eradicating invasive weeds and protecting native wildlife habitats.

Mr Willmot's work not only assists in mitigating bushfire risks but also strengthens the connection between First Nations knowledge and contemporary bushfire management.

Enhancing regional preparedness and infrastructure

Beyond land management, we further supported the Gladstone Regional Council's disaster preparedness by funding critical infrastructure enhancements:

- \$314,000 to improve technology and connectivity at the Gladstone Regional Council Disaster Coordination Centre, ensuring better communication and coordination during emergencies.
- \$1.7 million for significant upgrades to the Miriam Vale Community Centre, transforming it into a more resilient and functional hub for community activities and disaster response.

Our investment into Gladstone Regional Council's initiatives sets a ground-breaking approach to recovery and resilience. By integrating First Nations knowledge, practices and community collaboration with bushfire management approaches, this model offers a pathway to strengthening the community resilience when faced with disaster.



Yuin Elder Uncle Phil Butler and NEMA staff discussing Black Summer Bushfire Recovery, Milton NSW.

Photo credit:
Heidi Carolan

Old practices rekindled in new firefighting partnership

Aboriginal communities in NSW are working with Forestry Corporation to bring together knowledge of cultural burning with government bushfire management.

Fire, Country and People, a three-year project awarded \$1,477,632 in Australian Government funding, has seen Aboriginal communities on the NSW Mid-North and North Coast work with Forestry Corporation to co-design a program to deliver localised firefighter training courses.

More than 50 members of the Western Bundjalung, Yaegl, Birpai and Bunyah communities have recently gained nationally recognised firefighting accreditation at training events at Jubullum, Grafton and Wauchope.

The aim of Fire, Country and People is to reduce the risk, severity and impacts of major bushfires while building capabilities in disaster readiness and contributing to the land management aspirations of Aboriginal communities.

Forestry Corporation's Aboriginal Heritage and Partnerships Manager John Shipp said the fire training, delivered by fire and incident management specialists, Fireground, will improve both the community and government response to wildfires.

"This program creates an opportunity for Aboriginal communities to work with government agencies to develop a path forward for effective and sustainable bushfire management," Mr Shipp said.

"Fire, Country and People will aim to improve the resilience of each community in preparing and managing major bushfires on Country while assisting the communities to use fire to manage the land, a practice that has existed for sixty thousand years."

Fire, Country and People will also help build the scientific evidence base behind cultural burning. A research program has been established to understand the effect of traditional Aboriginal fire management practices and regimes on the intensity and extent of bushfires.

Aboriginal communities, universities and government agencies will work in partnership to supply data on the social, cultural, economic and ecological benefits that can be achieved at the landscape level.

The \$2,957,632 Fire, Country and People: Aboriginal Community Disaster Ready Project has received funding from the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund (administered by NEMA) and is jointly funded by Forestry Corporation.



Yaegl fire training in Grafton, NSW as part of the Fire, Country and People project.

Photo credit:
Rob Cleary, Seen Australia



Yaegl fire training in Grafton, NSW as part of the Fire, Country and People project.

Photo credit:
Rob Cleary, Seen Australia

Improving consideration of First Nations communities in planning and training

As a national leader in emergency management, NEMA regularly brings together emergency management organisations to improve collaboration and planning that is inclusive and culturally appropriate for all Australians.

Given the increased complexity, intensity and frequency of disasters in Australia, the agency developed a strategic planning tool, The Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) process, to make sense of complex issues related to crises and disasters.

The Australian Government's preferred planning tool, which aligns with the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework, the CASP process provides a structured, systematic methodology for analysing complex scenarios and integrating responses from government, private, and not-for-profit sectors. This has fostered a more coordinated crisis response and enhanced collaboration between sectors, for the benefit of affected communities.

The process has also integrated First Nations perspectives and insights into scenario planning, reinforcing NEMA's commitment to inclusive and culturally aware crisis management strategies.

In response to growing demand, NEMA established the CASP Taskforce in April 2024 to expand CASP training across NEMA, the Australian Government, and jurisdictional partners. Since its inception, the Taskforce has delivered 21 training sessions, equipping 400 stakeholders with essential crisis management skills.

NEMA aims to strengthen collaboration and advocacy with First Nations peoples and communities in future updates to the CASP, mandating or strongly recommending partnership in crisis planning and training.



Crisis and Strategic Planning in action.

Photo credit:
Heidi Carolan

Our Reflect RAP commitments



NEMA staff with Dr Bhiamie Williamson following a presentation for NAIDOC Week.

Photo credit:
Heidi Carolan



Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local areas or sphere of influence.	August 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion/ Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) Chair Supported by: RAPWG
	Develop and implement resources that provide our staff with guidance about engaging with First Nations communities and stakeholders.	September 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Identify opportunities to enhance coordination internally, with and across government and the emergency management sector, to ensure meaningful consideration of First Nations communities. Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local areas or sphere of influence.	December 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair Supported by: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Through a Liaison Officer, strengthen relationships with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and identify partnership opportunities with First Nations organisations and communities.	December 2025	Lead: Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response Group Supported by: Deputy Coordinator-General, Disaster Resilience and Recovery Group
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	April 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Continue to invite First Nations voices to provide expertise and inform national discussions on emergency management.	June 2026	Lead: Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response Group Supported by: Deputy Coordinator-General, Disaster Resilience and Recovery Group
	Continue to build on partnership with First Nations peoples and communities across the emergency continuum through organised fora and events.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and materials to our staff.	27 May – 3 June 2026	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch Supported by: Assistant Coordinator-General, Media, Communications and Engagement Branch
	RAPWG members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Encourage and support our staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair Supported by: Coordinator-General
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Incorporate First Nations Impact Assessment and considerations into policy and program design, planning and proposal processes (e.g. the National Plan Guideline and template, for use across the Australian Government).	April 2026	Lead: Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response Group Supported by: Deputy Coordinator-General, Disaster Resilience and Recovery Group
	Communicate to all staff our commitment to reconciliation.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Continue playing a leadership role across government and jurisdictions to advocate for consideration of First Nations peoples across the emergency management continuum.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch



Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Implement compulsory cultural awareness training for our staff (to be completed by all existing staff and as part of onboarding for new starters thereafter).	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights across NEMA.	December 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion Supported by: Chief Operating Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
2. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Build on our understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our operational area.	December 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Increase understanding amongst our staff of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
3. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week and other dates of cultural significance.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week and other dates of cultural significance.	July 2025 and July 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair Supported by: Chief Operating Officer
	Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week and other dates of cultural significance by promoting external events and activities in our local areas.	July 2025 and July 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair Supported by: Chief Operating Officer
	RAPWG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event and other events and activities which raise awareness of and celebrate dates of cultural significance.	July 2025 and July 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Continue to incorporate NEMA's procured First Nations artwork, 'Danbang', across its printed and digital media assets.	Incorporate elements of 'Danbang' into our existing branded assets, internal and external documents, templates and imagery, demonstrating our ongoing partnership with First Nations peoples.	June 2026	Lead: Assistant Co-ordinator-General, Media, Communications and Engagement Branch
	In collaboration with Rebecca Salcole, to bring 'Danbang' to life and demonstrate what each element of the artwork means, to further promote cultural learning and engagement with First Nations peoples.	June 2026	Lead: Assistant Co-ordinator-General, Media, Communications and Engagement Branch



NEMA staff celebrating the launch of "Danbang".

Photo credit: Heidi Carolan



Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for First Nations employment within NEMA.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Build understanding of current First Nations staff to inform future employment and development opportunities.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Support the application of affirmative measure (First Nations) in recruitment activities.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Develop and implement employment targets for First Nations peoples at all levels of the agency.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
2. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Continue to utilise and promote Supply Nation as a source of suppliers for procurements across the agency.	December 2025	Lead: Chief Financial Officer, Financial Management and Claims Assurance Branch
	Ensure Supply Nation information is included in NEMA's procurement templates and other documentation to promote supplier diversity.	December 2025	Lead: Chief Financial Officer, Financial Management and Claims Assurance Branch



Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RAPWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Actively maintain the RAPWG to govern RAP implementation.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Maintain Terms of Reference for the RAPWG.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Maintain First Nations representation on the RAPWG.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2025	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2025	Lead: Chief Operating Officer
	Maintain appointment of a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	June 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
3. 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.	June 2026	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Survey.	June 2026	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2026	Lead: First Nations Champion/ RAPWG Chair
4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's site to begin developing our next RAP.	October 2026	Lead: Chief People Officer, People, Governance and Integrity Branch





Contact details

Chief People Officer

National Emergency Management Agency

GPO Box 133

Canberra City ACT 2601

Email: reconciliation@nema.gov.au



Australian Government

**National Emergency
Management Agency**

nema.gov.au

