


Reconciliation Action Plan. Reflect.



January 2023–January 2024





Escent acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage and beliefs and honour the sacred relationship they have with the land and waters.

We pay our respect to their Elders past present and emerging.

Reconciliation Action Plan. **Reflect.**

January 2023–January 2024

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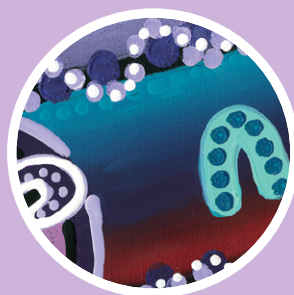
Positive Steps for Positive Change
Maria Watson-Trudgett, 2022



Positive Steps for Positive Change

This artwork reflects Escient's journey of reconciliation and our desire to build and nurture respectful and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and employees.

The artwork represents Escient's Reconciliation vision and aspirations of taking positive steps for positive change.



Escient gradient

A representation of the collaborative way in which we work with our clients, and a reminder that 'through better experiences, we deliver better results'.



Escient and RAP Working Group

Communicating learnings, delivering RAP actions.



All people



First Nations culture and cultural knowledge



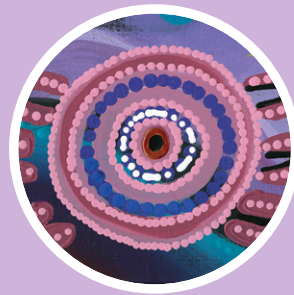
Sharing information



Ongoing learnings



Communicating cultural awareness



Learning circles



Collaboration and working together



Walking together on this journey



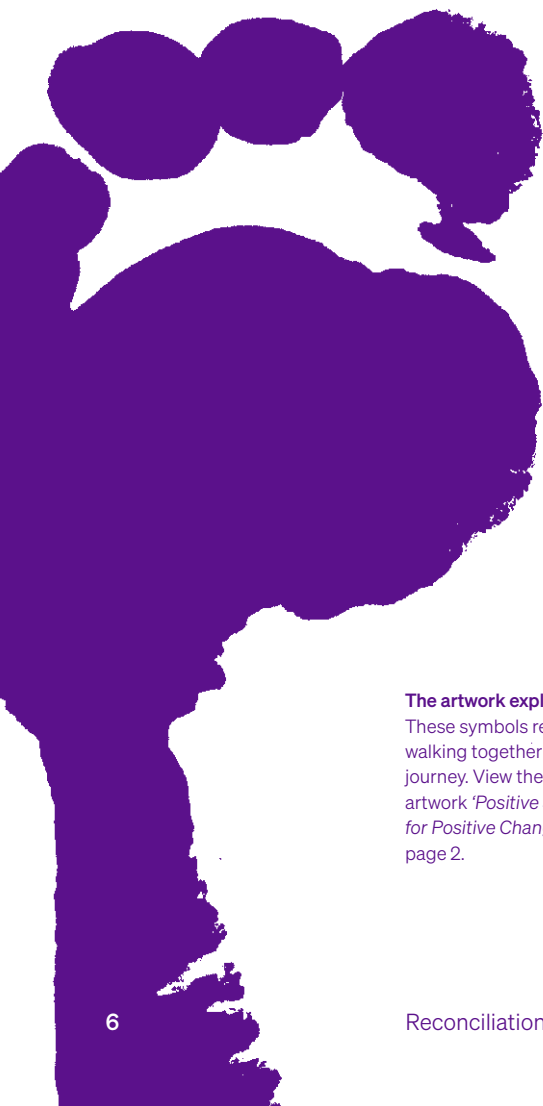
Land, Water and Sea

These symbols represent the different locations of Escent offices and the Traditional Owners of the area.

Artist profile— Maria Watson-Trudgett

My paintings express my connections to my Aboriginal Culture, in contemporary expressions of now!

I intentionally painted my feet to signify steps towards change, hence the artwork title ‘Positive Steps for Positive Change’.



The artwork explained
These symbols represent walking together on this journey. View the full artwork ‘Positive Steps for Positive Change’ on page 2.



I am a proud Koori woman and ‘fresh water’ girl of the Wiradjuri people. I am a storyteller and self-taught artist. Painting quietens my mind and supports me to connect with my Culture, Country, and Ancestors. Painting creates a sense of belonging and strengthens my Aboriginal identity.

I have been painting and exhibiting for more than a decade, and have created many commissioned artworks for private collectors and organisations, both national and international.

Art and Expressionism

My painting style is a contemporary fusion of abstract and Aboriginal art, using groups of symbols as a way of narrating a story and preserving cultural traditions. It is the way our people have passed on information for thousands of years.

My Culture, My Stories

Mostly I paint stories of my Country, Wiradjuri. Wiradjuri people are ‘River People’—skilled hunters, fishers, gatherers and bush trackers. Growing up by the rivers and in the surrounding bush was my way of life and is an important element of my spiritual connection.

For me ‘Country’ is all things—it is a place of belonging and a way of life. Country incorporates rivers, creeks, waterholes, hills and valleys, plants, animals, and people. Country embraces the seasons and constellations of the sky and dreaming stories. These elements are reflected in my artworks.

Aspirations and Aims

I am passionate about positively influencing peoples attitudes and awareness of First Nations peoples and our diverse cultures and contributing to the preservation of the longest living culture. I am enthusiastic about collaborating on meaningful projects.

A message from Escient CEO— Stephen Mabbs

Escient is not just a business entity—it comprises people who are passionate about helping to shape the future.

Building our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been a natural progression of our social conscience and is led—not as a business expectation but as an expectation of our employees that we contribute to our communities and society.



I am proud to share our Reflect RAP—Escient’s first—with our clients, partners and the community. This document is a statement of our commitment to reconciliation and guides three core aspects for Escient to adhere to—Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

Our RAP is a courageous but sustainable plan that seeks to strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our communities, and employees.

As we deliver on our RAP actions and commitments, we aspire to build a reciprocal relationship and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to understand their diverse cultures and cultural histories, including the regions where we operate our business. In turn, we aim to advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to embrace their potential, participate in economic and social opportunities and contribute to a shared contemporary society.

Looking to the broader community, we are seeking creative ways to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our network by joining local community activities as well as participating in and celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events.

As we continue our reconciliation journey, we aim to achieve our vision for reconciliation. Our RAP holds us accountable and brings transparency to our reconciliation efforts. It will guide us as we learn more about our shared history and support us to gain a deeper cultural awareness, while we build and nurture respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I encourage others to play their part in reconciling Australia and to take positive steps for positive change.

Our Vision for Reconciliation.

Our vision for reconciliation is to live together in a nation which appreciates the importance of First Nations' histories and cultures, is inquisitive and willing to learn, celebrates the significance, embraces, and accepts it as our shared history.

The future Australia we would like to see is the one where First Nations peoples are acknowledged and respected across all aspects of society—a nation where we all value each other and work together to build a vibrant, modern, inclusive, and equitable society for all.

For Escient, this means continuing to deliver on our Purpose—Helping Shape the Future—not just for our clients, but for the benefit of all Australians.



A message from Reconciliation Australia CEO— Karen Mundine

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



Escient joins a network of more than 2,200 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 Escient 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 Escient, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

The artwork explained

This symbol represents ongoing learnings. View the full artwork 'Positive Steps for Positive Change' on page 2.

About **Escient**

Escient is an Australian employee-owned Business and Digital Consultancy firm providing services that are helping to shape the future—for organisations, society, and the planet.

We help organisations deal with today's ever-changing landscape so they can thrive in its complexity. And we help them make a more positive impact, by becoming more human and being purpose led.

As a leading consulting firm we provide professional services—from strategy development to transformation through delivery of strategic outcomes—across Australia. We do this with a team of collaborative and highly skilled consultants who are passionate about the success of their clients.

Founded in 2016, our 130+ professionals have a strong desire for inclusion, equity and diversity, and their social and environmental impact. We are recognised as an Employer of Choice and have been awarded widely through Australian industry programs. Currently Escient has two known staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Escient Offices

Escient wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands upon which our offices are located.

Adelaide

The Escient Adelaide office is located on Kurna Land. We acknowledge the Kurna people, and pay our respects to their Elders both past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge that the Kurna people were the first to fly the Aboriginal flag just down the road from our offices in Tarntanyangga (Victoria Square).

Brisbane

Escient acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara people as the First Nations Custodians of the lands where our Brisbane office is located. We pay our respects to their Elders both past, present, and emerging. We recognise the important role all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples play in our community.

Melbourne

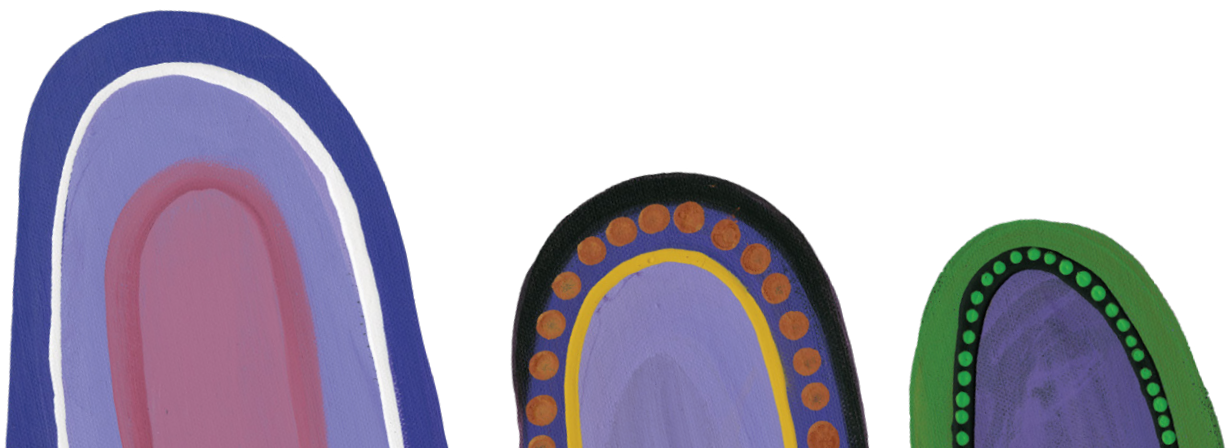
Escient's Melbourne office is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri people, of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land. We honour and respect their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to their Country and aim to respect cultural heritage, customs and beliefs of Aboriginal people.

Sydney

The Escient office in Sydney is located on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We acknowledge the Gadigal people, and pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and future leaders. We recognise and respect their connections to land, water, sea, and community, cultural and spiritual practices.

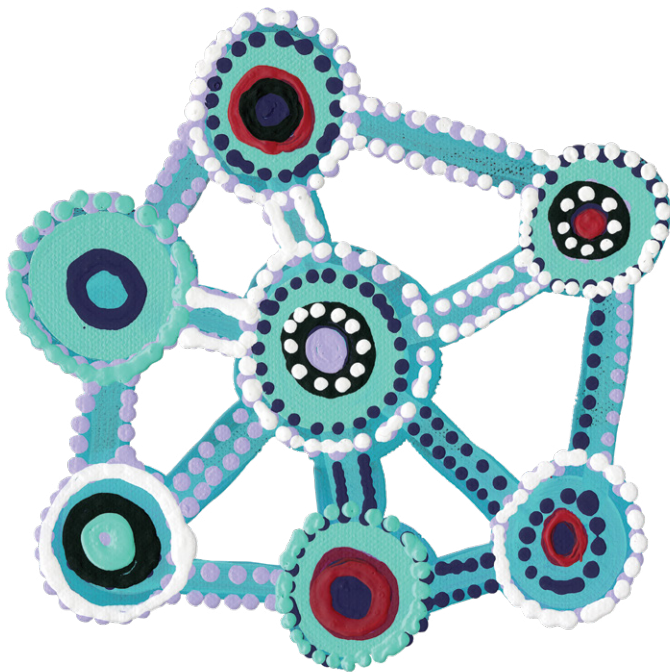
The artwork explained

These symbols represent land, and reflect the Traditional Custodians of the different locations of Escient offices. View the full artwork 'Positive Steps for Positive Change' on page 2.



Escient's Values

We strive to achieve exceptional shared success, through innovation and re-defining partnerships.



The artwork explained

This symbol represents sharing information. View the full artwork 'Positive Steps for Positive Change' on page 2.

Selfless

The most satisfying success is one that is shared. This kind of success requires humility and self-awareness.

A team that is built from a wealth of knowledge and experiences (far broader than one person's alone) will proactively harness energy to deliver shared success for all.

Courage

The pace of change and rising expectations means our thinking must be brave and our actions bold.

It's working together to inspire courageous action. It's doing the right thing even when it is difficult. It's telling the truth and demanding it of ourselves.

But courage doesn't mean recklessness. Our bravery is underpinned by sound thinking and proven processes.

And sometimes it means being willing to say, "I don't know" and then stopping at nothing to find the answer.

Creativity

Solving problems is essential in an ever-changing world, where we are constantly encountering new challenges. It's why we look at things differently.

Sometimes you can be so close to a problem it's impossible to see a solution. We step back and look at the problem from all angles. And to give us a better perspective, we look at things from other people's perspectives.

An unbiased and uninhibited perspective enables us to bravely look beyond the easy answers to complex challenges.

Empathy

Everything is underpinned by a human need that we must thoroughly understand from everyone's perspective.

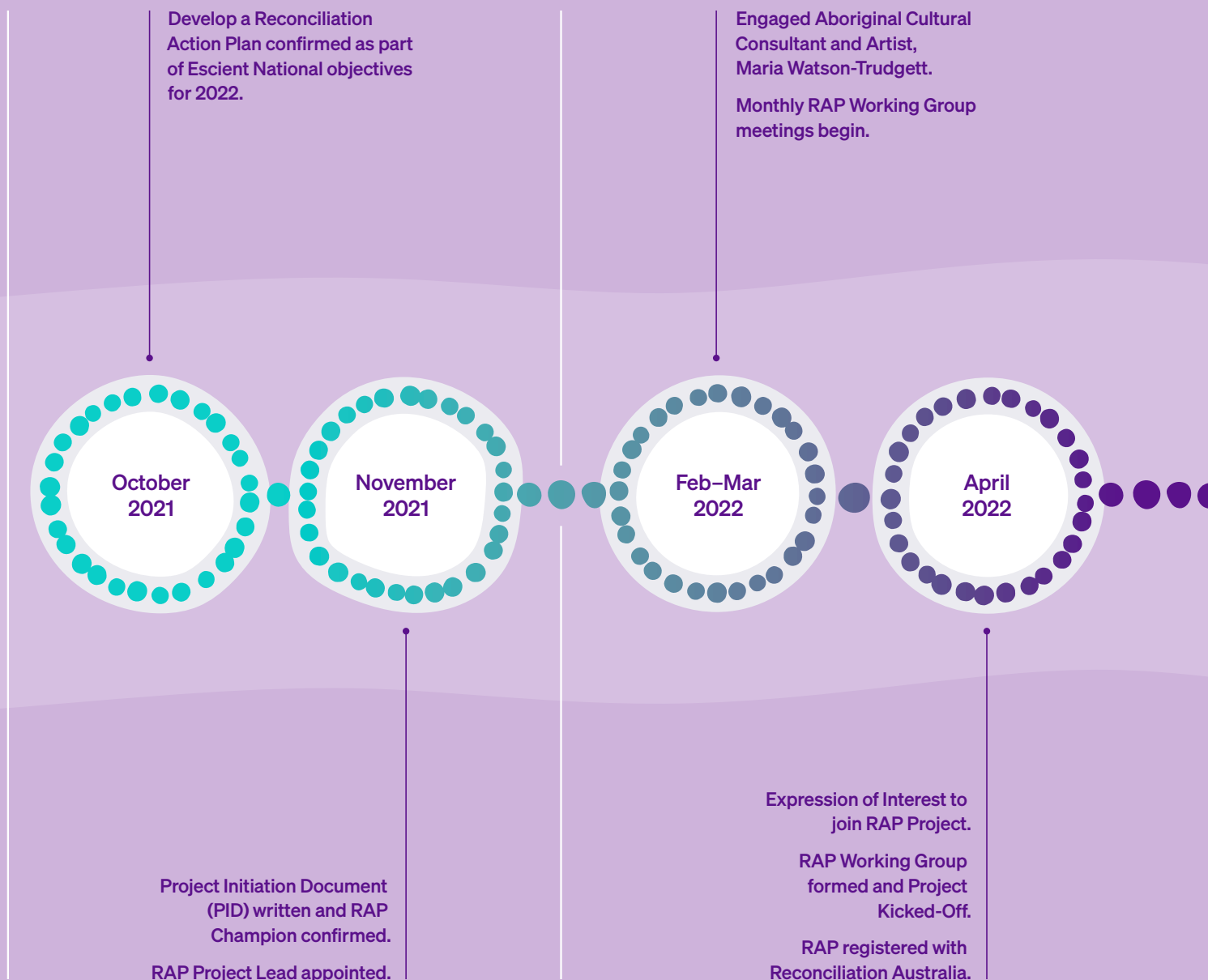
We listen first. Carefully. We listen to the needs and frustrations, hopes and dreams, desires and ambitions of our clients, their customers, and staff.

But listening alone isn't enough. Understanding what we have heard; knowing what it feels like to be in their shoes, enables us to turn comprehension into viable and valued actions.

Our Reconciliation Journey

2021

2022



2023

RAP Updates at monthly Regional and National Escent forums.
Collaboration into 'Our Vision for Reconciliation' statement.
Acknowledge and celebrate National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.
Workshops to ideate artwork colours, symbols and messages.
Developed initial RAP action plan.
First RAP draft submitted.

May-Oct
2022

November
2022

December
2022

RAP
Implementation

RAP artwork complete
and presented at
All Company Meeting.

Final RAP draft
submitted.
RAP endorsed by
Reconciliation Australia.

The artwork explained

This symbol represents Escient and its RAP Working Group—communicating learnings and delivering RAP actions. View the full artwork 'Positive Steps for Positive Change' on page 2.



The Escient RAP Working Group would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, water, sea and their cultures.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Escient RAP Working Group Members



Stephen Kovacs

Managing Director, Escient QLD
RAP Champion

Why I am involved

As Escient's RAP Champion I have the privilege to be amongst an amazing team of dedicated and talented professionals who have a desire and passion to contribute toward this very important objective—positive steps for positive change.

I feel as a community we need to amplify the important gesture of acknowledging our country by immersing ourselves in the history of this great land and its first people. First Nations peoples have been a part of this land for over 40,000 years and we have so much to learn from them, so much to understand and so much to respect.

For me, the journey towards our first RAP has been an experience of learning and an opportunity to further my understanding about the raw and unfiltered histories of our First Nations communities, their land and their rich expansive cultures.

What I do

I am the Managing Director of our Queensland Escient Team. My role transcends between our clients and our consultants to ensure that we provide the very best advisory consulting services while enabling an employee environment of engagement and connectedness.



Maria Watson-Trudgett

Aboriginal Artist and Cultural
Consultant

Why I am involved

I am a proud Koori woman of the Wiradjuri people and a passionate advocate for positively influencing people's attitudes and awareness of First Nations peoples and diverse cultures.

I am delighted to be a part of Escient's RAP working group and to be the Aboriginal Consultant engaged to guide Escient's RAP development and implementation. I am proud to work with an organisation that are genuinely passionate about their reconciliation journey and dedicated in taking 'Positive Steps for Positive Change'.

What I do

I'm a First Nations Strategic Advisor, with 30 years' experience in community and stakeholder engagement. I have extensive experience of cultural safety principles and a deep understanding of traditional engagement approaches, and a strong record of achievement in leading national projects within First Nations communities.

I guide organisations through their cultural capability development, by creating and implementing strategic frameworks, Reconciliation Action Plans, culturally appropriate content and terminology, community engagement and service delivery, and all programs and initiatives pertaining to First Nations peoples and communities.



David Pink

Director, Escient QLD

Why I am involved

I have been embarrassed by just how little I know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures and histories. Born in the early 1970s, I do not recall learning much about our First Nations peoples at school, and certainly knew nothing of the horrific treatment that past governments and their policies permitted. My involvement in the Escient RAP has been not only to start learning and understanding more through the actions we can take, but to begin a personal journey of knowing more about the oldest living culture, which every Australian should be proud of and celebrate.

Our Escient RAP enables me to be in a better position to empower my children's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and diverse cultures. Together we can acknowledge and celebrate the contributions and achievements of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What I do

I'm a Director with Escient with a speciality in Program and Project Management and I work with many clients to help them delivery their strategic initiatives.

Escient RAP Working Group Members



Jarrod McComas

Managing Consultant, Escient QLD

Why I am involved

I am involved in Escient's RAP to increase both my own and the community's genuine learning and understanding of Australia's rich First Nations cultures so that as an organisation we can learn how to best have a sustainable, ongoing impact.

After travelling through New Zealand and seeing how Māori culture is embedded into their daily lives across schools, politics, and workplaces, I felt the need to drive greater awareness through my own sphere of influence. Therefore, I desire to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures embedded throughout Australian society.

What I do

I am an experienced Managing Consultant at Escient with a passion for strategy, change and organisation transformation.



Robyn Chandler

Principal Consultant, Escient Victoria

Why I am involved

I am disappointed that the education system (when I went through) gave me little exposure to First Nations' histories and cultures. I embrace the opportunity through working on the Escient RAP to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the rich and diverse cultures and traditions of Australia's First Nations peoples.

Being a member of our RAP team enables me to not only learn more about First Nations cultures past and present for my own benefit, but also open the conversation with my colleagues, family and friends, share our learnings and experiences, and promote engagement with local First Nations communities.

What I do

I have been a consultant for over 30 years in Australia and internationally. I am a Principal Consultant with Escient and specialise in business strategy, analysis, and process.



Amy Edwards

Senior Consultant, Escient Victoria

Why I am involved

Participating in the development of our RAP provides a wonderful opportunity to further my understanding about the lands and cultures of First Nations communities, both locally and across Australia.

Through these learnings, I can partake in reflective and honest conversations among colleagues and friends to encourage cultural awareness and celebrate the cultures, determination and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I look forward to further advancing and embedding our organisation's reconciliation commitments to ensure they are impactful and sustainable.

What I do

I am a Senior Consultant at Escient, with experience in business strategy and analysis across a wide range of industries.





Amita Nair

Managing Consultant, Escient NSW

Why I am involved

Our Escient RAP is an opportunity for me to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures, and to become a means to the cause of spreading cultural awareness of First Nations cultures and histories and the importance of reconciliation in Australia.

What I do

I am a Managing Consultant with Escient and my focus is delivery management and process improvements. I love to work by collaborating with teams to deliver quality solutions that align with business goals and overall strategy.



Paul Sharp

Principal Consultant, Escient SA

Why I am involved

Being part of the RAP group gives me the opportunity to learn more about First Nations cultures and histories, and to contribute towards a future for reconciliation and positive change.

What I do

I am a Principal Consultant with Escient and my focus is Project Management and delivering outcomes with clients whilst ensuring their business and commercial needs are met and providing a great experience for everyone involved.



Debra Underwood

Marketing Director, Escient

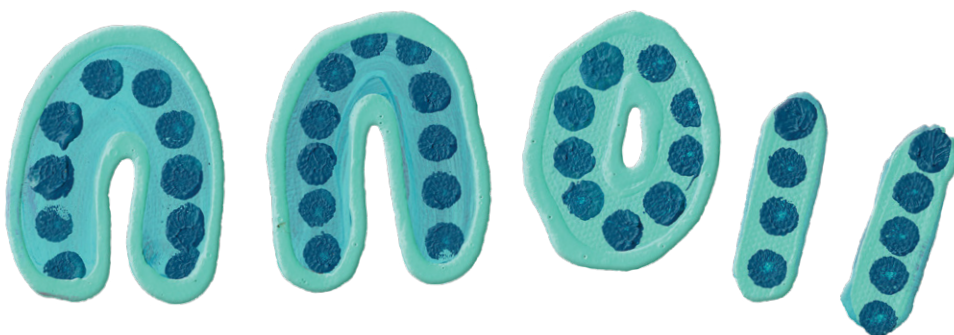
Why I am involved

My involvement in the RAP has been guidance on communication and brand, particularly in working with the effervescent Maria in messaging and colour palette for our artwork.

My reason for participating more broadly is my passion for people—Equity, Inclusion and Diversity. My involvement with our Escient RAP supports my knowledge of First Nations peoples and their diverse cultures, which I can share in the workplace and in my personal life.

What I do

I am the Marketing Director at Escient. I have had considerable experience working with Consulting firms. I value my role and consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to work as a leader, advisor, and advocate of marketing teams.



The artwork explained

These symbols represent all people. View the full artwork 'Positive Steps for Positive Change' on page 2.

Reconciliation Action Plan



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	March 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2023	Escient Director of Marketing & Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Escient Director of Marketing
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May– 3 June 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May– 3 June 2023	Escient CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2023	Escient CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2023	Escient Head of People and Culture and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2023	Escient Head of People and Culture and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant



Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	April 2023	RAP Working Group Chair and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2023	Escient Head of People and Culture and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	February 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2023	Escient CEO & Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Escient CEO
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	Escient Director of Marketing
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2023	Escient Head of People and Culture
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2023	Escient Head of People and Culture and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March 2023	RAP Working Group representative in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2023	Escient Director of Marketing



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	January 2023	Escient CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	January 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
12. 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 annually	RAP Working Group Chair
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	RAP Working Group Chair
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	RAP Working Group Chair and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2023	RAP Working Group Chair

RAP Contact

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