



Reconciliation Action Plan
REFLECT
June 2022-June 2023



ROYAL LIFE SAVING

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE	3
MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
OUR MISSION	7
OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION	8
OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY	9
ALIGNMENT TO POLICY	10
RELATIONSHIPS	14
RESPECT	16
OPPORTUNITIES	18
GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING	19
THE ARTWORK - WATER JOURNEY	21



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

For Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, the Traditional Custodians of our headquarters in Ultimo, Sydney are the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. This is an area tracing the bays and inlets of Sydney Harbour around Balmain. It includes many saltwater and freshwater waterways that are intertwined with rivers, creeks, waterholes, beaches, harbours and marshes where people live, work and play.

While we are situated on Gadigal land, it is important to acknowledge that our hopes and aspirations extend across the more than 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

We reflect on more than 30,000 years of continuing stewardship of fresh and salt waterways, and the importance of water for sustaining life, especially in desert communities.

In contemplating our first Reconciliation Action Plan we recognise and respect Australia's First Nations cultural and spiritual connections to water.

We note the long-term lifesaving skills of coastal and freshwater nations. Those skills helped to keep communities safe in seasons of floods and cyclones.

We draw energy and context from dreamtime stories.



In the context of the Royal Life Saving mission, our ambition is to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to build on existing connections between people and water, aspiring to achieve gains in health, social and economic benefits for communities across Australia.

We aspire to ensure that children have access to swimming pools and swimming lessons. That youth learn lifesaving skills, and we provide opportunities to viable careers both in aquatics and those leadership lessons into other jobs and other elements of life.

We aspire to harness the transformative power of the local pool as a venue for social cohesion, for community connections and for health benefits that extend beyond childhood and across all life stages.

This our first Reconciliation Action Plan. It reflects the start our formal journey. It is hoped that this journey will influence our staff, volunteers, member organisations and partners to make positive contributions to reconciliation in their communities across Australia. We look forward to seeing and learning from both our successes and failures and seeing the positive outcomes that come from this journey.

We thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for their ongoing custodianship of the land and water. We thank Reconciliation Australia and Murawin Consultants for guiding us through this Reconciliation Action Plan process.



Dr Mitch Hartman, President



Justin Scarr, Chief Executive Officer

MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Royal Life Saving Society - Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Royal Life Saving Society - Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with 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 Royal Life Saving Society - Australia 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 Royal Life Saving Society - Australia, 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



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia acknowledges the deep connections to peoples and cultures across the Eora Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this area, the Gadigal People, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. As an organisation with national reach, we extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders across Australia and recognise their continued connection to land, waters and communities.

OUR MISSION

Over the past century our vision has remained the same, and we have always sought to reduce drowning, to increase physical activity, especially in and around the water, and to contribute to the creation of more resilient communities, Australia-wide. Our goal for Australia is to be a water-loving nation, free from drowning by leading efforts to reduce drowning and increase water safety and lifesaving skills.

The values that underpin our work are:

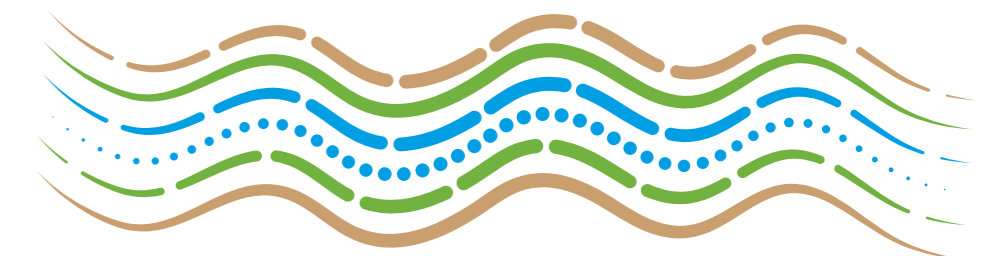
- Diversity, Equality and Respect
- Leadership, Collaboration and Integrity
- Humanitarianism/Social Entrepreneurship
- Quality and Innovation

Delivered with a commitment to data, to advocacy and to action. This is our leadership formula, though we don't use the term 'leadership' lightly. Our leadership places the issue in focus, makes every effort to collaborate with openness, and recognises that solutions to big issues are best built with others.

Our eight priority areas are:

- Drowning prevention leadership
- Research, policy and advocacy
- Community awareness and action
- Swimming, lifesaving, water safety pathway
- Drowning prevention leadership abroad
- Safe aquatic locations
- Organisational cohesion and growth
- People and culture

The framework that we deliver on is a team effort. It represents the collective effort of our Members, Board, Staff, Volunteers, and Partners.



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Royal Life Saving is committed to building a strong learning foundation on the principles of relationships, respect and opportunities.

We acknowledge the land where we work, live and play always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

The rivers, lakes, pools, billabongs, and dams in Australia bring life to communities. They are spaces for play, social connection, and recreation. They can also be spaces of danger and tragedy.

We recognise that water safety awareness and enjoyment of our waters is a collective responsibility. We can all play a part.

We recognise the historical legacy of colonisation and its continuing impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, families, and children.

We celebrate the resilience, survival, wisdom, deep connection to water and land that continues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.

Swimming is a life-long skill. We acknowledge that many swimming and water safety access activities have historically been exclusionary to First Australians. We are committed to a future path that actively engages and encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access, design, participate in, and lead water safety programs.

This is a long-term commitment which encompasses our research, policy, communications, programs and leadership teams. We will continue investing time and resources to this commitment.

Royal Life Saving will hold a symposium to strengthen our existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and water safety advocates and is committed to forming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.

Through active listening and strong, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, professionals, and advocates, we will work to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of all ages to participate in aquatics, life saving and water safety activities. These opportunities include employment, program design and evaluation, swimming education, and life saving training.

Royal Life Saving seeks to be a culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Just as swimming can be made up of different strokes, our reconciliation journey will be made up of different actions. We recognise there will be times we need to sit back, listen and learn. Importantly, we recognise and value the importance of play and joy in the learning journey. We will make time for reflection and processing.

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

We are a small organisation of 18 staff. A Reconciliation Action Plan (Reconciliation Action Plan) working group was established in August 2021 with representatives from across our organisation.

These members are:

- Shaun Jackson - National Manager – Training and Workforce Development
- Katrien Pickles - Senior Project Officer – Research and Policy
- Stacey Pidgeon - National Manager – Research and Policy
- Caitlin Turner - Senior Project Officer – Lifesaving Sport and Development

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Champion is Stacey Pidgeon - National Manager, Research and Policy, who is responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Currently our organisation has no known staff that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. We will work within this Reconciliation Action Plan to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand, support and encourage more staff from diverse backgrounds. Our work around and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to date has included:

Learning – cultural education through, a workshop with [Murawin Consultants](#) staff completing the Share Our Pride educational history tool, internal newsletters, ‘Lunch & Learn’ sessions with speakers on topics including reconciliation, history, links to waterways, the arts, sciences and business. We have consulted with our Western Australia member organisation who have a Reconciliation Action Plan. We presented our research at the Indigenous Wellbeing Conference in 2021.

Communications and Marketing – We developed a communications plan (including social media) promoting key dates for significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days and events. National water safety campaigns for print and media include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses – using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned companies for consultancy work, supplies, catering and gifts.

Research - Royal Life Saving consulted with the Director of the Ngarruwan Ngadju First Peoples Health and Wellbeing Research Centre, and the program manager of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program at the George Institute of Global Health, for guidance and feedback to the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Drowning report](#) (November 2020) and development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section of the [Australian Water Safety Strategy](#) (April 2021). Both documents adhered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research ethics principles.

Partnerships – we are currently in discussions with [Ngarruwan Ngadju First Peoples Health and Wellbeing Research Centre](#) to build a long-term relationship to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research with a focus on learning about connection to waterways. We are actively pursuing partnerships and opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led initiatives in the sports, arts and youth spaces. We are developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities and organisations to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group.

ALIGNMENT TO POLICY

We have aligned our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan to our two guiding policy frameworks.

Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

Led by Royal Life Saving, the [Australian Water Safety Strategy](#) (AWSS) 2030 plays an essential role in National, State, Territory and community approaches to preventing drowning and promoting safe use of the nation's waterways and swimming pools. It identifies priority areas where peak water safety bodies Royal Life Saving and Surf Life Saving work together to prevent drowning at rivers, lakes, swimming pools and in coastal waters across Australia. Linking our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan to this policy ensures reconciliation impacts and outcomes both for our organisation and the aquatic industry in Australia.

Royal Life Saving Strategic Framework – A Nation Free From Drowning

We have always sought to reduce drowning, to increase physical activity, especially in and around the water, and to contribute to the creation of more resilient communities, Australia-wide. This strategic framework represents the collective effort of our Members, Board, Staff, Volunteers and Partners.



ACTION AREA: **RELATIONSHIPS****Advocacy**

- Campaign for improved access to culturally appropriate programs and services
- Advocate for increased investments in water safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Encourage organisations to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan

Drowning Prevention and Leadership

- Support State and Territory coordinated efforts
- Facilitate high-value workshops, symposiums, conferences

ACTION AREA: **RESPECT****Collaboration**

- Establish a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Safety Reference Group
- Reinforce local partnerships with community members and organisations
- Develop drowning prevention strategies and programs that are led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and supported by the water safety sector

Research

- Support Aboriginal and Torres Islander-led and community engaged research, including qualitative research
- Investigate contributing factors to drowning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Evaluate the effectiveness of relevant campaigns, programs and services

Research, Policy and Advocacy

- Expand and communicate evidence-based approaches
- Influence improvements in policy, legislation, regulation, program support
- Evaluate initiatives to improve policy and practice

Community Awareness and Action

- Campaign to increase community awareness and action
- Promote the benefits of safe aquatic pursuits
- Reach key audiences with innovation, perseverance and presence
- Build stakeholder and community awareness of Royal Life Saving vision and impacts

ACTION AREA: **RESPECT****Safe Environments**

- Acknowledge and recognise the deep connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and water when planning and implementing strategies and programs

Education

- Increase accessibility and availability of culturally appropriate water safety, swimming and lifesaving programs

Policy

- Align water safety to health, education and employment policies and programs, including Closing the Gap targets

Workforce

- Strengthen pathways to education, training and employment across the aquatic workforce
- Create a more culturally competent and diverse workforce

Education

- Deliver culturally safe and responsive swimming and water safety programs that are co-designed with, and delivered by communities

ACTION AREA: **OPPORTUNITY****Swimming, Lifesaving, Water Safety Pathway**

- Champion the case for Swim and Survive skills for all children
- Promote community resilience through rescue, lifesaving and emergency care skills
- Advocate on behalf of those who miss out on swimming and water safety skills
- Foster pool lifesaving sport as vehicle for skills and leadership development

Safer Aquatic Locations

- Deliver quality, innovative, customer and safety focused training

Organisational Cohesion and Growth

- Govern with a common purpose, clarity of roles, commitment to the cause
- Develop sustainable funding streams, including the use of social enterprise

People and Culture

- Support a membership with deep connections to the Australian community
- Foster innovation, commitment, respect and accountability
- Champion diversity at all levels



RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations Royal Life Saving's sphere of influence as a national organisation. 	December 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and utilise best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	December 2022	Senior Project Officer – Research & Policy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop relationships with the aim to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group for the next Reconciliation Action Plan 	June 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify initiatives that advance inclusion in the Aquatics Sector 	June 2023	Lead: National Manager – Research & Policy
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all Royal Life Saving staff and member organisations. 	June 2022, 2023	National Manager – Strategic Communications and Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May - 3 June, 2023	National Manager - Marketing & Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support Royal Life Saving staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May 2023	Chief Executive Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to the Royal Life Saving board members and all staff. 	August 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Reconciliation Action Plan publicly on website (report and video) 	June 2022	Social Media and Digital Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Reconciliation Action Plan updates regularly - internally at staff meetings (monthly), newsletters (quarterly) 	June, September, December 2022, March, June 2023	Social Media and Digital Communications Officer



RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish updates on the progress of the organisation towards the achievement of the Reconciliation Action Plan Objectives - externally via website and social media 	September 2022, March and June 2023	National Manager – Strategic Communications and Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Reconciliation Action Plan learning with other Royal Life Saving member organisations - Lunch & Learns and newsletters (quarterly) 	June, September, December 2022, March, June 2023	Senior Policy Officer – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that Royal Life Saving can engage with on our reconciliation journey 	December 2022	National Manager – Aquatics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations to approach and could collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	December 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
	4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and implement best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	December 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 		December 2022	National Manager – Finance

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.	December 2022	National Manager – Aquatics
	• Prepare a Royal Life Saving cultural awareness training plan in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders (Cultural education, workshop, tour, new staff orientations)	June 2023	National Manager – Education
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation (staff and board)	December 2022	Training and Workforce Development, Education and Training
	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	December 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	• Increase the understanding among Royal Life Saving board, staff and Members of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2022	National Manager Vocational Training & Workforce Development
	• Identify organisations to connect with to learn about HR policies concerning cultural leave flexibility.	March 2023	National Manager – Finance
	• Ensure organisational communication materials, resources, campaigns and social media to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.	June 2023	National Manager Marketing and Events
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information among Royal Life Saving staff and board members about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2022, 2023	National Manager - Marketing & Events
	• Introduce Royal Life Saving board, staff and members to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events to attend.	June 2022, 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	• Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, board and staff members to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022	Chief Executive Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Commission research project through an Australian university to learn more about connection to waterways focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.	• Conduct a qualitative research project to learn more about the meaning of and relationship of waterways to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (e.g. qualitative research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, including stories and artwork).	June 2023	National Manager – Research & Policy

OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Royal Life Saving employment policy and practices to understand barriers experiences by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in seeking employment with us and to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	March 2023	National Manager – Finance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	September 2022	National Manager – Finance
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business strategy to increase procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultants - Catering - Gifts 	September 2022	National Manager – Finance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	September 2022	National Manager – Finance

GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain RWG to govern Reconciliation Action Plan implementation. 	June 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	June 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG). 	December 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural advisor to be part of and inform the RWG. 	December 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	July 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on Reconciliation Action Plan commitments. 	September 2022	National Manager – Research & Policy
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 2023	National Manager – Research & Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August 2023	National Manager – Research & Policy
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan. 	March 2023	Senior Policy Officer – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Communities



THE ARTWORK - WATER JOURNEY



About the artwork

Water Journey, is a representation of Royal Life Saving - Australia's connection with Aboriginal culture and the journey towards its future of reconciliation.

The centre of the artwork represents the Royal Life Saving Australia's connection and commitment to its reconciliation journey. The symbols surrounding the centre signify the coming together of people and the water lines and fish represent the connection to water and safety.

The dotted symbols along the journey pathway represent the values and priority areas of Royal Life Saving Australia's mission. The people along the journey pathways represent members, board, staff, volunteers and partners. The dots represent connection to the land, waters and communities. The waves on the right side of the artwork represent water safety and life saving skills.

The reconciliation journey is reflected throughout the piece. The pathways signify the establishment and connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the commitment to actively promote awareness of their peoples and cultures.

About the artist

Lani Balzan is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her family originates from Mudgee but she grew up all over Australia and lived in many different towns. She now calls the Illawarra home. Lani is a nationally recognised Aboriginal Artist, and has been creating art for over 10 years and has had continued success across the country. One of her biggest goals and inspirations with creating her artwork is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation; bringing people and communities together to learn about what amazing culture we have here in Australia.

www.lanibart.com.au



ROYAL LIFE SAVING

CONTACT DETAILS:

Name: Stacey Pidgeon

Email: spidgeon@rlssa.org.au

Position: National Manager – Research and Policy, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

Phone Number: 0455 381 115