



ecoteam

Reconciliation Action Plan



# INNOVATE

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

March 2018 – March 2020



**STRIVING FOR EQUALITY** Artwork by: Lisa Robinson

The artwork on the front cover of Ecoteam's RAP is of seven flying boomerangs by Lisa Robinson. Lisa is an award winning artist from the Wiyabal tribe in northern NSW. Lisa uses traditional earth tones in her artwork and starts with a single dot in the middle of the canvas. Lisa uses her own specific style to create the dots and draws her inspiration from her local environment.

ecoteam

13 Ewing Street, LISMORE NSW 2480

Phone: (02) 6621 5123

Fax: (02) 6621 8123

Email: [info@ecoteam.com.au](mailto:info@ecoteam.com.au)

Web: [www.ecoteam.com.au](http://www.ecoteam.com.au)



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

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## Our Vision For Reconciliation

Ecoteam is an environmental consulting company, based in Lismore NSW. We aim to work together with our clients and community to create true wealth, which we see as a healthy environment, happiness and financial solvency for ourselves, our families and our community.

**Ecoteam's vision is for a just and equitable Australia, which embraces and celebrates our nation's First Peoples.** We can make a significant contribution to reconciliation through our everyday thoughts and actions. Ecoteam works directly in and closely with local Aboriginal communities and offers first preference to community members when opportunities for employment within the community arise. We aim to raise awareness of reconciliation with our business partners. By mentoring other small businesses through the registration and implementation process, we will work towards our vision of a just and equitable Australia.

We vow to:

- Respect cultures, land and ethics together as a team
- Act in a way that PROMOTES reconciliation
- Continually build upon the company values of inspiring positive change, uncompromising ethics, sustainability, working in the present and thinking in the future, being solution oriented.
- Create true wealth by nurturing the environment and inspiring community
- Maintain an ongoing commitment to reconciliation and champion the benefits of having an endorsed Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Our Business

- Ecoteam is an environmental assessment and engineering consultancy whose passion lies in protecting and preserving the Australian environment.
- The precursor to Ecoteam was conceived and developed at Southern Cross University's Graduate Research Centre. The brainchild of Ecoteam chief research scientist Dr Keith Bolton, Ecotechnology Australia Pty Ltd (ETA) was formed in October 2003. A grant from the Australian Government's Sustainable Regions Program awarded to ETA in October 2005 provided strategic support in the start-up phase of the company's development as a stand-alone entity. The Ecoteam division was then established in 2009.
- Ecoteam's core business is designing constructed wetlands which use sound scientific principles to treat a range of wastewater types, including agricultural and municipal effluent, to a high quality suitable for discharge into the environment. Wetland treatment systems use plants and naturally occurring microorganisms to treat wastewater and have economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Ecoteam are highly involved in the Australian Water Industry and Manage Water and Sewerage services on three Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. We also manage a sewerage system at Toonumbar Waters Retreat, perform water sampling and advice for Balunda correctional facility and manage the leachate treatment system at the Northern Rivers Waste Transfer Facility
- Ecoteam also offer a range of other environmental and developmental services including Environmental Assessment and Monitoring, Development planning, Soil Testing and Contaminated Land Rehabilitation.
- Ecoteam employ around 10 people including, 3 staff of Aboriginal descent. We partner with Aboriginal communities with a goal to form strong working relationships. Ecoteam is based in Lismore, NSW our business most commonly has a state focus; however projects with AusAID have seen our business succeed with an international focus in India and Indonesia, and most recently in Papua New Guinea. Ecoteam will work anywhere we are needed.
- We do not support projects that cause harm and choose only to work with ethical people and companies

## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

At Ecoteam we believe that reconciliation can be achieved through our everyday attitudes and actions, and that every contribution counts. Our RAP is shaped around our everyday business and is integrated into our business management systems.

The RAP Working Group will be known as the “RAP Committee” and is made up of Lise Bolton (Managing Director), Aaron Taylor (Water & Operations Manager and RAP Champion), Robyn Mirigliani (Accounts & Administration Manager), Stefanie Stanley (Business Manager & WORQ Manager), and Alinta Hippi and Christine Collins both of whom are of Aboriginal descent of the Bundjalung Nation. The RAP will be implemented by everyone, whether it be staff members, contractors and the communities with whom we liaise. All of the people involved in the RAP will ensure it remains relevant and is achieving the objectives it set out to achieve. Clear delegation of tasks and responsibilities will be given by the RAP Committee and will be internally audited along with our WHS, Quality Assurance and environmental management systems. A RAP Update is incorporated into our monthly Team Meeting where we discuss the progress of having our RAP endorsed. Once our RAP is endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, we will use this time to involve the team and provide updates on how the RAP is progressing. Monthly Team Meeting minutes are distributed to all employees, including remote employees via email or hardcopy.

Ecoteam’s RAP is championed internally by Aaron Taylor. Aaron spends two days a week within three Aboriginal communities, Malabugilmah, Jubullum Village and Baryulgil. Aaron undertakes service and maintenance of drinking water and wastewater treatment systems and directly supervises Aboriginal staff.

A past project that Ecoteam has been involved in is the Malabugilmah Effluent Treatment and Reuse System. Residents of Malabugilmah were suffering illnesses from untreated effluent polluting nearby waterways. The Malabugilmah Community contacted Ecoteam to ask if we could help. A wetland based treatment system was installed where the effluent was treated to a high standard and then reused to water a full size NRL field via a subsurface irrigation network. Local community members were trained through TAFE and made up the majority of the workforce during construction. The football field is enjoyed by all and the nearby waterways have returned to their natural state returning cultural benefits of fishing, turtle diving and recreational activities, like swimming and canoeing.

Managing water and sewerage systems is a large job and there are always upgrade and maintenance works to be done. Our first port of call for skilled labour is always the local communities in which we work. This promotes a healthy relationship with the community and provides the Local Aboriginal Land Council with another income stream.

Ecoteam believes that the following points are paramount to the ongoing success of our RAP:

- Communication
- Community consultation and involvement
- Knowledge of community issues and cultural sensitivities/practices

Progress towards our RAP will be tracked in a separate document and will be reviewed at each RAP Committee Meeting.



## Relationships

*Building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community forms a part of Ecoteam's ethos. At the core of Ecoteam's business activities is respect for cultures, land and ethics. Ecoteam strives to demonstrate partnerships in a way that promotes reconciliation and to continually strengthen upon this foundation. Promoting and acting on reconciliation is a way to positively engage our staff.*

**Focus area:** Working together with First Australian Peoples and communities to enhance positive outcomes for all stakeholders. Building on our strong reputation as leaders in the business and local community.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
1.1 The RAP Committee holds regular meetings to monitor RAP development, implementation, progress and reporting.	WORQ Manager <u>W</u> aste Avoidance & Resource Recovery Plan, <u>O</u> ccupational Health & Safety (now Work Health, Safety, <u>R</u> econciliation Action Plan, <u>Q</u> uality Assurance	March 2018  March 2018  March 2018	Our Innovate RAP is endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.  RAP Committee oversees the development, launch and implementation of the RAP.  Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RAP Committee.
	Accounts & Admin. Manager	April 2018 October 2018 April 2019 October 2019	Meet twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.
	WORQ Manager	June 2018	Establish RAP Committee Policy and include in Quality Assurance Manual (ISO:2015) ie. Amend QA-SP-02 WORQ Committee Procedure document to equate to a Terms of Reference for the Committee.



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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
<b>1.2</b> Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and promote stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.	RAP Champion	May 2018 & 2019	Hold one internal National Reconciliation Week event each year.
	Accounts & Admin. Manager	May 2018 & 2019	Register Ecoteam's National Reconciliation Week event on Reconciliation Australia website
	RAP Champion	May 2018 & 2019	Support an external National Reconciliation Week event
	Business Manager	May 2018 & 2019	Promote Ecoteam's NRW event and other NRW events online and in newspapers and via social media.
	RAP Committee	May 2018 & May 2019	Ensure our RAP Committee participates in an external event to recognize and celebrate NRW.
<b>1.3</b> Maintain and leverage mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.	RAP Champion	December 2018	Scope, develop and maintain a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within Ecoteam's sphere of influence that could be approached to assist in the development & enhancement of the RAP.
	Business Manager	December 2018	



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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
			Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add to General Staff Induction the "Ecoteam Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors Working on Indigenous Communities"</li> </ul>
	Business Manager	October 2018 & 2019	Organise at least one meeting per year with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.
	Accounts & Admin. Manager	June 2018 & 2019	Determine available budget to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and or activities in 2017/18 & 2018/19 financial years.
1.4 Raise internal and external awareness of Ecoteam's RAP	WORQ Manager	May 2018	Implement our communications plan to raise awareness among internal and external stakeholders about RAP commitments.
	Business Manager	April 2018	Make the RAP available on the network (in a shared location with QA and WHS forms and procedures) AND on the Ecoteam website.
	Business Manager	March 2020	Publish results of our biannual review on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Linked In and Instagram, including progress updates.



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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
	RAP Champion	June 2019	Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with stakeholders.
1.5 Build and promote stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and other staff within Ecoteam by working together, celebrating successes and acknowledging milestones.	Managing Director	Dec 2018, 2019	Support remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend the annual team development day.
	RAP Champion	December 2018 & 2019	Provide verbal updates between remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and office based staff on significant team events.





## Respect

*At the core of Ecoteam's beliefs is respect for cultures, land, waters, experience and perspectives. This is a key part of our Company's vision to 'create true wealth'. Through education and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories we can demonstrate our appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.*

**Focus area:** Mutual respect through positive communication and awareness. Demonstrating how we want to be treated, and treating others with the same respect.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
2.1 Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	WORQ Manager	June 2018	Develop and pilot an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for Ecoteam which defines cultural learning needs of employees and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion)
	WORQ Manager	June 2018	RAP Committee to review resources on <a href="http://www.shareourpride.org.au">www.shareourpride.org.au</a> .
	WORQ Manager	June 2019	Provide opportunities for RAP Committee members and Ecoteam staff to undertake cultural awareness training. Partner with trainers to develop and deliver training. Training providers include NRSDC and Dave Widders Consultancy.
	Managing Director	March 2019	Ensure all new employees and/ or registered subcontractors participate in cultural awareness training as part of their induction, including review of documentation 'Code of Conduct for Working on Indigenous Communities' and 'A Brief History of Aboriginal People in Australia'.
	RAP Champion	December 2018	As part of induction, each new staff member must visit Jubullum, Malabugilmah and Baryulgil communities for one day and assist Aaron with duties.
	Business Manager	October 2019	Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training.



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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
<b>2.2 Demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our workplace</b>	RAP Champion	June 2018	Develop and distribute a fact sheet and calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant days/events to Ecoteam staff. Discuss upcoming significant events in our monthly Team Meeting.
	RAP Champion	December 2019	Purchase, display and appropriately acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the Ecoteam office.
2.3 Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	RAP Champion	May 2018	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> .
	RAP Champion	March 2018	Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintain respectful partnerships.
	RAP Champion	April 2018	Invite a local Traditional Owner to provide Welcome to Country at the opening of our new Ecoteam Office.
	RAP Champion	December 2018 & 2019	Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings.  Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings.
2.4 Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Managing Director	March 2018, February 2019 & 2020	Review contracts, HR policies and procedures to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can attend NAIDOC Week events.



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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
	RAP Champion	July 2018 & 2019	Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.



## Opportunities

*Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities is a key part of Ecoteam's business ethics. Ecoteam believes in purchasing from local, sustainable suppliers and supports small business in the Northern Rivers wherever possible. Ecoteam strives to maintain employment of three Aboriginal staff. Training and professional development will enable Aboriginal staff to build on current skill sets and provide future employment opportunities.*

**Focus area:** *Supplier diversity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff training and skill development.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
<b>3.1</b> Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Managing Director	August 2018	Document Ecoteam's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and retention strategy.
	Managing Director	August 2018	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.
	Managing Director	February 2019 & 2020	Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development and training requirements.
	Managing Director	July 2018	Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media. Include in all job advertisements, ' <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are encouraged to apply.</i> '
	Business Manager	June 2019	Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities
<b>3.2</b> Investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within Ecoteam.	Accounts and Admin. Manager	August 2019	Review and update procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services.
	RAP Champion	July 2018	Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.
	Business Manager	July 2018	Investigate Supply Nation membership.



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**Focus area:** *Supplier diversity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff training and skill development.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
	Accounts and Admin. Manager	March 2018	Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.



## Governance, Tracking Progress and Reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
4.1 Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.	WORQ Manager	June 2018	Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.
	WORQ Manager	Submit by September 2018, September 2019	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire annually. This data is used in the RAP Impact Measurement Report.
	WORQ Manager	May 2018	Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.
4.2 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	Business Manager	March 2019 & 2020	Report our RAP achievements, challenges and learning (externally) to Reconciliation Australia, RAP stakeholders, local newspapers and on social media.  Report our RAP achievements, challenges and learning (internally) to all team members and the Board of Directors.
4.3 Review, refresh and update Ecoteam's RAP	RAP Champion	September 2019	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on challenges and achievements.
	RAP Champion	December 2019	Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.
<b>Contact details</b> <i>Name: Stefanie Stanley</i> <i>Position: Business Manager</i> <i>Phone: (02) 6621 5123</i> <i>Email: <a href="mailto:stefanie@ecoteam.com.au">stefanie@ecoteam.com.au</a></i>			

