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Burgmann College is a unique university residential community with an egalitarian approach to its structure. Opened in 1971, Burgmann is affiliated with The Australian National University and is situated on its campus. Burgmann College was originally sponsored by the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches and the Churches of Christ. Burgmann is a community comprising residential members (students and staff), members of Council and members of Convocation. Unlike many older colleges, Burgmann is a single community with no hierarchies of residential membership, and students have significant say in the running of the College. The College aims to provide a vital community; an academic support system; pastoral care for residents and, where possible, a wider university population; and supervision of students, with maximum cooperation with student bodies and a flexible approach to modern needs.

The Burgmann College Community remains unique and compelling as a fully collegiate university residence for 350 students within the Australian National University. With over 230 fully catered undergraduates and a village community of 120 postgraduates, there is a vibrant interaction between diverse and interesting intellectual forces that supports a high academic and research achievement. Our learning community is based on ‘shared learning’ amongst residents. Academic support is both received and given by all.

Our Business

Burgmann College employs twenty full time equivalent staff, none of whom identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The College is both national and international in its reach, as membership is open to domestic and international ANU students and we have alumni across Australia and throughout the world. Approximately 20% of our residents are international students. The College operates in a single location.
Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Burgmann College is situated on the land of the Ngunnawal people. The College aspires to play an active role in Australia’s national reconciliation movement. In developing its inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan, the College seeks to understand and reflect on our current practices and programs. We want to ensure we are providing a culturally safe and supportive environment in which current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents can achieve their highest potential, and determine areas for future improvement.

In formally communicating our commitment to reconciliation, the College affirms its wish to foster and maintain a respectful community of informed residents and staff, embedding respect for the world's longest surviving cultures and communities throughout our practices and programs.

The College intends to contribute an annual program of appropriate cultural and education events which acknowledge and elucidate the wrongs of Australia’s past, and provide opportunities for people to share their knowledge towards the advancement of reconciliation.

The College seeks to create opportunities for the development of ongoing mutually constructive relationships between the College and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and build upon the existing Doomadgee-Burgmann Community Partnership.

In providing a welcoming home environment where racism is not tolerated and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents are supported to achieve their highest potential academically and personally, we hope to contribute to the achievement of excellent educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ANU students, and to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who choose Burgmann as their home while studying at ANU.

The College’s reconciliation journey to date has been largely informal, with the exception of the Burgmann-Doomadgee Community Partnership which encourages enduring and meaningful friendships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The College regularly includes a Welcome to Country in its annual Commencement Dinner event program.

Commencing in 2018, the Chairperson of the Burgmann College Council Acknowledges Country at bi-annual Council and monthly Board of Management meetings. The College holds annual National Reconciliation Week activities, which in 2018 included hosting dinner with Dr Aunty Anne Martin and Associate Professor Asmi Wood, and a ‘Yurbay’ Bush Foods interactive workshop education event for residents. In the lead up to Reconciliation Week, the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre gifted to the College an Aboriginal flag and a Torres Strait Islander flag, which now hang permanently in the College Dining Hall.

In June 2018, the College offered a one day cultural competency training program to selected staff, residents and invited colleagues within the ANU residential community and ANU School of Art and Design. The College also supports the Deputy Principal in her ongoing academic role with the ANU School of Art and Design, where she co-facilitates a field research program made possible through ongoing partnerships with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council and Twofold Aboriginal Corporation. Internally, the RAP is championed by the Deputy Principal. The development of this RAP was supported by Aunty Anne Martin and Professor Richard Baker at the ANU; Board Chairperson Greg Mills; Principal Sally Renouf; Aboriginal residents Darcy Jackman, Christen Richardson and Ella Imber-Ireland; the 2018 Co-Chairs of the Doomadgee-Burgmann Community Partnership, Stella Ajani and Samantha Willis; and Burgmann Residents’ Association Diversity Committee Chair, Margaux Huey.

2019 Burgmann residents participating in the first smoking ceremony in the College’s history // Photo: Rittwick Visen
Doomadgee - Burgmann Community Partnership

The Doomadgee - Burgmann Community Partnership (DBCP) commenced in 2008. DBCP is an association within Burgmann College. The DBCP’s mission is to encourage enduring and meaningful friendships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, in particular, through Burgmann’s relationship with key members of the Doomadgee community in remote north-west Queensland. Central to the DBCP is an annual program of events, including an annual trip to the Doomadgee Community, and when possible, the hosting of members of the Doomadgee community at Burgmann College. The DBCP supports through fundraising efforts, charities or organisations that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or programs. DBCP strives to build shared pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledge for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through frequent and positive interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and to raise awareness and consciousness of issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre at ANU

Burgmann College is fortunate to work in close partnership with the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the residential application process. Commencing in 2018, the College holds a minimum of two places per annum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Applicants are also encouraged to apply for the Burgmann Price Scholarship and for Burgmann College Scholarships or Bursaries. In 2018, four Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students called Burgmann home.

2018 Doomadgee Trip-up participants // Photo: Alena Payne
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<td>1. Maintain a RAP Working Group</td>
<td>• Maintain a RAP Working Group (refreshed annually) that is operational to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff and residents from across our organisation.</td>
<td>February 2019</td>
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| 2. Build internal and external relationships | • Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.  
• Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.  
• Establish contact with ACT based Aboriginal Youth community services. Seek to engage Aboriginal Youth in College initiated activities, such as friendly sport games. | March 2019 | Deputy Principal |
| 3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) | • Encourage our staff to attend a NRW event.  
• Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.  
• Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.  
• Formalise an Annual Reconciliation Dinner event in the College calendar. | 27 May-3 June | Principal & Deputy Principal |
| 4. Raise internal awareness of our RAP | • Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments.  
• Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP. | Dec 2018 – March 2019 | Principal & Deputy Principal |
| 5. Review and strengthen existing partnerships | • Seek to review the Doomadgee-Burgmann Community Partnership in collaboration with the DBCP Co-Chairs, for the purpose of better understanding the opportunities the partnership affords.  
• Develop an MOU between the College and the DBCP to articulate the mutually valued qualities of the program, and as a framework for its longevity. | September 2019 | Deputy Principal & Co-Chairs of DBCP Principal |
| 6. Engage Burgmann College residents and the broader Burgmann community in events which foster reconciliation | • Engage our residential student leaders in the delivery of RAP outcomes. (ANU’s new CORE Training module, Events, Film Screenings)  
• Seek to welcome new and returning residents to Burgmann College with an appropriate cultural welcome event, such as a smoking ceremony. (February)  
• Promote, and encourage Burgmann residents, Alumni and Council Members to attend, as appropriate, events hosted by the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre and other events offered by the ANU, such as the university’s Annual Reconciliation Lecture. | September 2019 | Deputy Principal |
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| 7. Investigate Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural learning & development | • Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation.  
• Capture data and measure our staff’s current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.  
• Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation. | June 2019         | Principal & Deputy Principal    |
| 8. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week                                       | • Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff, alumni and residents of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.  
• Introduce our staff, alumni and residents to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.  
• Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July each year | Deputy Principal & student leaders |

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| 9. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols | • Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area.  
• Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence.  
• Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).  
• Include in College staff training, student leadership training and the New Residents Program | March 2019        | Deputy Principal, DBCP Co-Chairs, 2019 student leaders |
| 10. Demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures in our community, buildings and grounds | • Hold the inaugural Annual Speaker series of events, one per term. In 2018, invite distinguished alumni, guest speakers and academics to reflect on the importance of Truth in Reconciliation.  
• Seek to add and display artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the College art collection.  
• Seek to display an Acknowledgment of Country in the Reception Foyer of College.  
• Work with local Traditional Owners to understand the significance of the land on which the College is built, and recognise this with a plaque at the College entrance.  
• Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance (Sorry Day, Mabo Day, Close the Gap Day, etc)  
• Communicate and encourage staff to use Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool to all staff. | November 2019     | Deputy Principal, CDBCP Co-Chairs, student leaders |
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| 11. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment      | • Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.  
• Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities. | June 2019      | Principal & Deputy Principal         |
| 12. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity | • Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.  
• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. | November 2019  | Principal & Deputy Principal         |
| 13. Investigate ways to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to Burgmann College | • Seek to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals to contribute to the Burgmann Alumni and Friends Mentoring Program.  
• Establish identified scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.  
• Seek to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential fellow member of the College community.  
• Seek to increase the number of applications the College receives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. | August 2019   | Principal & Deputy Principal         |
| 14. Investigate ways to include and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and businesses | • Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships).  
• Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation.  
• Investigate opportunities to increase pro bono activities.  
• Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership. | November 2019  | Deputy Principal                     |
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| 15. Build support for the RAP | • Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation.  
• Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.  
• Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia. | July 2019 | Deputy Principal & Business Manager |
| 16. Review and Refresh RAP | • Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.  
• Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review  
• Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement. | August 2019 | Deputy Principal |
I have a strong belief that racism and exclusion begins within the home. My idea is that by piercing the home as the source of this, we may be able to both diminish racism and de-normalise the way we idealise Australian homes. Within these works I never favour one of my cultures over the other as I am both Indigenous and of Colonial decent and I am very proud to be part of both of these cultural identities. The Walam Wunga (grinding stone) Table deliberately melds Indigenous cultural practices with Western furniture designs to show the mutual relationship that I have with my two identities, but also to suggest what all of Australia could have. My mind set is that I am encompassing both of my cultures, as well as others, into new artistic and cultural avenues. Alongside new Indigenous objects like the Walam Wunga Table there must be new symbols and motifs to represent these within the Indigenous visual language. These motifs must be for everyone.

The work, Dhalang-girr (New) Gabin-gidyal (Beginning), initiated from a visit to Burgmann College. On my tour, I was told about the culture of seating at meal times in the College’s Dining Hall, where residents fill any empty seats at one table before starting a new table. This simple, yet effective gesture ensures that everybody gets to know everyone, doesn’t enhance the environment for social cliques and also ensures nobody is excluded or lonely. The interesting thing is that this notion was also the arching idea for the Walam Wunga Table. Extending my previous work, I linked the table with the Burgmann seating arrangement and produced the Dhalang-girr (New) Gabin-gidyal (Beginning) motif.

By bringing together white and black Australia, I believe we could change attitudes towards other cultures as well, we need to include everyone into the bigger picture for real change to begin.
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