



Reconciliation Action Plan

QITE Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020



Our vision for reconciliation

Our Vision: “Q.I.T.E. is committed to reconciliation, and through strong relationships we foster a culture of respect for all individuals. We aim to enhance our service delivery to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in providing better engagement that will further contribute to their lives and families and the communities in which they live through education and employment”.

Our business

Q.I.T.E. is a local not-for-profit organisation and one of the largest providers of employment services in the Far North Queensland region. We are also proudly a Public Benevolent Institution and a registered charity. Commencing in 1987, Q.I.T.E. was formed after a group of concerned citizens sought to assist youth with high unemployment and low school retention rates in the Mareeba community through the provision of training, recruitment and employment services working with the most vulnerable clients in our communities. Since this time, Q.I.T.E. has changed immensely and grown, with a current workforce of 80 staff we work in the communities of Mareeba, Atherton, Ravenshoe, Mossman, Cairns, Innisfail and Tully and we offer a diverse set of programs which work towards helping people gain skills to move into employment through a series of accredited and non-accredited training. Q.I.T.E. also owns and operates a 70-place long day care Centre with an approved kindy program, which operates with 15% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in our Centre. We have ten (10) Indigenous children in our approved kindy program.

Q.I.T.E. is proud to be recognized as a community asset, and as an organization, we provide a wrap-around service to our clients, and work to contribute to the wider community by campaigning where possible to influence change by being members of the National Employment Service Association, National Workforce Network, Jobs Australia, QCOS and various chambers of commerce across our region. This allows us to be aware of what is happening in our local areas and to provide training for clients so they are ready for the projects that maybe happening.

Q.I.T.E. has operated continuously in the employment, training & community service industry for over 31 **years** in the **Tablelands** region, including 10 **years** as part of the **Cairns area**.

QITE's current service area spans almost 250,000km² from Mossman to Tully. The services we offer includes:-

- jobactive and Harvest Labour Service contracts which is Federally funded by the Department of Jobs and Small Business;
- Disability Employment Services which is Federally funded by the Department of Social Services
- Recruitment Services and Labour Hire;
- Accredited and non-accredited training
- **Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) - As part of the IAS service** Q.I.T.E operates a regular school bus for children in Mareeba to help with school attendance for primary school aged children. This initiative is funded, with the help from the Department PM&C (Prime Minister and Cabinet).
- Social enterprises of *QT's Early Learning Centre* - QT's Child Care Centre was opened in September 2009 and provides quality day care services for up to 70 children per day (from 6 weeks to 5 years).

- *Passenger Transport Services* - Q.I.T.E. Transport Services is a dedicated service providing transport from Q.I.T.E.'s offices to employees' workplaces if they do not own their own vehicle. In a community with limited public transport especially to remote farms, this service provides benefits to local employers and employees alike.

Q.I.T.E. has a diverse workforce that we are proud of. We currently have **twelve (12)** staff who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander throughout the organisation in roles such as Indigenous Mentors, Senior Employment Brokers, Employment Broker, Childcare worker and Receptionist and are valued members of our ever-growing team which has a variety of roles across the organisation ranging from bus drivers, employment brokers, finance, quality assurance and childcare staff.

Our RAP

Within the Q.I.T.E. service area, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is almost three times the state average. Therefore, we recognised that a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was a necessary and integral part of Q.I.T.E.'s business and service delivery to ensure our organisation would commit to building the capacity of supporting First Australian Peoples in Far North QLD to gain meaningful employment.

Q.I.T.E. formally committed to implementing a R.A.P. in conjunction of our Indigenous Australian Training, Employment and Supplier Plan, which was accepted by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in 2012. Q.I.T.E. had commenced work on the R.A.P. prior to this in recognition of the communities in which we operate, and the clients whom we support. Q.I.T.E. operated a specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Job Services Australia contract up to the 30th of June 2015 and is focussed on improving employment in our region for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

On the 10th April 2013, Q.I.T.E.'s R.A.P. Working Group met for the first time to discuss the our first R.A.P. and to devise a plan around the organisation's goals for reconciliation. It was recognised that the R.A.P. Working Group could collectively draw on each member's diverse background and experience to agree to a series of goals, which would make a difference to the organisation, our clients and our stakeholders.

Q.I.T.E. is very proud of the progress we have made in our second RAP and we have had a official opening at our new Head office in Mareeba where a Welcome to Country was performed by a local Traditional Owner and was very well received by the media, staff and general public. Q.I.T.E. has also made over ten bursary donations to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who schools recognise as achieving well but needing a helping hand.

The R.A.P. Working Group has been re-formed to develop our third RAP with a total of 10 (ten) members, which include; General Manager (Jillian Trout) as the internal R.A.P. champion, with the other staff members which include the Innisfail Site Manager (Kira Balderson) the Cairns Team Leader (Ben Holt), Compliance Manager (Alita Jennings), Indigenous Broker from Cairns (Tonia Mason), Indigenous Broker from Tablelands (Aaron Enoch) and the Tablelands Site Manager (Keely Van Wensveen), Post Placement Support and Finance officer (Fran O'Dwyer), the Director of QT's Early Learning Centre (Siale Jenkins) and respected Tablelands Elder (Eddie Hastie).

Four (4) members are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders within our RAP group.

QITE's third RAP will focus on strengthening the organisation's focus on reconciliation, and building on the achievements already made under the first and second RAP's such as a development of a cultural leave clause for staff, cultural awareness training for staff, anti-discrimination training and working with public high school's in our region to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students moving into years 11 and 12 who are worthy of a QITE Bursary to help with the

costs of their further education. We have also in the last period of time opened 6 community pantries across our Region to help with people in the area purchase low cost grocery items and donated fruit and vegetables for anyone in the community who needs to take advantage of this.

The R.A.P will be championed by all members of the RAP Working Group by discussions with staff and will be championed externally by Edward Hastie a respected member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Far North QLD. Mr Hastie has been involved in all of our RAP Working Group meetings, has been since day one, and will continue to be involved in all of our Working Group meetings.

Since our first RAP launched, our organisation has changed significantly and we are a smaller organisation due to the Federal Government contract changes. What we have noticed in the journey is that staff that are still with the organisation have all been supportive of the RAP and have volunteered to attend cultural events such as NAIDOC week and have learnt a lot from the training they have attended.

We have now created a cultural leave policy for our staff as well as staff have and will continue to undertake cultural awareness training so they are enabled to be better equipped to assist with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in a more culturally appropriate and respectful way.



Relationships

At Q.I.T.E., we believe that Reconciliation is a two-way process; therefore, our focus is on building relationships with individuals and communities. We seek to build on our existing network to create partnerships and to share experiences with First Australian organisations, groups and individuals.

Focus area: *People, Performance and Culture*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations 	General Manager and Senior Managers	Meet twice a year – each Oct and April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island stakeholders and organisations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build, maintain, and strengthen relationships. 	Site Managers for Cairns, Innisfail and Tablelands. Director of Qt's Early Learning	27 th May - 3 rd June, 2019 and 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one internal event each year, at each of QITE's full-time sites (Atherton, Mareeba, Cairns) as well as our Part-time sites and have RAP working group members participate in an external NRW event.

	General Manager		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circulate Reconciliation Australia NRW Resources and reconciliation materials to all staff. ▪ Identify one NRW activity in the area of each of Q.I.T.E.'s full-time sites, and investigate opportunities to partner, with the organisers to assist with and participate in the event. ▪ Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participant in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. ▪ Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence 	General Manager and Leadership Team	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement strategies to engage staff in reconciliation. ▪ Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. ▪ Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. ▪ Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.
	General Manager	December 2019	
	RAP Team	April 2019	
	RAP Team	November 2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies 	General Manager and Leadership Team	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. ▪ Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. ▪ Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Starit Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. ▪ Invite Elders to deliver an educational information session to senior leaders about the effects of racism.
		September 2019	
	GM and Board	November 2019	
	Elders of community and GM	December 2019	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.



Respect

Q.I.T.E. acknowledges the importance of fostering a culture of respect, and an environment where cultural awareness is encouraged, and practiced.

It is our intention to first build on this organisation's culture of First Australian Peoples respect and equality in order to create a workforce of Reconciliation Champions. We plan to contribute to reconciliation by demonstrating respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through increasing our appreciation, understanding and awareness through learning First Australian People's history, cultures, achievements and perspectives. We will actively promote cultural awareness within all Q.I.T.E. teams. We will also seek to become a mentor for other organisations and businesses to embrace reconciliation.

Focus area: Service Delivery and People, Performance and Culture

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning. 	General Manager and Compliance Manager RAP Working Group	June 2019, 2020 October 2019 October 2019 December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for RAP working group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop a specialised cultural learning for all staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols 	General Manager RAP Working Group	June 2019 and 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including

	General Manager and Leadership team	<p>June 2019</p> <p>June 2019 and 2020</p> <p>Feb 2020</p>	<p>Acknowledgement to Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. • Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. • Review, update and communicate cultural protocol document to include broader cultural protocols for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples/communities within in the Far North QLD region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week 	General Manager and Compliance Manager Site Managers	<p>May 2019</p> <p>July, 2019 and 2020</p> <p>June 2019 and 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC events. ▪ Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff. ▪ RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. ▪ Identify local community NAIDOC events which Q.I.T.E. could contribute to by organising a QITE stall or other agreed contribution to assist with the celebrations.



Opportunities

At Q.I.T.E. our aim is to create sustainable employment opportunities through various services for individuals in Far North Queensland with a focus on closing the employment gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in the region.

Focus area: People, Performance and Culture.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	General Manager and Compliance Manager	June, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities
		June, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.
		July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.
		July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.
		July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise all job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
		December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR procedures and policies to ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees can be addressed.

<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	<p>General Manager</p>	<p>July 2019</p> <p>August 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>Sep 2019</p> <p>November 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy. ▪ Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. ▪ Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. ▪ Maintain membership to Supply Nation to link with Certified Suppliers ▪ Review procurement policies barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early School Leavers in attending QITE information sessions about training and employment opportunities post leaving school. 	<p>Assistant Site Managers</p>	<p>November 2019</p> <p>November 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage with local Schools in QITE service areas to promote information sessions and opportunities to the early school leavers and students who are finishing high school explaining our services and the benefits available. ▪ Offer Bursaries to senior high school students at the recommendation of the school to continue further studies. ▪ Engage with students who may wish to be referred to Transition to work programs in the area for assistance with ongoing study/training

Governance			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	General Manager and RAP Working Group	Feb, May, August November, 2019 and 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG ▪ Maintain and update Terms of Reference for the RWG. ▪ Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation..
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	General Manager and R.A.P. Working Group	By September 2019 and 2020. Annual September 19, 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Define resource needs for RAP implementation ▪ Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management ▪ Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments via the AGM Report. ▪ Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.

<p>3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally .</p>	<p>General Manager and R.A.P. Working Group</p>	<p>September 2019, 2020 May 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and submit the annual RAP impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. • Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly • Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learning annually. • Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial workplace RAP barometer
<p>4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP</p>	<p>General Manager and RAP working group</p>	<p>Feb 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to being developing our next RAP. ▪ Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.

Contact details
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