



Molonglo Conservation Group

Reflect

Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2019-July 2020



Cover images: Bullan Mura (women's pathway) regeneration at Yarralumla, ACT (Karen Denny and Wally Bell)

Protecting Button Wrinkle Wort (endangered) - Ngunawal Traditional Custodians working on Country and Sharing Knowledge - Bulbine Lilly (Bush tucker)

Cultural Warning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this Reconciliation Action Plan includes images and names of deceased persons

A message from the Board of the Molonglo Conservation Group 2019-20

As President of the Molonglo Conservation Group (formerly known as Molonglo Catchment Group), I am proud to introduce our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

We encourage management of natural resources of the Molonglo catchment region in ways that integrate science and Aboriginal culture. Using an interconnected 'all-of-landscape approach', we recognise the overlaps in tablelands ecological connectivity, creek and river corridors, and the traditional landscape pathways that directed the course of the earliest rural landholders, and Aboriginal people before them. Our inclusion of Aboriginal cultural awareness is increasingly integrated, daily, into thinking and conduct of current projects, and as we plan our future programs.

The Molonglo Conservation Group has developed a strong understanding of who the Traditional Custodians are of the lands and waters in our local area. We are also continuing to explore ongoing partnership opportunities with local Traditional Custodians in the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence. This allowed us to develop a business strategy that includes raising awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols). Our cool burn workshops have been particularly helpful in implementation of the strategy.

We have identified business and employment opportunities that include current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants, which will inform future employment and development opportunities. We are proud of our achievements in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is a natural next step in our journey of acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. In particular, through this Reconciliation Action Plan, we look forward to deepening our understanding and building upon our existing relationships with the Ngunawal Traditional Custodians as we engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Molonglo catchment and surrounding southern tablelands region.

The Molonglo Conservation Group recognises the importance of a long-term commitment to actively and respectfully partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to supporting and enhancing understanding and knowledge of caring for this land and its waters as part of our Reconciliation journey. Together we can improve environmental wellbeing through encouraging sustainable land management by enabling and integrating caring for country in the southern tablelands.

Karen Williams
President

Tony Webster
Treasurer

Daryl Crapp
Director

Wendy Goodlet
Director

Linda Beveridge
Director

Mike Braysher
Director

Peter Kenshole
Director

Molonglo Conservation Group: Who we are

The Molonglo Conservation Group is a not-for-profit network of Landcare and Park Care groups in the Molonglo and Queanbeyan River catchments of southern NSW and the ACT. We are developing diversified funding streams to implement programs that restore landscapes, enhance knowledge and build community capabilities. Our activities cover urban, peri-urban, rural and conservation landscapes.

The Molonglo catchment comprises approximately 212,000 ha within the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment in south-eastern NSW and the ACT. It includes all the land that drains into the Molonglo River and Lake Burley Griffin, including the Queanbeyan River, and all the tributaries.

VISION	<i>We seek to achieve</i>	<i>A healthy, resilient and productive landscape with diverse, interconnected ecosystems and communities</i>
MISSION	<i>What we do</i>	<i>We facilitate the development, design and delivery of best practice natural resource and landscape management programs</i>
	<i>How we do it</i>	<i>We work with rural and urban landholders and the wider community to transform capabilities and facilitate cooperative, adaptive inter-connected landscape management</i>



The Molonglo Conservation Group acknowledges the significance to the local Aboriginal people of the land, water, flora and fauna within and around the catchment area. The respective spiritual connections are based on deep respect for, and an intrinsic understanding of the tablelands ecology, and the pathways and corridors that traverse this land.

The catchment encompasses parts of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Snowy-Monaro Regional Council, and part of the ACT. Included within the boundary is the entire city of Queanbeyan and a portion of the central suburbs of Canberra.

Molonglo Conservation Group: How we operate

The Group was formed in 2003 with the principal objective of developing the Molonglo Catchment Strategy. The implementation of this Strategy is now our focus. We do this by coordinating and integrating the network of Landcare and Park Care groups, and by partnering regional service providers and local rural and peri-urban landholders in and around the Molonglo catchment area.

The Group has been supported by the ACT, NSW and Australian Governments' environmental programs in this role. The Group seeks to assist with coordination and collaboration among various parties and to add value to existing services. Our office is located at 89 Tennant Street, Fyshwick, ACT.

Molonglo Conservation Group's development of a Reconciliation Action Plan is part of our long-term commitment to understanding and 'harnessing leading Natural Resource Management (NRM) science and local knowledge to develop, design and deliver NRM programs'.



We have a volunteer Board and 10 paid staff. Our consultancy team includes 2 local Aboriginal consultants.

A key part of our business model is to work in collaborative partnership with others to harness their expertise and effectively coordinate resources to deliver meaningful outcomes. Working with Ngunawal Traditional Custodians in association with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Catchment and feeder areas is an important part of our interconnected approach.

The development and implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan is championed by the Board. The Board has an identified RAP representative and considers formalising our existing commitment to reconciliation as an important milestone in our journey.

Molonglo Conservation Group: Our partnerships

An important part of our strategy to achieve this vision is through partnerships that build and share all capability and expertise.



We partner with and access grants from ACT, NSW and Commonwealth Governments to support work undertaken by:

National, State and Territory Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Landcare • Water watch • NSW Environmental Trust • ACT Government Environment and Heritage Program 	Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oaks Estate Progress Association • Campbell Community Association • Wandiyali Restoration Trust • National Parks Association (ACT)
Local Landcare Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Urban Woodlands Rescue Group • Carwoola • Burra • Wandiyali Restoration Trust • Captain's Flat and District • Majura Valley • Queanbeyan • Royalla 	Park Care Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Aranda Bushland • Friends of Black Mountain • Friends of Mount Majura • Grevillea Park care • Lyneham Commons • Mt Ainslie Weeders • Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park • Mt Pleasant Parkcare Group

Molonglo Conservation Group: Our reconciliation journey

Year	A timeline of major reconciliation activities to date includes:
2017-2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for Ngunawal Pathways: Integrating Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Natural Resource Management. The project involves Ngunawal people in caring for a key 'pathway' in the Ngunawal landscape and enabling their cultural knowledge and land management practices to be shared, applied and integrated with non-Aboriginal NRM practices, in on-ground works. Additionally, this project builds the capability of Aboriginal people to deliver on-ground NRM projects and expand the knowledge of NRM practitioners and the broader community about culturally important landscape context/practices (and how to apply them as part of environmental activities). Launch of brochures and interpretive sign proposed for July 2019. • In 2019 new projects all have components that involve Ngunawal Traditional Custodians in initial assessment of project sites and formal launch events including Welcome to Country. • "Traditional burning in the 21st Century: Aboriginal cultural burning workshop series". By exploring what contemporary fire management can learn from traditional fire management, the workshops have both reconciliation and ecological restoration outcomes. Interested landholders, Traditional Custodians, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Government representatives, Landcare networks and NRM groups were all invited to participate in the workshops. Cultural and Hazard reduction burns have occurred in the Southern Tablelands in April and May 2018. A traditional 'cold burn' on the site of Bullan Mura was facilitated and promoted by Molonglo Conservation Group (see below). Cool Burns are a holistic approach to restoring this important pathway for endangered flora and fauna in Yarralumla. Other burns are proposed for the Googong area in 2019. • Wandiyali banks to bush riparian linkages project builds on previous activity in the area. This project brings together a cluster of properties that is currently a project 'gap' with respect to upstream and downstream initiatives. It addresses local issues within the Jerrabomberra Creek habitat Corridor and links remnant vegetation and project outcomes from all sides. A great deal of planning work has been undertaken in relation to resource assessments on Wandiyali and neighbouring properties, as well as negotiations with local Council. The area that is the focus of this project is located at a 'cross-roads' in ecological corridors, overlapped by cultural pathways that were traversed by rural settlers throughout the region's history, and Aboriginal people prior to them.
2016-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majura Valley Bush Festival: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ngunawal cultural campfire for women and children. Ngunawal family history by Karen Denny and Rebecca King included learning a children's song in the Ngunawal language and games. ○ "Landcare in practice" a riparian restoration site with Wally Bell (Ngunawal Elder and Mulanggang Landcare Group). Acknowledged Aboriginal cultural and rural land use perspectives in a discussion focussed on addressing issues of flash flooding, erosion control, stable access for cattle while retaining water in the system for improved productivity. • Incorporated information and Ngunawal drawings about Aboriginal plant use in nameplates on walking trails on Black Mountain.

2015-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla – Building Ngunawal engagement in natural resource management: Bullan Mura. Bullan Mura means “women’s pathway” in Ngunawal language and the restoration of this section of land is restoring an ancient storyline of everyday activities and social and cultural trade and relations. The establishment of a ‘no-mow’ area on Bullan Mura is promoting the growth of Indigenous perennials and grasses and protecting the regeneration of threatened and endangered species of plants. Based on this experience, an article about working with the Ngunawal community to strengthen cultural landscapes in the Canberra region was published by the President of Molonglo Conservation Group (Karen Williams, “Sharing and caring for Ngunawal pathways” in <u>Landscape Architecture Australia</u>, August 2017, issue 155). • 2015 series of Ngunawal Walks and Talks expanded on the 2013-14 series, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ public introductory lecture at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. ○ boat cruise on Lake Burley Griffin for environment/heritage and planning post-graduates and informed amateurs. ○ stories and sharing of experiences and knowledge through ‘Talk in the landscape’. This focused on the symbolism of the landscape at the base of Mt Ainslie that includes the National War Memorial and Anzac Avenue. ○ coach tour of Sullivan’s Creek catchment for environment/heritage and planning professionals, and post-graduates.
2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Interacting with the Ngunawal Perspective”. Commencement of a program of walks and talks with Ngunawal community leaders Wally and Tyrone Bell and, water and earth scientists Fiona Dyer and Ken McQueen. The walks shared different aspects of culture, environment and landscape as interpreted through conversations. These drew together various aspects of Ngunawal culture, fresh water ecology, geology and geomorphology, and the history of the natural environment and cultural landscape of the ACT region. The walks were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oaks Estate and Molonglo Gorge. ○ Oaks Estate and Beard. ○ Little Black Mountain and Sullivan’s Creek. ○ London Bridge limestone arch formation on the Burra creek. • Supported PlaceStories.com/project/154400

Molonglo Conservation Group: Activities and initiatives for our people



The Molonglo catchment is part of a traditional corridor along which Aboriginal people have travelled, hunted, camped, conducted meetings and ceremonial practices for at least 25,000 years before the present day, and we embrace and incorporate Welcome to Country across overlapping cultural, jurisdictional and ecological boundaries. As specifically noted, we organise ourselves around our core programs. ‘Our natural resource programs connect ecosystems and communities, integrate science and Aboriginal biocultural knowledge’.

We are proud to demonstrate our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in our everyday business practices. For example, staff are being included and mentored in current Ngunawal cultural awareness events and discussions about incorporating Aboriginal cultural significance in project plans for Wandiyali (a private rural property under conservation management). Through this and our other Ngunawal program activities we are encouraging regular and authentic inclusiveness with staff to achieve cutting-edge actions and outcomes.

We are also proud to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community groups through everyday decisions. In particular:

- Our **Ngunawal walks and talks series 2013-16** provided initial concepts and enabling support and encouragement that led to a Ngunawal business “Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural and Land Management Services” being established. Our current Ngunawal cultural awareness training activities for Parkcare and Landcare groups are exploring and testing potential business ideas and models for Ngunawal gender specific, general cultural awareness training for volunteers and rural landholders.
- Through our efforts to encourage community engagement in **Our Caring for Ngunawal Pathways: Integrating Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal natural resource management** projects, we have increased the profile of the cultural significance of 2.35ha of remnant woodland, about 0.5 km from Parliament House, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. We are working with the Ngunawal community in negotiating with ACT and Commonwealth Government agencies to have the name “Bullan Mura” (Ngunawal for Women’s Pathway) generally recognised for that area of land, using signage to mark the location.
- **Planting and Weeding for Reconciliation—Our History, Our Story, Our Future.** In May 2016, Molonglo Conservation Group in partnership with Friends of Grasslands and Buru Ngunawal Consulting conducted a Community planting and weed control activity associated with ACT Environment Grant project on Bullan Mura. The activity acknowledged the cultural significance by dividing work party volunteers into appropriate gender groups—planting (women’s group) and weed control (men and women group). The activity was **timed to coincide with National Reconciliation Week**. A lunchtime sausage sizzle was held to thank volunteers who participated in the planting and weeding activity, providing an opportunity to hear Ngunawal Custodians—Wally Bell and Karen Denny—tell more of the Ngunawal history and story, and about how Landcare can best work for the future of Ngunawal country.
- We also encouraged and supported Ngunawal women—Karen Denny and her daughter Rebecca King—to run 3 x 45min classes for **2017 World Outdoor Classroom Day** at the National Arboretum. Each class involved 30 children. Karen and Rebecca taught the children to sing a song in Ngunawal language. The activity was conducted in the garden celebrating the story of Mununja the Butterfly, a Ngunawal children’s story told by Karen’s father Ngunawal Elder the late Don Bell. The garden had been designed and installed by Thunderstone, Karen’s brother’s business.
- We continue to promote and incorporate cultural awareness activities in our project proposals for Government grants. For example, 2019-24 project Landscape-species conservation—Aprasia (Pink-tailed Legless Lizard) habitat in the Googong-Burra region. We are also planning an NSW Environmental Trust Protecting our Places grant application in 2019. We also include

staff and consultants in 2019 Ngunawal cultural awareness events and discussions about incorporating Aboriginal cultural significance in project plans.



Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	Form a RAP Working Group comprising RAP Board Rep, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff from across our organisation Principal Ecologist Program Manager to support the implementation of our RAP,	July 2019 Review and report November 2019	President
2. Build internal and external relationships	Develop a list of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 ○ RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey 	August 2019	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Build on our activities in previous National Reconciliation Weeks (i.e. 2019 attendance at SE LLS NRW event at Braidwood) by organising a joint MCG—NSW Southeast Local Land Services SE LLS 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 Review LLS event.	May 2020 May 2020 May 2020 Review 2019 event July 2019	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer) (President & Executive Officer) (President & Executive Officer)
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement a plan to build on existing awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments and their responsibilities	September 2019 (review and report April 2020)	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
	Publish RAP on our website	July 2019	Treasurer



Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation	July 2019	Principal Ecologist, Executive Officer
	Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	August 2019	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
	Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation and incorporate cultural awareness and development into our regular activities.	September 2019, Review November 2019 and May 2020	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
	Communicate and encourage staff to use Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool	September 2019, Review November 2019 and May 2020	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
	Investigate cultural immersion programs	February 2020	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
6. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities	July 2019	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)
	Introduce our staff and Board to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area and encourage them to attend.	July 2019	RAP working group (President & Executive Officer)





	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event	July 2019	(President & Executive Officer)
	Hold an Internal NAIDOC Week “Voice, Treaty, Truth”—workshop (Caring Ngunawal Pathways project review with Ngunawal Traditional Custodians)	July 2019	President, Executive Officer, Principal Ecologist
7. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols			
	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). Discuss the issue of overlapping Traditional and Local Land Council Boundaries and include outcomes of discussion in agreed protocols.	August 2019 Review March 2020	RAP working Group (President & Executive Officer)
	Invite a Traditional Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country at the Caring for Ngunawal Pathways sign launch and the Aprasia Project launch.	July 2019	Principal Ecologist
	Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance by conducting an Outdoor Classrooms event.	Sept 2019	Executive Officer
	Launch an interpretative sign and brochure on Bullan Mura	July 2019	President, Principal Ecologist



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Explore funding avenues to include traineeships, employment training and contractor opportunities in current programs and new projects.	October 2019	Programs and Operations Managers
	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation	April 2020	Operations Manager
	Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and contractors to inform future employment and development opportunities	April 2020	Operations Manager
9. 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	November 2019	Operations Manager
	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	November 2019	Operations Manager
	Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation	November 2019	Operations Manager
10. Investigate opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships)	October 2019	Operations Manager
	Support placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	October 2019	Operations Manager
11. Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land management practices	Promote Aboriginal land management techniques, such as 'cool burns' and 'bush tucker foraging gardens', when engaging with other partners	April 2020	Programs and Operations Manager

	Investigate opportunities with Thunderstone Cultural and Land Management Services and Buru Ngunawal Consulting and other non-profit organisations such as Ngambri Aboriginal Land Council and Mogo Aboriginal Land Council to assist in providing culturally aware hands-on land management experience to complement formal training	October 2019	Operations Manager
--	--	--------------	--------------------



Governance and Tracking Progress

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build support for the RAP	Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation.	August 2019	RAP Board Rep
	Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	August 2019	RAP Board Rep
	Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2019	RAP Board Rep
13. Review and refresh RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	March 2020	President
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review	April 2020	RAP working group (President)
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	July 2020	RAP working group (President)

Contact details.

Name: Dr Karen Williams
Position: President
Phone: Office: 6299 2119; Mobile: 0427 803 896
Email: President@molonglo.org.au