Managing Indigeneity, Cultivating Citizens:

Reconciliation Action Plans in Australian Organizations

by

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Abstract

At its core, this dissertation is concerned with the widespread failure of liberal democratic citizenship to uphold rights and facilitate social membership for ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples. Specifically, this dissertation takes stock of Australian reconciliation, in particular its flagship Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program, after a quarter of a century of formal, state-sponsored reconciliation. On one hand, the wide spectrum of opinions about reconciliation as a failure versus an ongoing national project presents an interesting sociological puzzle— *how do some social actors come to partner with the state on conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation whereas others reject reconciliation as a framework for intergroup relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?* At the same time, my dissertation presents a clear and rigorous analysis of state-driven reconciliation: *how does Australian reconciliation ask citizens to conceptualize and practice citizenship and Australian identity? And how does reconciliation imagine, enable and constrain relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?* Above all this dissertation strives to lay a strong empirical foundation for debates about the future of Australian reconciliation in the post-Uluru era.

The dissertation introduces *citizenship project* as a useful concept for understanding and comparing large-scale collaboration between the state, other collective social actors, and individuals to change an existing citizenship regime in accordance with a set of socio-political ideals. I find that the conciliatory norms and narratives of Australia's reconciliation citizenship project promote the acknowledgement and celebration of Indigenous history, culture and people in public life and emphasize

voluntary, private action to ameliorate Indigenous / non-Indigenous socio-economic inequalities. At the same time, I find that Australia's conciliatory citizenship project obscures the role of political and economic structures in ongoing racialized hierarchies and has constrained structural reform as a strategy for combatting racialized injustice. I further argue that conciliatory norms and priorities of the Australian citizenship project of reconciliation are so thoroughly institutionalized that they will continue to influence Australian conceptualizations of Indigenous / non-Indigenous difference and aspirations for intergroup relations for many years, easily decades, to come. I base these claims on a rigorous empirical study involving 70 semi-structured interviews, over 100 contact hours with case study organizations and extensive documentary research on Australia's globally unique RAP project.

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Figure E.1 "A fresh canvas for Indigenous politics"
Anangu artists (from left) Christine Brumby, Charmaine Kulitja, Rene Kulitja and Happy Reid with the Uluru statement canvas. Photograph by Clive Scollay. (Fitzpatrick 2019)

Uluru Statement from the Heart

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

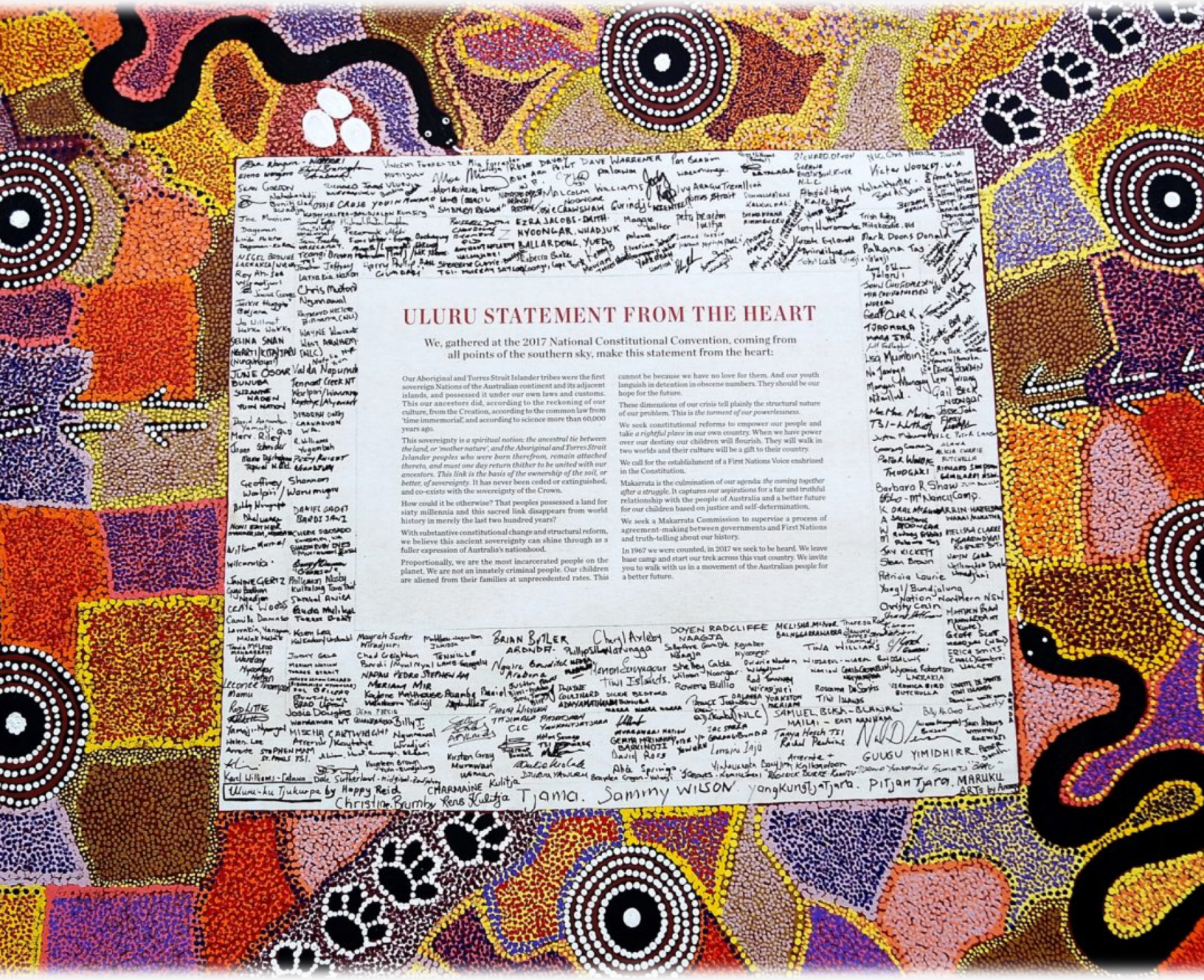

Figure E.2 The Uluru Declaration from the Heart (2017)
(1 Voice Uluru 2019)

Prologue

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is no mere document: it is a traveling work of art, a remarkable multicultural consensus signed by 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates[1], and the anchoring ethos of a growing social movement, 1 Voice Uluru. It is also, I argue, one of the great political treatises of our time, articulating, in language as passionate as it is precise, some key precepts of Indigenous Australian socio-political theory: *sovereignty*[2], *voice*[3], *power*[4], and *makarrata*, the Yolŋu word for "coming together after struggle."[5] Since the Uluru Statement, the latter concept of makarrata especially has enjoyed revival of interest as a complement or perhaps an alternative to projects of recognition,

[1] In response to public interest in the Uluru Statement, Melbourne Law School released an informational booklet: "The Uluru Statement from the Heart was a national Indigenous consensus position on Indigenous constitutional recognition, which came out of a constitutional convention of 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates. Held at the foot of Uluru in Central Australia on the lands of the Anangu people, the statement called for the establishment of a 'First Nations Voice' enshrined in the Australia Constitution and the establishment of a 'Makarrata Commission' to supervise agreement-making and truth-telling between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Uluru Statement was the culmination of 13 Regional Dialogues held around the country. It comes after many decades of Indigenous struggles for recognition and calls for a stronger voice in their affairs" (MLS 2017).

[2] The Uluru Statement discusses sovereignty at length, mentioning the word five times: "Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first *sovereign* Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands […]. This *sovereignty* is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature' […]. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of *sovereignty*. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the *sovereignty* of the Crown. […] With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient *sovereignty* can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood" (2017).

[3] In contrast to sovereignty, the Uluru Statement says little on the concept of voice aside from its emphasis on constitutional guarantee ("[w]e call for the establishment of a First Nations *Voice* enshrined in the Constitution"). As the Melbourne Law School's Uluru Statement information booklet, "This constitutional guarantee is important. The Indigenous bodies of the past that have been set up only in legislation have been easily struck down as soon as political priorities change" (MLS 2017). The last 'Indigenous body of the past' to have been struck down was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), which was created in 1990 and was dissolved in 2005 (Behrendt 2010; Bennett and Pratt 2004; Cunningham and Baeza 2005; Sanders 2004).

[4] The Uluru Statement discusses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage as a result of (settler colonial) power imbalances: "Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. […] Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. […] And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. […] This is the torment of our *powerlessness*. We seek constitutional reforms to *empower* our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have *power* over our destiny our children will flourish."

[5] "*Makarrata* is a word from the language of the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land. It means two parties coming together after a struggle, to heal the wounds of the past, and to live again in peace. The word's core message is to acknowledge that something wrong has been done and to seek to make things right. The word captures the aspirations for a fair, truthful and reconciled relationship between First Nations and the people of Australia, and for a better future for First Nations' children based on justice and self-determination" (MLS 2017).

reconciliation, treaty and truth-telling that are already underway in Australia (Appleby and Davis 2018; Fenley 2011; Little 2019).

For now, however, the Uluru Statement remains at the level of political ideals. Neither the British nor the Australian Government have ever recognized the sovereignty of Australia's Indigenous peoples, a sharp contrast from treaty-making practices in other British settler-colonial societies including Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Moreover, Australia's constitution, which has governed the Commonwealth ever since Federation in 1901, does not acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as Australia's First Peoples[6], much less make any provision concerning representational, cultural or other collective rights. And as the Uluru Statement itself laments, Indigenous Australians face much higher rates of disadvantage and incarceration than non-Indigenous citizens.

While makarrata has often been translated into English as "reconciliation", the Makarrata Commission proposed in the Uluru Statement bears little resemblance to the state-driven Australian reconciliation that is the subject of this dissertation.

•••

In 2016, I conducted the initial wave of fieldwork for my research on the Reconciliation Action Plan program while the dialogues leading up to the Uluru Statement from the Heart were still taking place. As

[6] Constitutional recognition is a pressing and persistent political issue in Australia (Davis and Langton 2016b; Macklem and Sanderson 2016; Morris 2017; Muldoon and Schaap 2011). From 2012-2017, the Australian Federal government funded Reconciliation Australia to "raise awareness across the Australian community of the need to change the Constitution, in advance of a referendum" (RA 2018a). Although a referendum regarding same-sex marriage was successfully held in 2017, no referendum on constitutional recognition was held. In 2018, RA issued a press release framing the legacy of the Recognise campaign as a "huge asset going forward" in rallying support behind the goals of the Uluru Statement:

"The campaign raised the profile of the issue with millions of Australians becoming aware and supportive of the need for change. Independent polling showed that, in the five years of the Recognise campaign, awareness levels rose from 30% to over 75% of the population. […]

By the time the campaign concluded in 2017, it had attracted the support of more than 318,000 Australians from all walks of life. More than 160 community and corporate organisations partnered with Recognise to support change, and more than 18,000 Australians took part in the Journey to Recognition around the country. […] Recognise, which was led by Joint Campaign Directors – one Indigenous and one not – maintained at most times an equal number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff. […]

As Australia prepares to take the next step of supporting the Statement from the Heart, we are confident that the awareness and support levels raised by the Recognise campaign will be a huge asset going forward .(RA 2018a)

luck would have it, this was also the 25th anniversary of Australian reconciliation—which has been ongoing since 1991, first under the auspices of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) and now with the national leadership of Reconciliation Australia (RA) (Figure P.1)[7].

Figure P.1 National Reconciliation Week 2016

Specifically, the 2016 anniversary celebrated 25 years since reconciliation's parturient moment on September 2, 1991 when the Australian Parliament created the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR). Foremost amongst the CAR's charges in its legislative mandate was to "consult Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community on whether reconciliation would be advanced by a formal document or formal documents of reconciliation" (Australian Government 1991). Although the CAR's legislative mandate was careful not to use the word treaty or to make any guarantees, but even a path towards treaty was an exciting prospect at the outset of the CAR's ten-year term.

[7] Australia's reconciliation process, now in its 28th year in 2019, far exceeds the duration of any other national reconciliation process since this transformational justice practice started with Chile's National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) in 1990. Based on my own database of national reconciliation processes (n=24), Australia's Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 1991 is the second instance of national reconciliation globally. South Africa's widely-known TRC, championed by the unforgettable duo Archbishop Desmond Tutu and President Nelson Mandela, was the third instance of national reconciliation in 1995.

Regardless of whether the treaty process was doomed from the beginning or whether it was at some point derailed[8], the CAR's term expired without making any provisions for a treaty process between the Australian government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The "formal document of reconciliation" presented by the CAR after nearly a decade of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and the state was only a brief "Declaration Toward Reconciliation." "We all know there are still many steps on the path to genuine reconciliation, nationally and locally," counseled CAR Chairperson Evelyn Scott in her final words at Corroboree 2000, "I am confident we can complete the journey together."[9]

To that end, the CAR published a longer *Roadmap to Reconciliation* and later submitted a final report to Parliament entitled *Reconciliation: Australia's Challenge* (CAR 2000c, 2000b). As a key part of their "National Strategy to Sustain the Reconciliation Process—one of the *Roadmap's* four strategies to "address practical, cultural and spiritual dimensions of reconciliation"—the CAR endowed an independent organization to be called "Reconciliation Australia" to take over responsibility for national leadership of the reconciliation movement going forward.

•••

In 2016, RA released *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report, the most important agenda-setting document for Australian reconciliation since the CAR's *Declaration* and *Roadmap* were released 16 years earlier to coincide with the centenary of Australian Federation. The *State of Reconciliation* report

[8] In 1996 John Howard became Prime Minister of Australia at the head of a Liberal-National coalition government. In 1997 Patrick Dodson, a Yawuru man known as the "father of reconciliation" in Australia, stepped down as the Chairman of the CAR. Chapter 2 discusses this history in more detail.

[9] In the words of the CAR's promotional materials, "Corroboree 2000 will be a ceremonial gathering of Australians to exchange commitments, make agreements and share in cultural performances for reconciliation. It will bring together Australians from all walks of life who can demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation as the Nation approaches the centenary of Federation in 2001." Later that year, Evelyn Scott publicly said the following: "Corroboree 2000 affirmed my belief that reconciliation has the potential to define a mature Australia, a nation that's come to terms with the shared past of its Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and is ready to go forward together" (Scott 2000).

introduced a new framework for reconciliation with five interrelated dimensions (Figure P.3). As this thesis will detail, RA's flagship Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program was assigned a crucial role in carrying out the "institutional integrity" dimension of reconciliation.

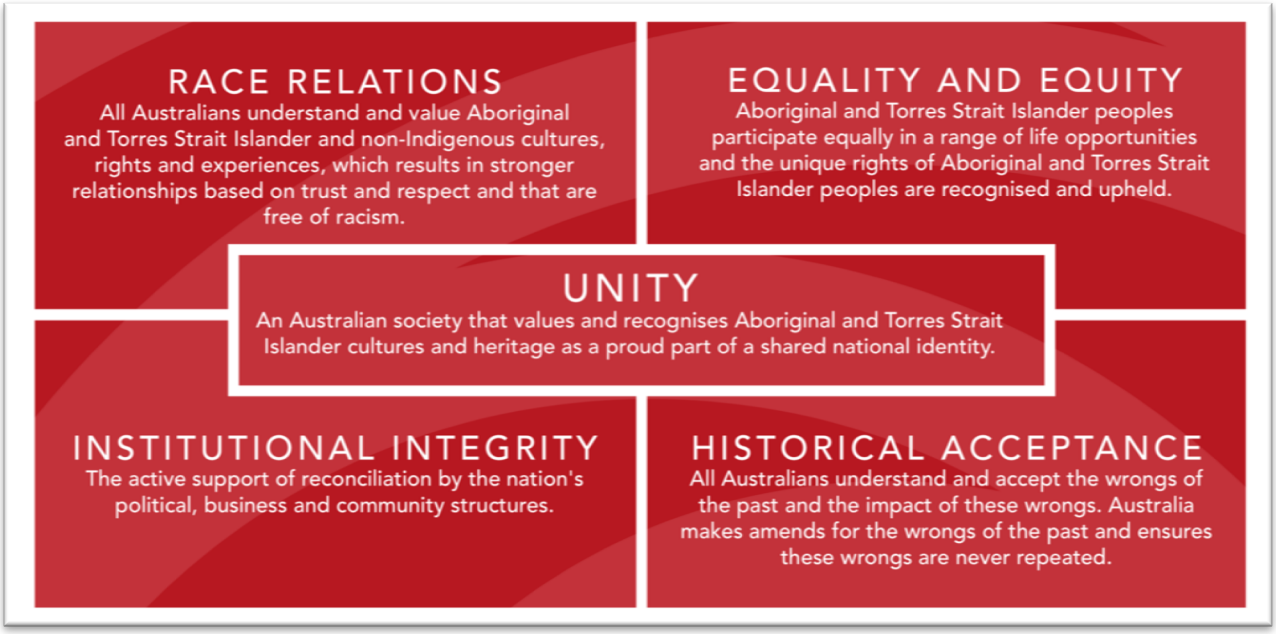

Figure P.3 "The five interrelated dimensions of reconciliation"
(RA 2016b:4)

•••

In 2016, Megan Davis and Marcia Langton[10] published their own assessment of the state of reconciliation in Australia. The independent evaluation of leading Aboriginal Australian academics was, to put it mildly, unfavorable:

> Reconciliation has failed. It was a statutory process set up after the state reneged on a national framework for land rights and a treaty process. Once the [CAR] Act lapsed, so did the process. Indeed, at the end of the reconciliation phase, the recommendations were colloquially labelled 'unfinished business,' demonstrating that reconciliation was not about truth and justice or addressing aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Reconciliation in Australia has always been state-driven. Despite the contemporary fashion for symbolic recognition, there is growing sentiment that the political conditions in Australia are ill-suited to permit public institutions to evolve in a way that is inclusive, pluralist, and accommodating of first peoples. (2016a:472)

[10] "Leading Aboriginal Australian academics" hardly does justice to the prolific careers of Davis and Langton, who are also widely known public figures both in Australia and abroad, intellectual and thought leaders, popularly published authors and activist Aboriginal Australian women (as well as South Pacific Islander Davis' case).

Importantly, as Davis and Langton point out, the obvious failure of Australia's state-driven reconciliation to lead to sovereignty or even greater recognition of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples was a *secondary* failure—a failure that was a possible, if not predictable, outcome of the reconciliation, itself "political convenience that emerged from a failed executive process […] for a land rights framework and a treaty"[11]. Furthermore, the Australian government's (most recent) failures to negotiate a framework for Indigenous peoples' collective rights is not some kind of paltry broken campaign promise—Australia is still non-compliant with international standards regarding the collective rights of Indigenous peoples despite having eventually pledged support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[12]

Many Australians, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as well as international observers find reconciliation to be a disappointment, if not an outright failure. As I experienced firsthand during my fieldwork, the political drama and media spectacle of reconciliation plays out against a stark backdrop of severe socio-economic and health inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The roughly 10 years of difference in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have remained virtually intractable despite a full decade of *billions* in government spending[13], a massive national "Close the Gap" campaign (CtG 2008), an agreement amongst Australian states on "Closing the

[11] The full quote reads: "Reconciliation was a political convenience that emerged from a failed executive promise to enter into negotiations for a national land rights framework and a treaty with Aboriginal people in the 1980s. Today, the contemporary version of reconciliation is focused on employment covenants that, while meritorious, avoid engaging with the substantive questions of all reconciliation movements globally: truth and justice" (2016a:450). The second half of this quote is, I believe, one of the few references in the scholarly literature to Australia's unique Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program, the subject of this dissertation.

[12] "The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international instrument adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, to enshrine (according to Article 43) the rights that "constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world." The UNDRIP protects collective rights that may not be addressed in other human rights charters that emphasize individual rights, and it also safeguards the individual rights of Indigenous people. The Declaration is the product of almost 25 years of deliberation by U.N. member states and Indigenous groups. […] The UNDRIP was adopted by 144 countries, with 11 abstentions and 4 countries voting against it. These four countries were Canada, the USA, New Zealand, and Australia. Since 2009 Australia and New Zealand have reversed their positions and now support the Declaration, while the United States and Canada have announced that they will revise their positions." (Hanson n.d.)

[13] "According to the Productivity Commission's 2012 Indigenous Expenditure Report, total direct Indigenous expenditure was estimated to be $25.4 billion. This represents 5.6% of total direct government expenditure. Australian Government spending accounted for $11.5 billion of this expenditure (45% of the total). The estimated expenditure per head of population was $44,128 for Indigenous Australians, compared with $19,589 for other Australians" (Gardiner-Garden n.d.)

Gap" targets (COAG 2007) and an annual "Closing the Gap" report on Indigenous / non-Indigenous inequalities for the Prime Minister (Australian Government 2009, 2016; Holland 2016, 2018). Popular racism remains such an issue in Australia that neither the Prime Minister's plea nor a statement signed by 150 organizations nor an Australian of the Year award nor #IStandWithAdam nor any other number of public shows of supports for Adam Goodes was able to stop this Aboriginal Australian Rules Football legend from a sickening kind of forced retirement—Goodes was effectively driven out of the sport by sustained booing from Australian Football League (AFL) fans, verbal abuse in journalistic and social media and threats of physical violence from untold members of the public (ABC 2015a, 2015b; AHRC 2015a; Farrell 2014; RA 2016a). Meanwhile, rates of incarceration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as the number of deaths in state custody are disproportionately higher in Australia to an astounding degree, even for an audience of U.S. sociologists.

Davis and Langton argue that Australian reconciliation has failed because it has been so inadequate relative to the injustices committed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

> Unlike Canada[14], Australia has no formal or continuous reconciliation process - not in the true sense of the word. There have been moments of significant, historical retelling, as exercised during the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and the Apology to the Stolen Generations. Yet for other historical wrongs such as the Killing Times (Frontier Wars) or the mass fraud perpetrated by the state during the Protection era (Stolen Wages), acknowledgment by the polity is virtually non-existent. Australian reconciliation is characterized by an 'intense resistance to any change in the colonial structures that continue to dominate and subordinate indigenous peoples.' (2016a:471)

Here, Davis and Langton remind us persistence of many elements of the settler colonial structure that has governed Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations since January 26, 1788. For instance, this date is currently designated as Australia's national holiday, officially known as "Australia Day", that has become a revealing flashpoint in the Australian political landscape: social movements backed by Indigenous and non-

[14] I would be amiss not to challenge the idea that Canadian reconciliation represents a significantly better model of reconciliation in comparison to Australia. Both processes have been robustly challenged and criticized.

Indigenous people stigmatize the holiday as "Invasion Day" or "Survival Day" and hold protests for its abolition altogether (ABC 2019; Darian-Smith 2017; Knaus and Wahlquist 2018). Every January, the statements, controversies, protests, think-pieces and hashtags that have come to mark the "Change the Date Debate" serve as a perennial reminder that if Australian reconciliation has not failed, then it certainly has a long way to go.

Figure P.4 "The Invasion Day rally in Sydney on Saturday."
Photo: AAP. (Plummer 2019)

Chapter 1. Introduction

This dissertation takes stock of Australian reconciliation, in particular its flagship RAP program, after a quarter of a century of formal, state-sponsored reconciliation. On one hand, the wide spectrum of opinions about reconciliation as a failure versus an ongoing national project presents an interesting sociological puzzle— *how do some social actors come to partner with the state on conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation whereas others reject reconciliation as a framework for intergroup relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?*

An even more important task for this dissertation at this juncture in Australian Indigenous political affairs is to present a clear and rigorous analysis of state-driven reconciliation, especially as it has been popularized and institutionalized through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program. *How does Australian reconciliation ask citizens to conceptualize and practice citizenship and Australian identity? And how does reconciliation imagine, enable and constrain relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?* In answering these two research questions, it is my hope to lay a strong empirical foundation for debates about the future of Australian reconciliation in the post-Uluru era.

Racialized Injustice and Reconciliation

All over the world, we readily observe evidence of egregious racialized injustices and inequalities. Ethno-racial minority groups[15] and Indigenous peoples[16] suffer systematically higher rates of social harms and fail to enjoy the same levels of political, economic and social membership compared to members of

[15] Here, an ethno-racial "minority" group refers to a non-dominant or marginalized ethno-racial group within a national community rather than a group that is a statistical ethno-racial minority. In other words, this use of ethno-racial minority includes groups such as black South Africans who, although they comprised a statistical majority, during apartheid existed in a citizenship regime that denied their basic humanity in service to a white nationalist hegemony.

[16]The United Nations (UN) Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues defines the term Indigenous peoples in the following way: "Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples" (2019a).

dominant ethno-racial groups[17]. Deeply entrenched ethno-racial hierarchies are present in autocratic regimes and "developing" nations just as they are found in our most wealthy, powerful and stable liberal democracies[18]. In Australia, for instance, the persistent 10-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people has become shorthand for a much longer list of struggles facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ("Closing the Gap" 2019a). In European liberal democracies from the United Kingdom and Hungary to Germany and Greece, economic pressures combined with a protracted refugee crisis have brought ethno-racial discrimination back to the forefront of political and public life in the form of right-wing populism. And in the United States, the unfettered official racism of the Trump era and frequent eruption of racial tensions over police violence have dashed any remaining hopes, however naïve, for a "post-racial" legacy of the Obama presidency.

Despite some legal protections and policy accommodations, ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples commonly lack full *citizenship*, defined as political, economic and social membership in the nation. Landmark documents such as the UN Declaration of Minority Rights (1992) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) represent the prevailing international consensus that nations owe the individual and collective rights of citizenship to the ethno-racial minorities and Indigenous peoples within their borders.[19] However, international enforcement of these rights is rare, especially in liberal democratic states. States wield an enormous amount of power when it comes to

[17] Individual identities, including ethno-racial, Indigenous, gender and sexual identities, are overlapping and intersectional (i.e. that the experience of a gay Indigenous man is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the life experience of a heterosexual Indigenous man, just as the experiences of white women may be very different from those of women of color). This dissertation focuses specifically on the consequences of identification as an ethno-racial minority or Indigenous person within hierarchical racial formations (HoSang, LaBennett, and Pulido 2012; Omi and Winant 2015).

[18] The Varieties of Democracy Institute at the University of Gothenburg finds that 39 countries in 2018 qualified as liberal democracies. "The Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) captures the quality of electoral aspects, as well as freedom of expression and the media, civil society, rule of law, and strength of checks on the executive," states the Institute, "Western Europe, North America, parts of Latin America, and Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and Taiwan continue to be the strongest holds for democracy in the world" (2019:10–11).

[19] Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States were the only nations to vote *against* the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It passed with 144 votes in favour and 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine) (UN 2019b). The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was adopted without a vote.

extending and upholding citizenship rights for the ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples who reside within their borders. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, racialized state formations[20] in which ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples experience systematically greater levels of injustice and socio-economic inequality are common in liberal democratic states. Non-dominant ethno-racial and Indigenous groups and their allies struggle against racialized injustices every day through individual acts of resistance and refusal; defending individual and collective rights; asserting the worth of their history, culture and unique voices; defining appropriate types of acknowledgement and representation in national heritage; and setting boundaries for intergroup relations.

As observers and potential upstanders[21], we must learn to recognize entrenched ethno-racial hierarchies as fundamental failures of liberal democratic citizenship—the political, civil and social rights necessary to experience belonging and to participate in public and private life as a full member of the national society. At its core, this dissertation is concerned with the widespread failure of liberal democratic citizenship to uphold rights and facilitate social membership for ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples. Simultaneously, it is interested in the ways that contemporary liberal democratic states identify, explain and take action regarding entrenched ethno-racial hierarchies. What role, if any, do liberal democratic states play in extending citizenship to marginalized groups? How do these states attempt to institutionalize measures to improve minority and Indigenous citizenship? According to what

[20] This dissertation loosely follows' Omi & Winant's conceptualization of any given national ethno-racial hierarchy at a specific place and time as a *racial formations*, i.e. "the socio-historical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed and destroyed" and "a synthesis, a constantly reiterated outcome, of the interaction of racial projects on a society-wide level." It also looks to Omi & Winant's definitions of *racial project,* "efforts to shape the ways in which human identities and social structures are racially signified," and *racialization* as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (Omi and Winant 2015:13–14; 109–11; 124–27). Indigenous peoples are unequivocally different from other ethno-racial minority groups in terms of their claims to sovereignty, rights to additional cultural protections and unique roles as First Peoples in national heritage. However, Indigenous peoples have often been racialized by settler colonial and other hegemonic forces and have been the subjects of many racial projects over the last centuries. With this in mind we can see that Indigenous peoples, like ethno-racial minority groups, are frequently marginalized in the ethno-racial hierarchies of modern liberal democratic states.

[21] The Boston-based Upstander Project defines *upstander* as: "a person who stands up, speaks out, and/or takes action in defense of those who are targeted for harm; one who aims to prevent or stop harm and/or injustice and transform situations where individuals or groups are mistreated; Can refer to situations defined by interpersonal, communal, social, and international disputes. ANTONYM: bystander" (UP 2019).

principles do they regulate citizenship and under what precepts do they manage intergroup relations between dominant and historically oppressed or marginalized groups.

Dissertation Overview

I introduce *citizenship project* as a useful term for identifying, conceptualizing and comparing large-scale collaboration between the state, other collective social actors, and individuals to change an existing citizenship regime in accordance with a set of socio-political ideals. Since WWII, decolonization, multiculturalism and transformational justice (including truth and/or reconciliation) have been prominent citizenship projects undertaken to modify citizenship regimes that disproportionately harm minority groups and Indigenous peoples. [22] Despite differences in the ways these generally anti-colonial, pluralist and inclusive citizenship projects have been institutionalized from state to state, a common objective is to dismantle racial hierarchies through changes to state-supported policies, projects, laws, institutions, norms and narratives.

Thus, citizenship projects illustrate the powerful potential of state involvement in social change. By the same token, they also reveal to us the limitations states, with their deeply vested dominant-group interests, face in their attempts to transform political and economic structures in ways that fully uphold the citizenship rights of ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples. Above all, citizenship projects reveal the fearsome challenge of trying to disrupt the many complex political, social and economic systems that recreate racialized hierarchies. Australia's formal policy of "reconciliation" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people ongoing since 1991 is one of the most large-scale and long-lasting citizenship projects of our era. This unique *conciliatory citizenship project* takes the violent

[22] Indonesia, Bulgaria and Canada are examples of countries that have had or still have multicultural citizenship projects. Bolivia, Zimbabwe and India are examples of countries that have had or still have decolonization citizenship projects. South Africa, Cambodia and Guatemala are examples of countries that have had or still have transitional justice-based citizenship projects.

colonization and dispossession of Indigenous peoples as its starting point for federally-funded programs aimed at building a "just, equitable and reconciled Australia" (c.f. CAR 2000a; RA 2019a).

Reconciliation is roundly and rightly criticized by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike for having failed to deliver substantive reforms concerning Indigenous sovereignty, representation and land rights in the more than 25 years since reconciliation programs and policies began.[23] It is difficult, essentially impossible in the absence of counterfactual reality, to determine if reconciliation has ameliorated injustices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and improved Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup relations. For instance, increased individual and collective citizenship rights and social membership for Indigenous people may not be causally related to reconciliation. Time, energy and resources devoted to Australia's conciliatory citizenship project may or may not be more wisely invested in other kinds of racial projects and social movements that also aim to dismantle ethno-racial hierarchies. Perhaps worst of all, reconciliation-related improvements for Indigenous people may turn out to be little more than cosmetic changes to an irredeemably settler-colonial state.

However, my research shows that regardless of its "success", "effectiveness" or "causal role" in dismantling settler-colonial ethno-racial hierarchies, *Australian reconciliation has become thoroughly institutionalized in the nation's social and political landscape as a way of thinking about Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples*. Across a range of national, organizational, interpersonal and individual levels, I find state-sponsored discourses and practices of reconciliation to be a prominent, accessible, resonant and legitimate framework for speaking about Indigeneity and conducting Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations. Australian reconciliation, therefore, is an important object of sociological study because of the

[23] Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation is also credibly accused of derailing social movement efforts in the 1970s and 1980s that placed sovereignty at the center of Indigenous activism and sought to negotiate formal recognition, treaties and land rights at the highest levels of government on a sovereign-to-sovereign basis between the Australian Federal Government and representatives of individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. What is less clear is if the Hawke government or other non-Indigenous political actors *intended* to divert public opinion and media attention away form issues of sovereignty or whether the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) represented a good faith attempt to foster a successful treaty process as its mandate says. See "The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991-2000)" section in Chapter 2 for further details.

ways it shapes the beliefs and actions of social actors regarding the concept of Indigeneity, the recognition of Indigenous peoples, the treatment of Indigenous individuals, and the conduct of Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations.

This dissertation asks and answers two research questions about Australia's unique citizenship project of reconciliation:

1. *How does Australian reconciliation ask citizens to conceptualize and practice citizenship and Australian identity?*
2. *And how does reconciliation imagine, enable and constrain relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?*

As this dissertation will elaborate, I find that the conciliatory norms and narratives of Australia's reconciliation citizenship project promote the acknowledgement and celebration of Indigenous history, culture and people in public life and emphasize voluntary, private action to ameliorate Indigenous / non-Indigenous socio-economic inequalities. At the same time, I find that Australia's conciliatory citizenship project obscures the role of political and economic structures in ongoing racialized hierarchies and has constrained structural reform as a strategy for combatting racialized injustice. I further argue that conciliatory norms and priorities of the Australian citizenship project of reconciliation are so thoroughly institutionalized that they will continue to influence Australian conceptualizations of Indigenous / non-Indigenous difference and aspirations for intergroup relations for many years, easily decades, to come.

I base these claims on a rigorous study involving 70 semi-structured interviews, over 100 contact hours with case study organizations and extensive documentary research on Australia's unique "Reconciliation Action Plan" (RAP) program, which started in 2006. The RAP program constitutes one of the most far-ranging and visible initiatives through which the project of reconciliation is actually carried out in Australia and is the particular focus of this dissertation's data collection. This unique and entirely

voluntary program has stimulated the development of customized plans in over 1,000 public, private, and third sector[24] organizations since its founding in 2006.

Through customized RAPs, participating organizations resolve to implement a number of "symbolic" actions that address recognition and social inclusion as well as "practical" actions that expand economic opportunities for Indigenous people. Qantas Airlines, for example, pledged to provide internships for Indigenous students and feature Indigenous culture through in-flight publications, while the Adelaide City Council promised to fly the Aboriginal flag and to finance certain Indigenous cultural events. According to Reconciliation Australia, the national body that coordinates the RAP program, over 25% of the Australian workforce is now employed by organizations that have adopted RAPs. Today, the RAP program remains one of the most vibrant and active initiatives in the contemporary reconciliation landscape alongside the Indigenous Governance Awards, National Reconciliation Week, and the recently retired "Recognise" campaign for constitutional recognition, which failed to result in constitutional change despite its success in gaining widespread popular, corporate and celebrity support.

This introductory chapter first briefly introduces the settler colonial history and socio-political context of Australian reconciliation and the RAP program more specifically. It then applies the sociology of citizenship to the Australian case, arguing that the term *citizenship project* is a useful, generalizable tool for more carefully identifying, conceptualizing and comparing large-scale collaboration between the state and other collective and individual social actors to transform existing citizenship regimes. Next, this introduction reprises the dissertation's research questions and provides a detailed overview of the project's mixed-methods research design. Finally, it provides a roadmap for the remainder of the dissertation.

[24] "Third" sector organizations are those which are neither public nor private and are often referred to as "civil society" or "non-profit" sector organizations (Viterna, Clough, and Clarke 2015). In the population of RAP organizations, the third sector is comprised of religious, not-for-profit, higher education, "PEAK", and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations. K-12 schools used to be included in the RAP program but have now been transitioned into a specialty K-12 program called Narragunnawali.

Case Background: RAPs & Reconciliation in Australia

The goal of this section is to provide vital background on Australian Indigenous and settler history for unfamiliar readers. Though difficult to condense such long and complex histories into a few pages, this section endeavors to provide a brief overview of three important contexts for the emergence of reconciliation in the 1990s: the deep history of Australia's First Peoples; the contemporary Australian settler colonial state starting with Captain James Cook's orders to "take possession" of the Australian continent in 1770; and the remarkable transformations in consciousness and activism surrounding Indigeneity and Indigenous issues in the 1960s and 1970s, a period loosely known as "self-determination."

Indigenous History in Australia

Indigenous history in Australia begins over 60,000 years ago with migration from South Asia. Aboriginal peoples are proudly considered the world's "oldest living culture" (Behrendt 2016; Butlin 1988; Malaspinas et al. 2016; Smith and Briscoe 2002). Thriving in the incredible variety of Australian ecologies ranging from deserts to snowy mountains to tropical rainforests, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups weathered severe climactic fluctuations, including the most recent Ice Age. In fact, Indigenous oral history passed down through stories has accurately recorded many climactic events such as rising and falling sea levels as later verified through geological evidence (Reid, Nunn, and Sharpe 2014). There is increasing scholarly and public recognition of the significant influence Indigenous peoples exerted to shape the contemporary Australian environment through practices such as controlled burning (Clarke 2004; Gammage 2011; Head 2000; Yibarbuk et al. 2001).[25]

[25] Indigenous ecological knowledge and "stewardship" approaches to the environment and national resources are increasingly being sought on subjects from seasonality to waterway management in Australia (Ens et al. 2012; Horstman and Wightman 2001; Jackson, Storrs, and Morrison 2005; Prober, O'Connor, and Walsh 2011). This is part of a growing global interest in Indigenous environmental practices and "traditional ecological knowledge" (Berkes 2012; Berkes, Colding, and Folke 2000; Ross 2011; Whyte 2013).

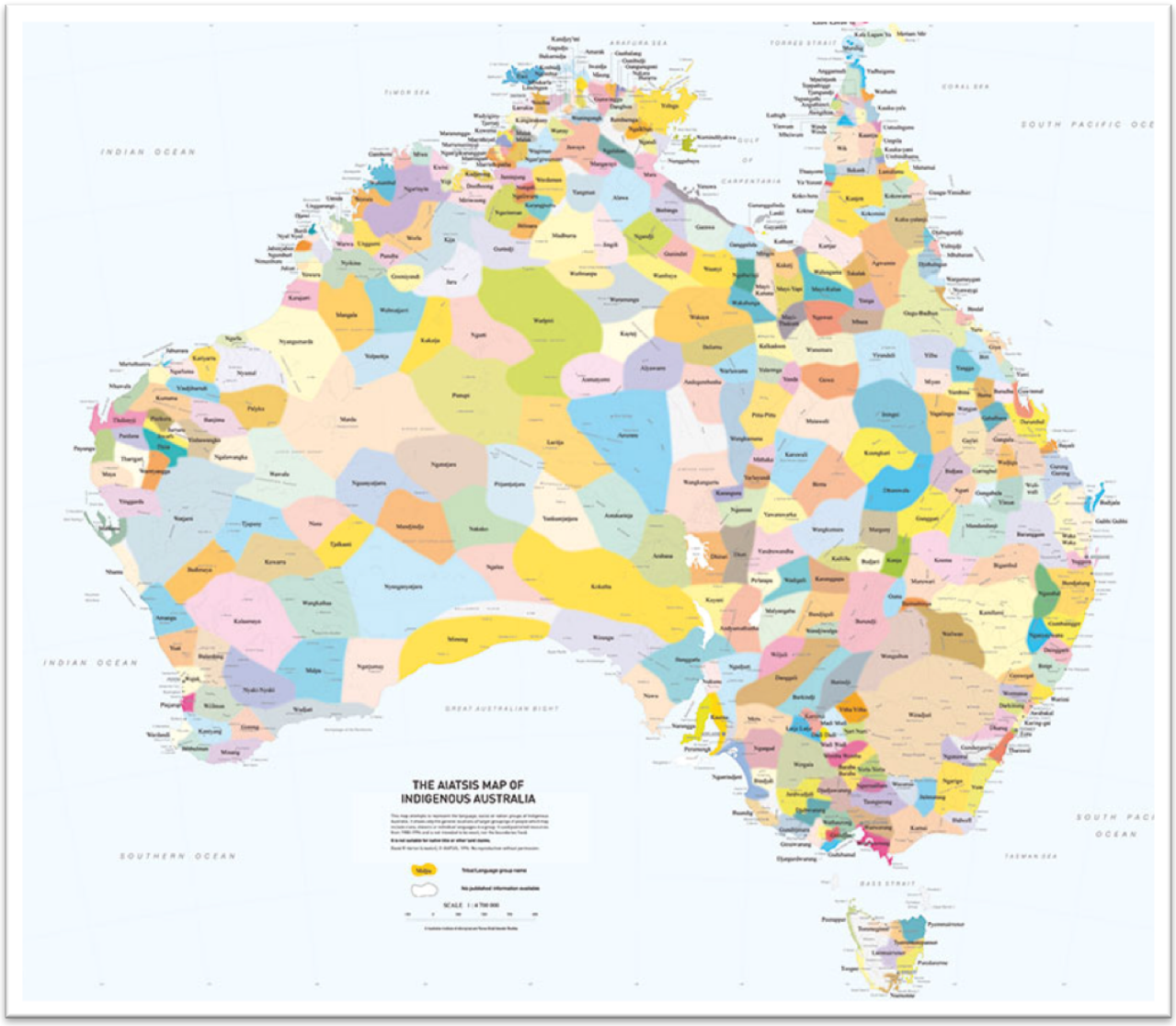

Figure 1.1 AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia.
David R Horton (creator), © Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS, and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996.

Central to Aboriginal spirituality and legality is land—typically translated into English as *Country* to signify a "multidimensional" concept that goes far beyond mere soil, water, flora, and fauna:

> Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like 'spending a day in the country' or 'going up the country'. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease. (Rose 1996:7)

While Aboriginal groups often practiced migratory lifestyles, each tribe or "skin-group" was associated with a particular country. Many Aboriginal rituals are performed to honor and maintain this deeply felt connection with country, and territorial boundaries were respected by neighboring groups who waited—even camped—to receive permission before entering a country belonging to others (Kowal 2015:91).

Australia as a Settler-Colonial State

Thus, when the British "First Fleet" landed in Sydney Cove in 1788, they arrived to a continent that was already inhabited by many complex Indigenous societies whose total population likely reached 750,000, if not more, individuals.[26] A little over one century later, plausible estimates put the Indigenous population at around 150,000, dropping below 120,000 in the 1920-30s (Madden and Jackson Pulver 2009). The clear cause of this precipitous decline cannot simply be attributed to the ravages of European diseases such as smallpox: the process of colonization in Australia involved incredible violence against Indigenous peoples, including police shooting parties and poisonings accounting for tens of thousands of deaths in frontier conflicts (Broome 2003). Especially as population and economic pressures incentivized settlers to seize larger and larger tracts of land, the general permissiveness and sometimes direct support of the colonial state for pervasive and extreme violence against Indigenous peoples is considered by many to fall under the definition of genocide (Barta 1987; Behrendt 2001; Moses 2000; Reynolds 2001; Tatz 1999). Certainly it is true that "[t]he basic fact of Australian history is the conquest of the country by one people and the dispossession, with ruthless destructiveness, of another" (Barta 1987:237).

In no small part, the conquest of Australia was undergirded by the "legal fiction" of *terra nullius*, the Latin phrase for "no one's land". Whereas the British government had made treaties and purchased land from Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada, the same was not true in Australia where

[26] Estimates of the Indigenous population in 1788 have ranged from 300,000 to over one million, but 750,000-800,000 is considered the most accurate estimate (Jones 1970; Madden and Pulver 2009; Smith 1980; Smith and Briscoe 2002).

Indigenous sovereignty was never recognized—"juridical denial" in the words of Indigenous scholar and activist Marcia Langton (Langton 2001; Langton et al. 2004). Overall, *terra nullius* is perhaps best understood as the constellation of settler beliefs and practices that supported the denial of Indigenous claims to the possession of territory and sovereignty.[27] Later in the 19th century, the ludicrous Darwinian "doomed race" theory would buttress settler claims to the Australian continent on the assumption that all Indigenous people would shortly assimilate or die out (McGregor 1997).

Terra nullius neatly exemplifies the "logic of elimination" of Indigenous peoples that scholars argue is constitutive of settler colonial societies both during and after state formation (Elkins and Pedersen 2005; Veracini 2011, 2015; Wolfe 1999, 2006). A key claim about settler colonialism societies—that "invasion is a structure, not an event" (Wolfe 1999:2)—points to the enduring logics of denial, elimination and erasure of Indigeneity and Indigenous people in modern settler states. In other words, settler colonial states are not merely relics of bygone historical eras but characterize ongoing Indigenous / non-Indigenous tensions in many countries, including Australia, the United States and Canada.

Thinking of Australia as a settler colonial state with Anglo-centric white nationalist foundations is a useful tool. It can illuminate contemporary political action surrounding entrenched racialized injustices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as frameworks for Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup relations. Contemporary political events from the government apology to the Stolen Generations (Barta 2008:20; Moses 2011) to the intervention in the Northern Territories (Howard-

[27] Despite instructions to receive the "consent of the natives" should he find the land to be populated, James Cook returned from his exploratory journey to Australia in 1770 having made no such "friendly alliances" and claiming that the continent was largely uninhabited based on his few anecdotal observations (Banner 2005). The First Fleet of eleven ships that arrived in Sydney Cove in 1788 to establish a penal colony justified British settler possession of Australian land on the basis of presumed sparse population and the absence of European-style dwellings, agriculture and commercial exchange. "The assumptions informing the doctrine of terra nullius thus had nothing to do with denying the palpable existence of the Indigenous people […]," argue Buchan and Heath, "Rather, they justified colonization of land that was occupied, but not recognized as owned" (2006:8). Notwithstanding debate on when terra nullius as a term came into use in the Australian context and the extent to which judicial rulings played a causal versus legitimizing role in Indigenous dispossession (Attwood 2004; Borch 2001; Connor 2005; Fitzmaurice 2007), it is certainly a concept that evokes the British attitude and modus operandi towards Australia as an "uninhabited wasteland" (Langton 2006:5).

Wagner 2012; Lovell 2012; Moran 1998; Tout 2012) have been interpreted through the lens of the Australian settler state seeking to rehabilitate its tarnished image without upholding the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or transforming political, economic and social structures that systematically harm Indigenous Australians. Unsurprisingly, this dissertation can but gesture towards the many excellent analyses of Australian reconciliation policies through a settler colonial lens (Attwood 2005; Davis and Langton 2016b, 2016a; Edmonds 2016; Gunstone 2008; Johnson 2011; Luker 2005; Moran 1998; Moreton-Robinson 2007; Moses 2011; Short 2005).

The "Self-Determination" Era

Crucial groundwork for the emergence of a settler colonial perspective was laid by a new consciousness of Indigenous issues in 1960s and 1970s Australia as a result of brave and tireless activism by Indigenous peoples and their allies.[28] Significant events that fostered popular and media consciousness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues included the 1965 Freedom Rides initiated by Charles Perkins to bring attention to the shocking conditions of de facto apartheid in regional New South Wales (Curthoys 1998, 2002; Edmonds 2012; Perkins 1975).[29] Another movement involved widespread strikes for equal wages, better living and working conditions, and land rights, such as the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off in which Vincent Lingiari led 200 Aboriginal workers to abandon their posts at a remote cattle station in the Northern Territories (Attwood 2000; Rose 1991).[30]

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[28] Race-based activism in 1960s Australia shares much in common with the contemporary Civil Rights movement in the United States, including direct transnational influences via media exposure and personal connections (Clark 1998).

[29] In his memoir, *A Bastard Like Me*, Perkins states: "The Freedom Ride was probably the greatest and most exciting event that I have ever been involved with in Aboriginal affairs. It was a new idea and a new way of promoting rapid change in racial attitudes in Australia. It brought, I think, to a lot of people, a confrontation with race relations in a very uncomfortable kind of way. Aborigines were being persecuted in country towns and other areas in Australia and they were second-class citizens. White people, the first-class citizens, made the laws which kept the Aborigines in their 'place'. I think the Freedom Ride was the one thing that destroyed this charade with one big swipe. It sowed the see of concern in the public's thinking across Australia. Something was wrong, something had to be changed in a situation that was unhappy for Aborigines" (1975:74).

[30] Some Australian state have even recognized these economic abuses through paying reparations for the "stolen wages" of Aboriginal workers (Gunstone and Heckenberg; Kidd 2006; Winter 2009).

This activism coincided with historic improvements in the rights of Indigenous people through the extension of voting rights in a series of state by state legislative acts ending with Queensland in 1965. In 1967, a national referendum was successfully held to include Indigenous people in the census and grant the Commonwealth government the power to make laws for Indigenous peoples.[31] The outpouring of popular support for Indigenous peoples and issues during the referendum's "Yes" campaign (and the withholding of the usual Parliamentary support for a "No" campaign) resulted in an astounding 90.77% of Australians voting to pass the referendum (Bennett 1985; NAA n.d.; SMH 1967). [32]

Shortly after the triumphant 1967 referendum, anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner urged Australian scholars to end the "Great Silence" surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, both in terms of their immense role in shaping modern Australian history and in terms of the terrible physical and cultural violence leveled against them since colonization. [33] Stanner's call to action was made even more dramatic by his argument that the omission of Indigenous perspectives and issues from the contemporary Australian historiography was far from accidental:

> [I]nattention on such a scale cannot possibly be explained by absent-mindedness. It is a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned

[31] Specifically, the referendum asked voters to decide whether two discriminatory references to Indigenous people should be changed in the Constitution:

> *51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to: [...] (xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.*
>
> *127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives should not be counted.*

After the May 27, 1967 referendum passed, the Constitution was officially altered on August 10, 1967 (NAA n.d.).

[32] Scholars have noted that the mythologizing of the 1967 referendum does not closely match its constitutional significance (Attwood and Markus 1998; McGregor 2008), but its resonance as a social movement and public triumph for Indigenous rights remains in the Australian imaginary.

[33] The academic impetus for Stanner's speech was a number of recently released histories of Australia in which Aboriginal people were marginal to sweeping narratives that presumed to encompass the entire continent (Curthoys 2008). Stanner wrote against these nationalist epics, arguing that historians should take seriously the role of Indigenous peoples in the formation of the Australian state as well as the many violent episodes in its founding. "The continent at occupation was held to be disposable because it was assumed to be 'waste and desert'," Stanner argued, "The truth was that identifiable aboriginal groups held identifiable parcels of land by unbroken occupancy from a time beyond which, quite literally, 'the memory of man runneth not to the contrary'" (1969:26).

> under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale. (Stanner 1969:25)[34]

Indeed, Stanner ushered in a new era of "revisionist" historiography that acknowledged, analyzed and commemorated the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples.[35]

Even amongst the many iconic movements and statements of this hopeful era of rapid improvements in political, economic and social membership for Indigenous peoples, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy stands out as a bittersweet landmark. Called "the most symbolically powerful political demonstration in Australia's history" (Schaap 2009:211), the Tent Embassy was established in 1972 when several young Aboriginal men from Sydney arrived with a beach umbrella and later erected a donated tent on the lawn in front of the Parliament building in Canberra (Figure 1.2). The goal of these prescient activists was to highlight the refusal of the Australian Federal Government to recognize the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[36] A five-point plan was soon presented demanding Aboriginal title and mining rights over Northern Territories, reserves, settlements, and sacred sites as well as restitution payments starting with a lump sum of six-billion Australian dollars. Over the next six-months, this non-violent symbolic protest swelled to thousands of protestors at times and the constant media

[34] This well-known passage from Stanner's original Boyer lectures has also been quoted by at least three of my sources: Henry Reynolds (1999:92), Andrew Gunstone (2004:3), and Ann Curthoys (2008:233).

[35] One of the most famous revisionist historians is Henry Reynolds, who listened to Stanner's lecture on the radio as a young man and heard Stanner's call to take part in a new generation of scholarship: "I hardly think that what I have called 'the great Australian silence' will survive the research that is now in course. Our universities and research institutes are full of young people who are working actively to end it" (1969:27). Later, in his memoir *Why Weren't We Told?,* Reynolds describes Stanner's Boyer lectures as "enormously encouraging, confirming many ideas which were still only tentatively held" and recalls the second speech in particular "helped strengthen my disquiet about mainstream historical writing" (1999:91).Reynolds later demonstrated that settler violence against Indigenous people in Tasmania had been publicly recorded and openly debated in the past, but had later been systematically excised nationalist narratives of Australian history written between 1900-1960 (Reynolds 1989, 2001, 2012).

[36] The proximate cause for the Tent Embassy demonstration was when, in what might have been unmemorable political speech on Australia Day, the controversial federal holiday celebrating the arrival of the "First Fleet" arriving in Sydney Cove in 1788. Then Prime Minister William McMahon had offered fifty-year pastoral leases to Indigenous groups—an insult to the growing movement for Indigenous land rights and sovereignty that followed on the heels of the success of the 1967 referendum. A creative form of protest ensued: "[s]ince McMahon's statement demonstrated that Indigenous peoples in Australia were effectively aliens in their own land, a group of Aboriginal Black Power activists in Sydney decided they needed an Embassy in Canberra under the noses of politicians" (Foley, Schaap, and Howell 2014:xxv).

scrutiny of the events gave a platform to prominent Indigenous leaders of the day including Gary Foley, Paul Coe, John Newfong, and Kevin Gilbert (Robinson 1994; Staff 1972).[37]

Figure 1.2 Establishment of Aboriginal Tent Embassy on Australia Day, 26 January 1972
From left: Michael Anderson, Billie Craigie, Bert Williams and Tony Coorey.
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Tribune / SEARCH Foundation" (NMA 2019).

Almost 50 years later, with dogged resolution, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy still stands in its original place at the now Old Parliament House[38] (Australian Government 2019b; NMA 2019) (Figure 1.3). The Tent Embassy has withstood arson attacks and survived many vigorous protests and legal challenges to its existence, even after it gained some protection as a national heritage site since 1995 (Jopson 2012; Korff 2019; Leslie 2012). Still an important gathering point for Indigenous activists from Australia and around the world (Fryer 2019; Thorpe 2015), the Tent Embassy is a bittersweet testament to the recognition of sovereignty that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders seek from the Australian Federal Government. It is

[37] After the passage of laws banning camping on Parliament grounds and scuffles with the police, the Tent Embassy moved elsewhere in Canberra before returning permanently to the Parliament lawn on the twentieth anniversary of the original protest and gaining protected status. Identified with the fight for self-government and Indigenous rights, the Tent Embassy has remained a focal point for protest in modern times, such as in 1992 when reconciliation replaced treaty proposals and in 2007 during the intervention in the Northern Territories (Jopson 2012; Muldoon and Schaap 2011).

[38] In 1988, 200 years after the first European settlement on the continent, the Australian Parliament moved to a new building. RA's original office, still the site of the Canberra branch, is located in the Old Parliament House.

a poignant reminder that the denial of Indigenous sovereignty is still at the heart of Australia's settler colonial project and a major barrier to the full citizenship of Indigenous peoples.

Figure 1.3 Aboriginal Tent Embassy Canberra opposite old Parliament House
(Thorpe 2015)

Theoretical Framework: Sociology of Citizenship

Citizenship is far more than a passport or the right to vote. Since T.H. Marshall, sociologists have understood citizenship as a deeply social process of *full membership* in a polity, a concept that encompasses the traditional "rights and responsibilities" formulation of citizenship but that also goes far beyond.

The sociology of citizenship gives us a firm theoretical grounding and conceptual toolkit with which to understand and analyze the problem of entrenched ethno-racial hierarchies. This section provides a brief overview of the sociology of citizenship, which I argue should be understood to include both

"vertical" (state-citizen) dimensions of citizenship as well as its "horizontal" (citizen-citizen) manifestations.

Defining Citizenship Sociologically

Like many important sociological concepts, citizenship resists precise definition. In everyday encounters and media representations as well as in academic circles, the citizenship is most often associated with the external boundaries of sovereign nations, e.g. holding a national passport and crossing international borders. However, it is important to remember that citizenship is an expansive concept with a heavily elaborated internal dimension:

> Everyone acknowledges the long history of internal exclusions by which women, racialized castes, property-less workers, and others were deemed unable and unworthy of being equal participants in political decision-making. They were treated as subjects to be ruled paternalistically and coercively rather than as citizens sharing in self-rule through democratic co-authoring of the laws. These internal exclusions are now discredited, at least formally. Most commentators assume that Western democracies have achieved something like universal citizenship for all members of society […]. *In reality, however, many members of society are still relegated, both de facto and de jure, to the status of passive subjects, not active citizens*" [emphasis added] (Kymlicka and Donaldson 2017:839).

Thus, citizenship has an imminently *internal* dimension concerned with the rights and social membership of those within national borders—at least for those who are deemed worthy, legitimate citizens.

Marshall, the towering father figure of the sociology of citizenship, famously published a lecture on *Citizenship and Social Class* in 1950 that defined citizenship in terms of *membership*, where membership entails the rights and responsibilities necessary to fully share and participate in society, from its heritage to its political processes to its standards of living. "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community," argued Marshall, "All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (1950:28–29).[39]

[39] This quote continues: "There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed" (Marshall 1950:28–29).

Marshall further stipulated that citizenship entailed political, civil and social rights, arguing that the latter category was the last in the historical development of citizenship and would be of most interest to sociologists:

> By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely connected with it are the educational system and the social services. (1950:10–11)

Marshall's language about "civilized beings" here is deeply problematic because of the way it recalls historical and ongoing systems of racialized oppression. So too is his reference to "prevailing standards" as if there are precise standards of living universally agreed upon by members of a given society. However, Marshall makes a crucial innovation in the sociological understanding of citizenship through his concept of social rights: the right to economic welfare and security, which makes possible social membership and enables the exercise of political and civil citizenship rights. In contemporary sociology, this line of thinking forms the basis of the well-developed subfield of social citizenship (Bloemraad et al. 2019; Ebert and Okamoto 2013; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Gorham 1995; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2003).

Marshall also left a legacy for contemporary sociologists through his interest in the potential of citizenship as a kind of universal (social, civil, political) membership that might overcome the inequality of class-based distinctions. He argued:

> "Citizenship requires a bond […], a direct sense of community membership based on a loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession. It is a loyalty of free men endowed with rights and protected by a common law. Its growth is stimulated both by the struggle to win those rights and by their enjoyment when won" (1950:40–41).

Marshall's reference here to "a civilisation which is a common possession" suggests the need to create forms of belonging, identities and representations of history in which all members of a society can recognize themselves (Banting and Kymlicka 2015; Gillespie 2007; Kymlicka 2011). This is the basis of what sociologist study under the banner of *cultural citizenship* (Beaman 2016; Ong 2013; Ong et al. 1996; Pakulski 1997).

More than 60 years after *Citizenship and Social Class*, Evelyn Nakano Glenn in her presidential address to the American Sociological Society returns to Marshall's language: "[a]t its most general level, citizenship refers to full *membership* in the community within which one lives" [emphasis added] (2011:3). Similarly, in a 2008 *Annual Review of Sociology* article, Irene Bloemraad, Anna Korteweg and Gökçe Yurdakul write that "[c]itizenship is usually defined as a form of *membership* in a political and geographic community" [emphasis added] (2008).

The Sociology of Citizenship

Though Marshall's legacy of political, civil and social rights as internal dimensions of citizenship has remained a popular way to break down the immense topic of citizenship, it is far from the only typology of this immense and urgent concept. An alternative way of understanding citizenship is offered by Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul who argue that citizenship "can be disaggregated into four dimensions: legal status, rights, political and other forms of participation in society, and a sense of belonging" (2008). This parsing of citizenship reminds us that rights—whether social, political or civil—are but one of the ways that citizenship can be experienced, observed and measured. Legal status, political participation and a felt sense of belonging are also important elements of what it means to be a citizen, i.e. a full member of society.[40] Most recently, the first edition of the *Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* names some of the concept's "manifold dimensions" as "legal status and political membership; rights and

[40] The concept of citizenship is deeply entangled with and is sometimes defined via rights. As Margaret Somers explains:
My passion for citizenship theory did not begin as such. […] I turned to a sociology of citizenship only when I recognized its signature role as a proxy and sublimation of a sociology of rights. In so doing, however, I discovered that the two are really one, for citizenship rights and rights as such are inescapably mutually implicated and constitution. Citizenship is the right to have rights.(Somers 2010:xiv)
While this dissertation defines citizenship primarily in terms of membership, it is certainly true that rights are at the core of what it means to belong to a society.

obligations, identity and belonging; as civic virtues and practices of engagement; and as a discourse of political and social equality or responsibility for a common good" (Shachar et al. 2017:5).[41]

This dissertation takes seriously two of the many significant updates to sociological thinking about citizenship since the time of T.H. Marshall. First, it is possible to think of citizens as subjects and therefore citizenship as a process of subjectification (Ong et al. 1996). This perspective states that citizenship is a "cultural process of 'subjectification,' in the Foucauldian sense of self-making and being-made by power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control, and administration" (Ong 2013:79), helping us to make sense of power dynamics in citizenship relations. Second, citizenship is better understood as a practice or process rather than as a status or state of being. Citizenship relations are constantly being remade and exist in a heavily contested cultural, social and political field of tangled symbolisms, official regulations and informal practices (Cardinal and Brown 2007; Crick 2017; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Jenson 2007).

Finally, this dissertation offers a spatial metaphor to parse the vast sociological and social science literature on citizenship through two distinctive sets of relations implicated in the making and remaking of citizenship. On one hand, many classic sociological works on citizenship focus on "vertical" relations between the state and citizens, which Charles Tilly neatly exemplifies in his parsing of citizenship as "mutually enforceable claims" between a state and citizens (Tilly 1997). On the other hand, "horizontal" relationships between citizens themselves are where so much of the important recognition and enactment of the privileges of citizenship takes place. As Glenn writes, citizenship "is a matter of belonging, which requires recognition by other members of the community" (Glenn 2011:3).[42]

[41] Also published in 2017, mammoth three-volume collection *The Transformation of Citizenship* edited by sociologists Jürgen Mackert and Bryan S. Turner, simply declines to define the term in favor of a brief comment on the "very diverse debates on citizenship." [41]

[42] This quote continues: "Community members participate in drawing the boundaries of citizenship and defining who is entitled to civil, political, and social rights by granting or withholding recognition" (Glenn 2011:3).

In practice, sociological studies of citizenship tend to recognize the important of *both* state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations in the continual making and remaking of national citizenship. Sociologists also recognize that citizenship is deeply affected by non-state collective actors, emergent interactions in the "public sphere" and social forces such as migration patterns, information technology and market dynamics (Somers 1993, 2010). This dissertation remains loyal to this multi-directional sociological tradition by questioning, rather than taking for granted, the way that social membership inheres in the many, ever-changing connections between the state, collective non-state actors and private citizens.[43]

Citizenship Projects: A New Paradigm

As the previous section established, sociological theory offers overlapping and interconnecting ways to understand the huge deficits in citizenship, i.e. full membership in Australian society, for Indigenous peoples. I argue the larger interdisciplinary field of "citizenship studies", prominently occupied by political philosophers amongst other social scientists as well as scholars of the humanities, can be broken down into three distinctive objects of study: models, regimes and projects (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Objects of Study in the Sociology of Citizenship

Object of Study	Tactic	Typical Sociological Subfields	Definition
Existing Concepts			
citizenship model	theoretical	social and political theory	hypothetical, proposed or ideal citizenship regimes
citizenship regime	empirical	comparative historical, inequality, race, gender	the way that citizenship is defined and practiced in a specific place and time
My Proposed Concept			
citizenship project	empirical	social movements, political sociology, cultural sociology	collective efforts undertaken to transform an existing citizenship regime into a different model

[43] I would like to acknowledge the very strong links between citizenship and other sociological subfields, in particular: political and cultural sociology, inequality, collective memory, ethnic and racial studies, immigration, Indigenous studies and social movements. Conceptually, citizenship is related to many *political issues* (rights, politics of representation, recognition and redistribution, identity politics), *socio-economic issues* (inclusion and belonging, support networks, mobility, health, education) and *cultural issues* (symbolic boundaries, cultural capital, narratives).

The terms "citizenship models" and "citizenship regimes" are already widely used in the social sciences to refer to the way that citizenship has been defined and practiced in specific times and places versus theoretical models created by scholars and practitioners., The term citizenship project is my own invention.[44]

Citizenship models theorize the configurations of rights and duties associated with social membership. Citizenship models may be abstracted from real cases (e.g. the "Ottoman model" or "French model" of citizenship) or they may be theories or ideal-types created by scholars, politicians and social movements. Rogers Brubaker's famous theory of French and German citizenship (1992) and Yasmin Soysal's meditation on citizenship in the European social project (2012) are well-known examples of the latter. An instance of the former is the typology of citizenship models—"the republican, the legal, and the liberal democratic-reflecting respectively the civic experiences of city republics, empires, and nation-states"— outlined by political theorist Richard Bellamy (2011).

In contrast to the theoretical bent of citizenship models, the study of *citizenship regimes* takes an empirical tack. For instance, Jane Jenson "deploys the concept of citizenship regime" in order to "reanimate discussions of European citizenship and to recapture them from the almost exclusive control of political philosophy and a focus on the standard liberal democratic model" (Jenson 2007). More specifically, citizenship regimes have been defined as "institutionalized systems of formal and informal norms that define access to membership, as well as rights and duties associated with membership, within a polity" (Vink 2017:222). As such, sociologists often study citizenship regimes comparatively, both quantitatively and qualitatively describing heterogenous experiences of citizens "across space, over time, and between different groups of individuals in the same society" (Shachar et al. 2017:7). A quick survey of recent sociological research reveals that the intricacies of citizenship regimes of European and North

[44] As far as I can tell, no scholar has ever consistently used the term citizenship project, much less theorized it.

American states are a popular topic (Byrne 2017; Ceobanu and Escandell 2011; Monforte and Dufour 2011; Nanz 2009; Paquet, Nagels, and Fourot 2018; Sarajlić 2012).

Defining Citizenship Projects

In order to better understand the ways that citizenship regimes change over time, I introduce the term "citizenship project" to refer to *sustained and organized collaboration between the state and non-state collective social actors and individuals to institutionalize changes to an existing citizenship regime*. By institutionalization, I mean that official state actors and non-state social actors collaborate change, successfully or not, specific laws, policies, regulations and programs that bear on citizenship rights and social membership.

My concept of citizenship project is a useful paradigm for aggregating multiple kinds of *social actors*—political institutions, individuals, private and public organizations, universities, industry sectors, social movements and activists—across macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis. This properly recognizes that citizenship projects, in addition to "top-down" state support, may have strong "bottom-up" elements through collaboration with grassroots activists, social movement, corporations, third sector organizations and private individuals.

The concept of citizenship project is also useful because it is neutral with respect to the wide range of *substantive issues* and *socio-political ideals* related to full social membership. Depending on the particular time and place, citizenship projects may entail attempts to transform border security, politics of recognition, land distribution, labor protections, gender politics, social welfare, civil rights and political participation, just to name a few. Citizenship projects may seek to revolutionize many aspects of political, civil and social rights or they may promote a few targeted reforms according to a virtually infinite set of social and political ideals. Especially given the representative underpinnings of modern liberal

democracies, the state is likely to be engaged in multiple citizenship projects that complement, compete and contradict each other.

Citizenship projects can be identified across a great many times, spaces and types of political entities, thus making the concept of great use to comparative historical scholars. For instance, the "long-distance advocacy" of religious organizations in 16th century Europe, which Peter Stamatov argues "originated from a persistent pattern of radicalization of religious actors against rival networks within the context of empire", may be considered a kind of imperial reformist citizenship project (Stamatov 2010). The inextricable relationship of contemporary citizenship practices to the nation-state, a "worldwide institution" (Meyer 2010; Meyer et al. 1997), is the subject of a rich sociological literature to which this thesis can only gesture (Bendix 1977; Bonikowski 2016; Brubaker 2009; Koopmans and Statham 1999; Spillman 1997; Wimmer and Feinstein 2010).

Contemporary Citizenship Projects

Citizenship projects may be characterized as multicultural, neo-liberal, imperial, developmentalist, settler-colonial, populist, revanchist, pluralist, decolonizing, fascist and/or cosmopolitan. As this list suggests, by no means are modern liberal democratic citizenship projects progressive or even liberal. The United Kingdom, for instance, is currently embroiled in Brexit, a nationalist, ethno-centric and isolationist citizenship project the substantive citizenship issues range from work authorization and naturalization to access to social services to national identity, collective memory and social membership. Similarly, in the United States, Make America Great Again (MAGA) can be understood as a white nationalist or proto-fascist citizenship project through which the Trump administration has aligned the efforts of various state elements, right-wing groups and disgruntled voters towards tightening legal regulations for migration and

citizenship against those from "shithole countries" and in favor of white middle-class American narratives, values and identities.[45]

MAGA and Brexit—as well as Australian reconciliation—neatly exemplify how citizenship projects are distinct from the concept of social movements. In their recent review article on the cultural impacts of social movements, Edwin Amenta and Francesca Polletta explain:

> Following Snow and colleagues (2004), we define social movements as sustained and organized collective actions to effect change in institutions by citizens or members of institutions who are excluded from routine decision-making. This definition includes the efforts of many advocacy organizations, but not those of interest groups.

In contrast, my concept of citizenship project explicitly seeks to capture how social actors—including individuals, all types of non-state collective actors *and* official state actors—collaborate to change institutions affecting citizenship. In other words, the concept complements and extends the existing social movements literature by forefronting the way that members and institutions of social movements groups and advocacy organizations form collaborative networks with a political actors and official state functionaries in pursuit of their goals to transform existing terms and practices of social membership.

In summary, conciliatory citizenship projects involve collaboration between state and non-state actors seeking to transform one or more aspects of social and cultural citizenship and economic and political participation. If there were ever a case for studying a *conciliatory citizenship project*, then Australian reconciliation surely surpasses most in terms of is long duration, large scale and sheer diversity of collective and individual participants. By seeing this remarkable case through the paradigm of

[45] Fortunately, MAGA has been met with serious resistance—from Congress's refusal to fully fund a border wall to judicial and citizen protests against "Muslim bans"—that limits the degree to which the MAGA values and vision for citizenship can be institutionalized as law, policy and regulation, even with some state support. Nonetheless, the MAGA citizenship project has entailed many negative consequences for the degree to which ethno-racial minority groups and Indigenous peoples are able to experience political, economic and social membership as U.S. citizens. For instance, Trump's election is linked to higher rates of pre-term birth complications among Hispanic women, a sign of severe sustained stress (Krieger et al. 2018).

citizenship project, we can better understand the range of social actors, the socio-political ideals and the institutional transformations pursued under the banner of Australian reconciliation.

Research Design

Australia's three decades of reconciliation is a fascinating instance of long-term state collaboration with collective social actors and private individuals to disrupt settler colonial legacies, to address racialized injustice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This dissertation asks two overarching research questions:

1. *How does Australian reconciliation ask citizens to conceptualize and practice citizenship and Australian identity?*
2. *How does reconciliation imagine, enable and constrain relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?*

The goal of this section is to explain my approach to answering these questions, i.e. the dissertation's research design, and to provide an overview of the data collected and reviewed in the writing of this thesis.

Research Design Principle: Following RAPs

In the midst of the cross-cutting dynamics of citizenship, which circulate ceaselessly in meso-macro-micro cycles and in complex system interactions between culture and structure, the RAP program offers a privileged standpoint from which to observe the unfolding of racial and intergroup politics in Australia. This dissertation's simple investigatory principle of "following RAPs" leads us not only into the midst of hundreds of public, private and third-sector workplaces, but also into contentious national debates and subtle interpersonal negotiations, not to mention into the richness of individual lived experiences of

reconciliation that range from euphoria to outrage. By centering the RAP program in my process of inquiry and analysis, I provide specific evidence of the ways in which Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation has become widely institutionalized. More importantly, I identify some of the many ways in which the RAP program both enables and constrains the thoughts, beliefs and actions of social actors with regards to issues of Indigeneity and Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations in Australia.

The research design of this thesis balances data collection and analysis showcasing the breadth, variation and commonalities in RAP practices across hundreds of organizations with delving into the uncharted depths of how the values and practices of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation circulate at national, industrial, organizational, interpersonal and individual levels.

Data & Methods[46]

This dissertation is, by necessity, a highly mixed-methods project, which made use of documents, interviews and participant observations in its analysis. Each of the four substantive chapters of this dissertation provides a detailed explanation of the data and methods used to answer its specific research questions about the RAP program and reconciliation in Australia. However, not all data collected for this thesis is directly interrogated in the following substantive chapters. The totality of data collected below provides the ultimate grounding for my analysis of nearly three decades of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation.

[46] Thanks to support from the Knox and Deakin Royce Fellowships at Harvard University, I was able to conduct more than 1 year of initial fieldwork while living in Sydney from October 2015 to November 2016, where I was a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. I was also able to take a pre-dissertation planning trip where I met my Australian advisor for this project, the now-emeritus historian Tim Rowse, as well as two follow-up trips in 2018 thanks to the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs as well as the continuing generosity of the Deakin-Royce fellowship. All data collected for my dissertation as a result of this fieldwork are identified and discussed in this section. However, the dissertation considers only a selection of this data in its substantive chapters. There remains much to explore in these rich documentary, interview and observational data, which I have been collecting on an ongoing basis since 2010.

As I "followed RAPs" during my data collection process, I tried to collect as many documents, interviews and observations of the RAP program as possible and paid extra attention to the kinds of debates, stories, challenges, emotions and hopes that coexisted with the RAP—whether on the pages of RAP reports, formal interviews about experiences with the RAP or subtle juxtapositions and ambivalences gleaned from keen observation. The RAP documents themselves still hold a kind of magic for me—fortunately my transition from undergraduate literary studies to a professional career in the social sciences has expanded my range of skills for seeing the ways that these inert documents are brought to life in highly occupied social and cultural spaces and the ways that such documents become part of personal, organizational and national trajectories.

Documentary Data

One of my first tasks for this project was to create a **RAP Document Database** (n=1,170), an independently compiled database of 1,170 RAPs and RAP reports created by organizations who joined during the first 10 years of the RAP program (2007-2015). Not only did I carefully research and verify the RAP participation of each of the 671 organizations included in the database,[47] I recorded information related their histories of RAP participation, organizational sector and geographic scope of operations.[48] Findings from these data are presented in Chapter 2.

[47] I compiled a list of 655 organizations from the Reconciliation Australia website's "RAP Hub" page who had at least one RAP beginning in the year 2015 or earlier. At the time of finalizing the list in June 2016, this excluded roughly 30 organizations whose first RAP began in 2016. This also excluded dozens of schools whose RAP documents I had recorded in 2012 because schools have been moved out of the RAP program into the Narragunnawali program for schools and early learning. I then checked this first list (taken from organizations visible on the "RAP Hub" webpage) against the list of organizations contained in the HTML page source. This led to the addition of 16 RAP organization that had been left out of the original list either due to my own error or problems with the website displaying mis-tagged RAP organizations. My final total of RAP organizations from 2006-2015 was therefore 671.

[48] I also recorded how RA classified each of the 671 organizations into one of eight organizational sector categories used by RA: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (5), community and not-for-profit (188), corporate (149), federal government (90), local government (47), PEAK bodies(57), state government (105), and tertiary education (30). I then investigated each document to assign its geographic space of operation according to its self-description in the RAP: international (in at least one country outside of Australia), national (in at least two Australian states or territories), or in a single Australian state or territory.

Second, I created a **Sports Organizations RAP Document Database** (n=54) for all 36 professional sports organizations, including sports teams and governing bodies, who joined the RAP program between 2007-2018. Findings from this data are discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition, I have been searching for, collecting and reading documents regarding the RAP program since 2010 when I was an undergraduate at UNC. The most important elements of my extensive personal archives of RAP-related documents include:

Australian Government Document Collection (50+ documents): digital government documents including laws, speeches, policy statements and other publicly accessible materials from Parliament, the Australian Government and other government organizations regarding reconciliation, Indigenous Affairs, (anti-) racism, and multiculturalism 1985-present.

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Collection (150+ documents): digital and physical documents related to the CAR, including Learning Circle study kits, *Walking Together* newsletters, publicity materials for public events, progress reports and documentation pertaining to Corroboree 2000 and the Sydney Bridge Walk.

Reconciliation Australia Document Collection (750+ documents and videos): digital and physical documents related to Reconciliation Australia, including annual financial reports and reviews, reports on the progress of reconciliation and the Reconciliation Barometers, videos and other publicity materials, blog entries, media releases, *Reconciliation News* issues, *Let's Talk* publications and Q&A *Factsheets*. This collection includes documents directly pertaining to the RAP program as well as videos produced by RA.

Case Study Organization Document Collection (100+ documents): digital and physical documents related to the RAP program at my four case study organizations, including internal documents related to the RAP program, publicity materials and website content.

Media Collection (75+ documents and videos): digital documentation of media attention related to the RAP program and reconciliation in Australia.

Semi-Structured Interview Data

For this project, I recorded 64 semi-structured interviews with three groups described below. Overall, 70 people took part in recorded interviews, which lasted 60 minutes on average with a median of 56 minutes (ranging from just 16 to 135 minutes). I most often interviewed people individually but conducted 8 interviews with groups of 2-5 peoples each.

Background "RAP Process" Interviews (n=21): interviews with individuals or groups at 15 different RAP organizations from across industry sectors and geographies

Reconciliation Australia Interviews (n=10): a total of 10 interviews with former and current staff members at RA (discussed in Chapter 2).

Case Study Interviews (n=39): interviews with RAP-involved employees and close affiliates at four case study organizations

Although the background "RAP process" interviews are not discussed with any detail in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, they provided some of my most important insights into the wide variations between RAP organizations as well as some of the commonalities in their experiences. These interviews were conducted with the RAP contact person at 15 different organizations, which I selected via a stratified sampling of the full population of 671 RAP organizations who joined the program in its first decade (RAP Document Database). My goal in sampling RAP organizations for "process" interviews was breadth: to discover a wide range of activities and discourses that organizations associated with RAPs across organizational sectors and geographic space. The first principle of sampling was *organizational sector* (n=3: private, public, third sector). I decided to sample equal numbers of organizations across the private (22%), public (36%), and third sectors (42%) even though this meant over-sampling corporations and

under-sampling community organizations. I split the organizations into three separate lists by sector and randomized each list. The second principle of sampling was *geographical area* (n=10: international, national, ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, WA).[49]

Based on this sector-geography sampling technique, I contacted 30 organizations for interviews, following up with the organization through phone or email at least three times. Using this method, I was able to conduct interviews via phone or in-person with 15 organizations (Table 1.2). These "RAP process" interview organizations hailed from several levels of geographic location (NSW, QLD, NT, national and international) as well as from all three private, public and third sectors. The industries of these organizations ranged from industrial agriculture to aviation regulation, from local government to the arts, from community and health services to tourism. Perhaps due to a selection effect, the organizations that responded to my interview solicitation tended to be on their first or second RAP at the "Innovate" stage—the second stage in the RAP program's "RISE" sequencing. Consistent with this thesis's finding of a common "one and done" pattern amongst RAP organizations, the majority of the organizations I interviewed as part of this "RAP process" sample are no longer active in the RAP program.

[49] The distribution of locations of RAP organizations was heavily unequal. For instance, 218 operated nationally (32%) and 105 were located in Western Australia (16%), whereas only 8 were in the Northern Territories (1%) and only 2 were Tasmanian organizations (0.3%). For this reason, I did not attempt to sample equally across all geographic locations. Instead, I chose the first organization to appear in each geographic category to be floated to the top of each randomized organizational sector list.

Table 1.2 "RAP Process" Organizations Interviewed (n=15)

Name	Sector	Industry	State	1st RAP	Total RAPs	Most Recent RAP	Current Stage
3Bridges Community	third	community services	NSW	2014	2	2015	Innovate
Ashfield Council*	public	local government	NSW	2010	2	2014	Innovate
Bathurst Regional Council	public	local government	NSW	2015	1	2015	Innovate
Brisbane S. Primary Health Ntwrk	third	health	QLD	2015	1	2015	Innovate
Civil Aviation Safety Authority	public	transportation/aviation	national	2015	2	2017	Innovate
GrainCorp	private	agriculture (industrial)	national	2012	1	2012	n/a
Maurice Blackburn	private	legal	national	2011	1	2011	n/a
Metro Screen**	private	communications/media	NSW	2011	1	2011	n/a
Museums & Galleries NSW	public	museum	NSW	2012	2	2014	Innovate
Remote Tours Pty Ltd	public	tourism	NT	2013	1	2013	n/a
St John of God Health Care	third	health	international	2013	2	2016	Innovate
Sydney Festival	third	arts	NSW	2013	2	2015	Innovate
Townsville City Council	public	local government	QLD	2013	2	2015	Innovate
Waverley City Council	public	local government	NSW	2015	1	2015	Innovate
Wood Group	private	resources	international	2015	1	2015	Innovate

**organization has merged; **organization has closed*

Participant Observation Data

Finally, an important part of my data collection on the RAP program took the form of participant observation. Most formally, my participant-observation took place within the context of my four organizational case studies where I attended public showcases and ceremonies, internal meetings and networking events in addition to conducting interviews. I also consider my affiliation with the Western Sydney University (2015-2016), presentations at conferences and symposiums, attendance at lectures and seminars, participation in university reconciliation events, and many, many coffees with students, faculty and administrators as forming part of my observational data on reconciliation in Australia—these were some of my most direct experiences with the multiple, contested ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Indigenous issues and reconciliation are talked about in contemporary Australia:

Pre-Dissertation Experiences (2009-2015): Pre-dissertation experiences living in Australia shaped the trajectory of this project immensely. They include intellectual engagement with Australian academics and Australian reconciliation topics such as an undergraduate seminar on Australian/US comparative history (2009), the development of a Fulbright application on the RAP program (2010), and arranging a research institution affiliation for my fieldwork stay (2015). This pre-dissertation experience also includes experience living and working in Queensland and New South Wales for four months on a working holiday visa while taking the GRE and submitting college applications (2011) and a two-week pre-dissertation visit to speak with Australian academics funded by the Weatherhead Center (2014).

Dissertation Fieldwork (2015-2016): During my fieldwork phase I spent 15 months living in two of Sydney's "Inner West" neighborhoods (Leichhardt and Newtown). In addition to attending seminars and presenting as a Visiting Fellow at Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture and Society, I applied for and received ethics clearance to conduct research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are considered a vulnerable population in

Australia. In total, I made approximately 35 visits over 100 contact hours across four RAP case study organizations (discussed in Chapter 3).

Follow-Up & Continued Engagement (2016-present): Since conducting the bulk of my fieldwork in Australia I have returned to conduct follow-up interviews with previously enrolled participants (2017, 2018), present at Australian academic conferences (Australian Catholic University, Swinburne University, the Australian Historical Association annual conference), speak with the media about the results of my research (ABC Radio, *Koori Mail*) and participate in the first-ever Reconciliation Action Plan conference sponsored by Swinburne University and Reconciliation Australia (2018). Most recently I attended a symposium held jointly between Harvard University and the Australian National University (2019).

Research Design Reprise

To conclude, the research design of this dissertation centers on the RAP documents created by some of the more than 1,000 organizations that have participated in Reconciliation Australia's flagship RAP program since 2006. Various kinds of documentary, interview and participant observation data were collected on national (macro), industry (meso), organizational (meso) and individual (micro) levels to shed light on the RAP program from different perspectives. In addition to over a decade of academic engagement with issues of Indigeneity and reconciliation in Australia and over 100 contact hours with 4 case study organizations, I collected well over 2,000 documents related to the RAP program and conducted 70 semi-structured interviews. Each chapter of this dissertation specifies the data mobilized to answer particular research questions. Taken together, the data collected and analyzed for this project represent an incredible amount of original research on an original topic: Australia's globally unique RAP program.

Roadmap

This dissertation unfolds through four empirical chapters, each of which investigate the RAP program at a different level of analysis, namely, national, organizational, industrial and individual:

Chapter 2: RAP Origins, Innovations and Trends: At the national level, I find that the RAP program carves out an important role for private, public and third sector organizations within Australia's conciliatory citizenship project and soothes tensions between "practical" actions reducing socio-economic inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and "symbolic" actions recognizing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and people. Chapter 2[50] tells the remarkable history of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program for the first time. Since its founding in 2006, more than one thousand Australian organizations have voluntarily committed to customized plans that seek to show respect, develop relationships and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Where did this program come from? How did it evolve over its first decade? Drawing on original data on RAP organizations, interviews with RAP program founders and staff and archival documents, I identify the program's institutional and conceptual origins and trends in RAP adoption from 2006-2015.

Chapter 3: RAP Dynamics in Case Study Organizations: At the organizational level, I find that RAP dynamics, i.e. the official discourses, management structures, social interactions and engagements with the RAP program in a participating organization, vary quite widely from case to case. This is true even in my four case study organizations, which share many characteristics including a location in the Sydney metropolitan area and a high degree of institutionalization and continuous participation the RAP program. The RAP dynamics illustrated in the descriptive case studies in Chapter 3 clearly demonstrate that organizational participation in the RAP program is an evolving and non-linear process

[50] An earlier version of Chapter 2 was published as "Reconciliation Action Plans: Origins, Innovations and Trends" in the *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* (21/4, 2019).

and that the institutionalization of RAPs tends to be highly uneven, especially at early stages of the program. This means that very little can be presumed about the dynamics of the RAP program within an organization. Multi-method research studies with long-term qualitative components, therefore, offer a privileged source of insight into the translation of RAP and reconciliation ideals into local organizational structures, systems and idioms.

Chapter 4: RAPs in Professional Sports: At the industry level, I illustrate how the RAP program enables the identification, acknowledgement and celebration of Indigenous identity and heritage in 36 profession sports organizations while quietly circumscribing the social activism of RAP organizations to that of private action instead of political reform (Chapter 4[51]). The immediate effects of RAPs are to popularize a discourse of reconciliation in which Indigenous difference is identified, marked, and celebrated as part of an expression of local and national unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. At the same time, the RAP program associates Indigenous difference closely with deficit through its focus on socio-economic inequality and closing the gap. In fact, RAPs promote understandings of reconciliation and Indigenous difference that may leave organizations and their members ill-equipped to understand persistent sources of conflict in Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, particularly those stemming from Indigenous aspirations for social change that would have to be driven by structural political reform. Ultimately, reconciliation efforts by organizations must be contextualized within a challenging, violent past and present of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations and an imminently political struggle to appropriately recognize Indigenous difference – and all the power-sharing and resource distribution such recognition might entail.

Chapter 5: Lived Experiences of Reconciliation: At the individual level, I interviewed 39 RAP-involved individuals across my four case study organizations to better understand lived experiences of

[51] An earlier version of Chapter 4, "Indigeneity and sport in Reconciliation Action Plans", was published in *The Difference Identity Makes,* Aboriginal Studies Press (2019), eds. Lawrence Bamblett, Fred Myers and Tim Rowse, pp. 238-64.

national reconciliation from those on the frontlines of Australia's contemporary citizenship project. Despite coming from extremely varied ethno-racial, religious, educational and professional backgrounds, RAP-involved employees demonstrated a consensus around defining reconciliation in terms of righting wrongs, better relationships and acknowledgement. Just as with my inductive coding RAP vision statements of sports organizations (Chapter 3), the definitions of RAP-involved employees are largely consistent with RAP themes of respect, relationships and opportunities. Additionally, a strong majority (72%) of RAP-involved individuals identified as participants or actors in the Australian process of reconciliation, with less than 10% of respondents rejecting the label of reconciliation participant altogether. Reconciliation was not, however, a concept that my participants tended to think about or discuss, however, in their personal lives or even during RAP-related activities.

Chapter 2. RAP Origins, Innovations and Trends

The history of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program since its founding in 2006 is short but remarkable given that the RAP program is now a central, flagship fixture in Australia's reconciliation landscape. Despite the precarious funding of its creator and coordinator Reconciliation Australia (RA), the program managed to not only survive but to see more than 650 Australian organizations join its ranks within a decade. With its membership surpassing 1,100 organizations in 2018 (RN 2018), the RAP program has attracted participations from many organizational types ranging from large financial institutions to church parishes, from iconic cultural institutions to small community service providers, from rugby teams to retailers. Perhaps most impressively, within ten years it had touched the lives of roughly 3 million people—over 25% of workers in Australia are employed by an organization with a RAP (RA 2015).[52]

Furthermore, the RAP program—along with its conciliatory values and its interpellation of organizations as collective social actors in reconciliation—seems to have a secure place in at least the next 25 years of reconciliation. RA's 2016 *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report[53] lays out a crucial role for the RAP program as part of Australia's "reconciliation journey" over the next 25 years (RA 2016b:11–12). The RAP program is also increasingly narrated as a milestone in Australia's history of reconciliation (RA 2016b:16–17; 66)[54], which links the RAP program to the history, moral trajectory and identity of the nation more generally.

Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to illustrate Australia's conciliatory citizenship project from a national (macro) level. *What social values and political ideals does the RAP program espouse? How does*

[52] While 3 million Australians are part of organizations that have held approved RAPs *at some point* since 2006, only about half—1.4 million Australians—are "working or studying in an organization with a *current* RAP" (RA 2017b) [emphasis added].

[53] RA's *State of Reconciliation Report* in 2016 was the most comprehensive assessment and plan for reconciliation since the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's (CAR) *Roadmap for Reconciliation* in 2000. It is a foundationally important document for understanding the conciliatory values and ideals of Australia's citizenship project of reconciliation.

[54] In these materials, the start of the RAP program is represented alongside such legendary historical events as 1967 referendum and the apology to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

the RAP program both emerge from and transform the history of Australian reconciliation? To answer these questions, I draw on numerous primary sources, including documents from the program's history as well as seven original interviews with the program's architects, founders and staff at RA to document the origins of the RAP program and trace its evolution over the first decade of its existence from 2006-2015. In telling the history of the RAP program for the first time, this chapter fills a conspicuous gap on a subject that is growing in academic importance.

RAPs in Scholarly Literature

While the RAP program has been the subject of many media releases, impact reports and other publications issued by RA, it has made shockingly little impact upon the scholarly literature. Likely the first journal article to be written on RAPs was authored by RA communications officer Claire Tedeschi and published in *Interaction*, a quarterly journal of the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria, in their "International Year of Reconciliation" issue (Tedeschi 2009). RAPs have been mentioned briefly in a growing number of academic works on topics including higher education (Bennett et al. 2016; Johnston and Bishop 2012; Kilpatrick and Johns 2014; Nolan, Hill, and Harris 2010), the mining sector (Coronado and Fallon 2010), social work and child welfare (Bennett 2015; Radich 2012), nursing and midwifery (Keast and Dragon 2015), mental health (Dudgeon, Milroy, and Walker 2014), engineering practice and education (Duff et al. 2011; Goldfinch and Kennedy 2013; Jordan 2012), the Australian Red Cross (Howitt et al. 2014), employment (Ferdinand et al. 2014), military service (Riseman 2013), and the evolution of Welcome to Country protocols (McKenna 2014).

Several articles focusing directly on RAPs in relation to employment targets, professional sports, and the profession of psychiatry have even given short histories and descriptions of the RAP program based on RA's website materials, annual reports and RAP impact measurement reports (Daly, Gebremedhin, and Sayem 2013; Hunter 2015; Lee 2015; Lloyd 2019). However, there exists no comprehensive history of the

RAP program—neither in the archives of RA nor in the academic literature—and some scholarly sources reveal confusion about the origins of the RAP program.[55] Instead, scholarly works have tended to focus on the formal period of reconciliation under the CAR from 1991-2000.

What are RAPs?

First, what are RAPs? The program's original slogan advertises that RAPs are about "turning good intentions into action." In 2006, RA's first publication on RAPs described the program as striking a balance between "formalising your business' desire and intent to create a fairer society" while at the same time supporting successful businesses (RA 2006:6). The publication listed a list of 12 "benefits for everyone", including increased ability to recruit and retain employees, an increase in community connection and patronage, and the possibility of joint ventures with Indigenous communities (ibid). While the template provided a standard checklist of questions to help organizations plan their RAP, it equally emphasized that RAPs should be creative and unique to the circumstances and capacities of each organization. "It is up to you," the publication urges, "to consider the most appropriate action/s your organization can take to improve the life choices of Indigenous Australians and reduce the gap in life expectancy" (RA 2006d: 7)(RA 2006:7). Organizations were asked to write down their vision and approach to reconciliation, create timelines for reconciliation actions and then register their plan centrally with RA.

In 2008, RA released an updated "Reconciliation Action Plan Toolkit" defining RAPs in more detail:

> A Reconciliation Action Plan is a tool to help your organization build positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It gives you a format for exploring how reconciliation can advance your business/ organizational objectives. And it's your public contribution towards the national effort to close the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. A RAP formalises your contribution by encouraging you to identify clear actions and realistic targets, as well as lessons learnt. While each organization shapes their own RAP, all plans include a creative blend of relationships, respect and opportunities. Developing a meaningful RAP takes time. But the final product is a simple, easy to read plan of no more than five pages. (RA 2008:2)

[55] For instance, Penny Edmonds' excellent book *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation* mistakenly locates RAPs as part of the formal reconciliation process in the 1990s (Edmonds 2016: 97).

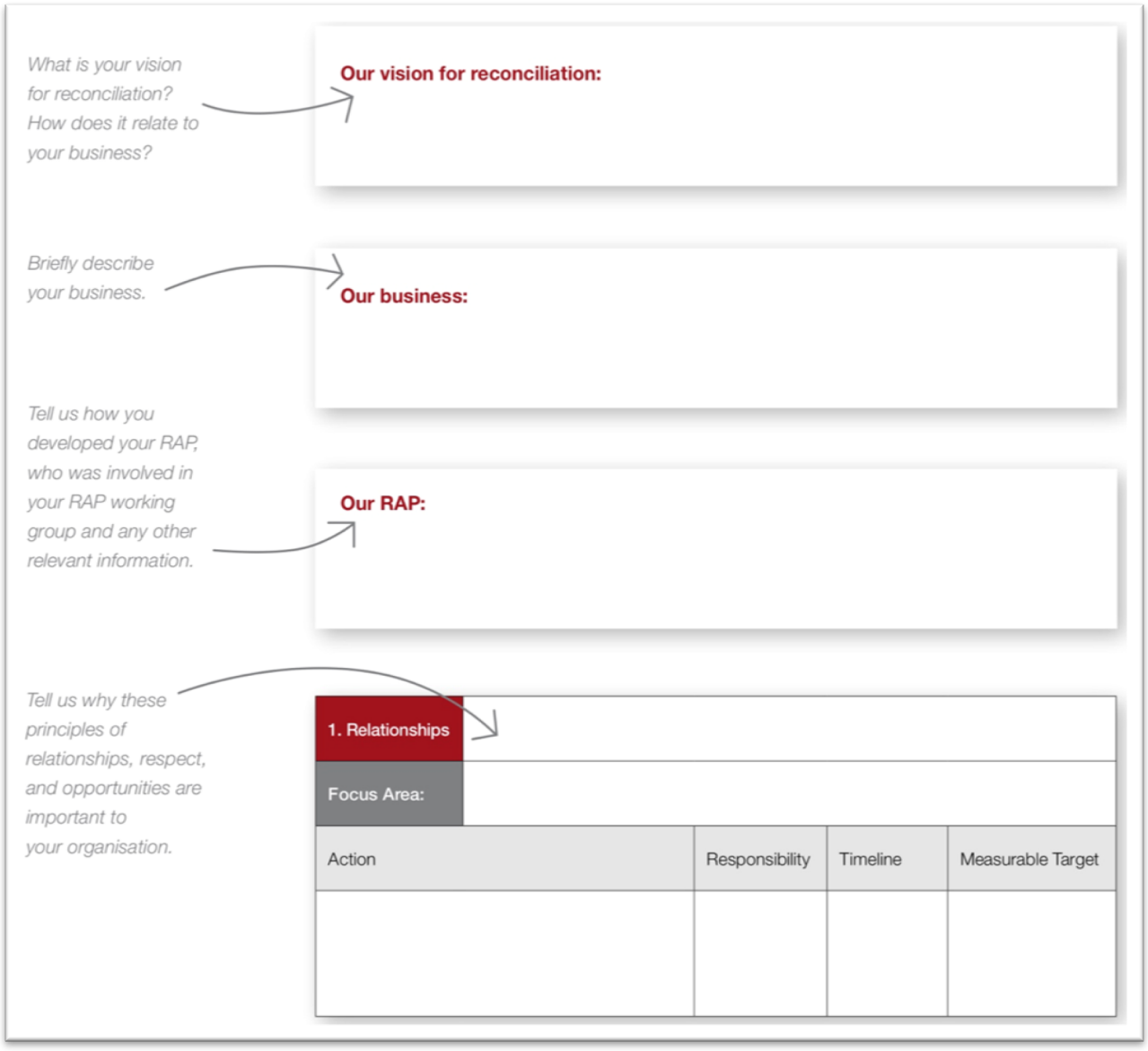
The new Toolkit introduced three discrete themes—respect, relationships, and opportunities—around which organizations were asked to structure their reconciliation actions (Figure 2.1):

Figure 2.1 RAP Themes: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities
(RA 2008:13)

Suggested actions for the *respect* theme, defined as "indigenous-led solutions, sharing information, professional, social and cultural networks," included having Indigenous people provide advice on RAP development and accepting invitations to spend time in Indigenous communities. For instance, Adelaide City Council pledged the "[f]lying of Aboriginal flag in Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga" as well as an "[a]nnual Aboriginal art exhibition in the Adelaide Town Hall" as part of their respect actions (Adelaide City Council 2009). *Relationships* could include tasks such as displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag and Indigenous art, conducting PR activities to promote Indigenous culture, and providing all staff with cultural awareness training. Under this theme, a Western Australian water supplier pledged to consult with "community members to incorporate Indigenous perspective into Waterwise Schools Program[56] curricula and materials" (Water Corporation 2008). Finally, *opportunities* entailed actions such as hiring Indigenous employees and partnering or contracting with Indigenous organizations. Employment targets for Indigenous employees, cadets and trainees, quarterly Indigenous staff forums and "a Buddy Program for new Indigenous staff" were just some of the opportunity pledges by Qantas, self-described as "Australia's largest airline and a national icon" (Qantas 2009).

[56] Waterwise Schools is a Water Corporation program to help schools both save water in their facilities and to teach students about water usage and conservation with dozens of Western Australian participants in 2008 (Water Corporation of WA).

The Toolkit's new two-page template also asked organizations to record their pledged actions in a four-column chart alongside information about responsible entities, the timeline for completion and measurable targets (Figure 2.2). "How will you know your action has been successful? What outcome will be achieved?" the template asks, prompting, "Provide an actual number" (RA 2008:15).



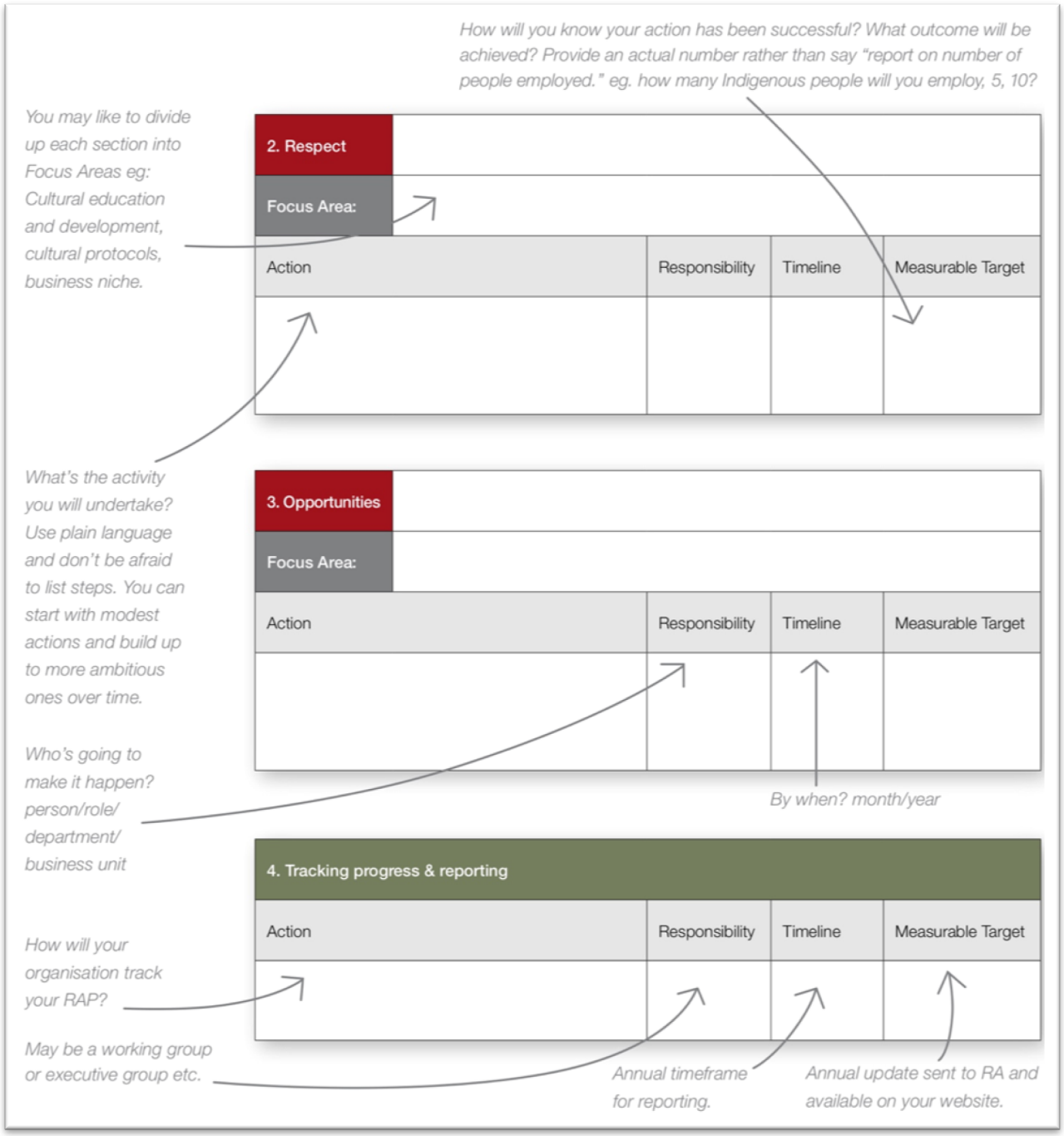


Figure 2.2 RAP Template
(RA 2008:14–15) cont'd

Finally, the 2008 Toolkit included many new graphics to guide organizations through the 14-step "RAP Journey" to create, register and launch a new RAP as well as the 7-element cycle for annual reporting on and "refreshing" of RAP targets and timelines. At the heart of this continuous process stood each

organizations' RAP Working Group, comprised of "a mix of people including executive members, managers across the organization, indigenous staff and ideally external indigenous stakeholders", who would meet regularly to create, oversee, report on and renew the organization's RAP document.

Finalized RAPs required the "executive sign off" from the organization and approval from RA to become official, whereupon the RAP would be made public in RA's online database. Although RA does not independently monitor or audit organizational follow-through on their pledged actions, organizations are asked to track and publicly report on their progress towards achieving actions and "lessons learnt" along the way (RA 2008:17). **"**RAPs are living documents to be reviewed and updated annually," advises the Toolkit, "A good RAP is about quality not quantity. be realistic, keep it simple and use plain language. A first RAP can take time to be developed and approved - a quick turnaround is not necessarily a good thing" (RA 2008:7).

In 2013, RA made the first major change to the program with the introduction of the "RISE" structure and the creation of specialized RAP templates (RA 2018b; Torrens 2016). Rather than a single RAP model for all organizations, there are now four specialized templates with increasingly stringent "minimum elements" (Figure 2.2-2.3). "There are four types of RAPs that an organization can develop: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch or Elevate," explains RA, "Each type of RAP is designed to suit an organization at different stages of their reconciliation journey" (RA 2017b: 4).

The most basic *Reflect* RAP model focuses on awareness raising within the organization, the creation of RAP governance, and the implementation of cultural protocols, while the next level of *Innovate* RAPs introduces actions related to cultural learning programming, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, and supply sourcing from Indigenous suppliers. The third and fourth level *Stretch* and *Elevate* RAPs introduce more ambitious targets and additional measurement and reporting requirements for organizations with a history of engagement with Indigenous issues or the RAP program.

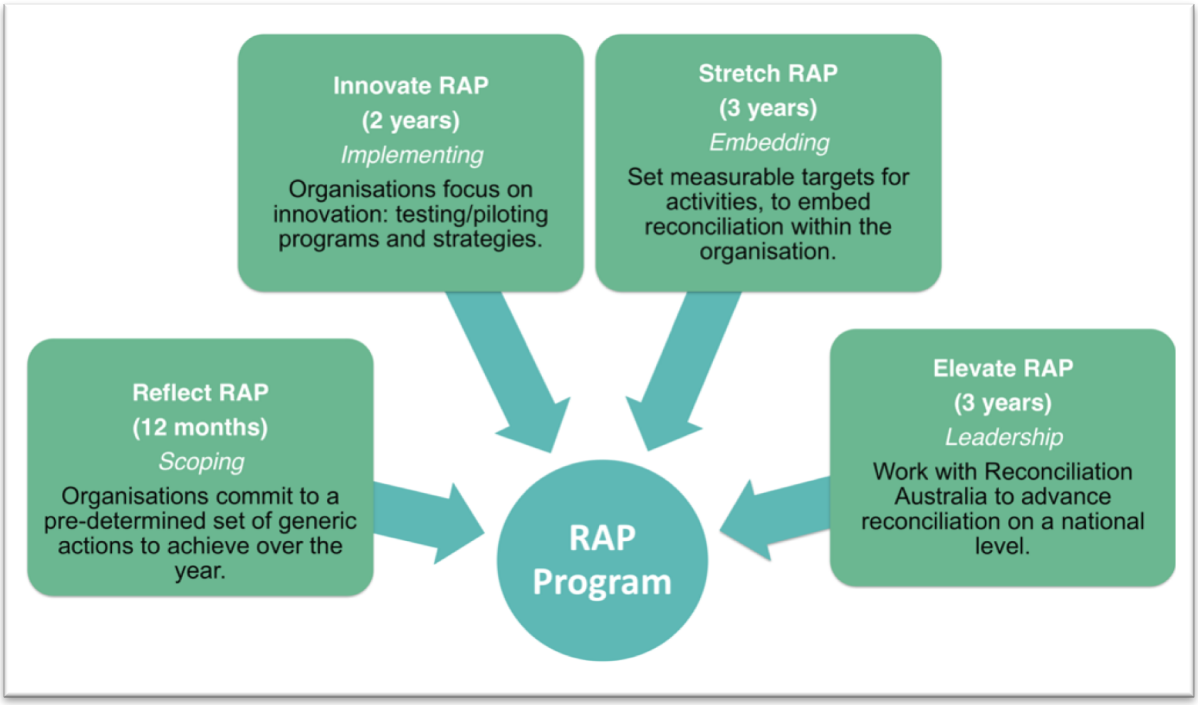


Figure 2.3: RISE Stages
(RA, Roberts, and Cappie-Wood 2017:9)

Meanwhile, other aspects of the program have remained remarkably stable in the ten years since the Toolkit template was released in 2008: the three themes of relationships, respect and opportunities are still central to the structure of RAPs even today. In fact, the 2017 *RAP Impact Report* introduces a diagram of RAPs in which these themes are the pillars of a RAP structure supporting the five dimensions of reconciliation—race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity, and historical acceptance—which were introduced in RA's landmark *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report in 2016 (Figure 2.4). This report lays out a crucial role for the RAP program in relation to the reconciliation dimension of institutional integrity, "the active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures" (RA 2016b:4). The number of RAPs in business, government and community sector organizations is suggested by the report as an "indicator" of support for reconciliation (2016b:7-8,24,41,44,48-49) and the RAP program is designated a "key action" for the next 25 years of Australia's "reconciliation journey" (2016b:11–12, 24, 48).

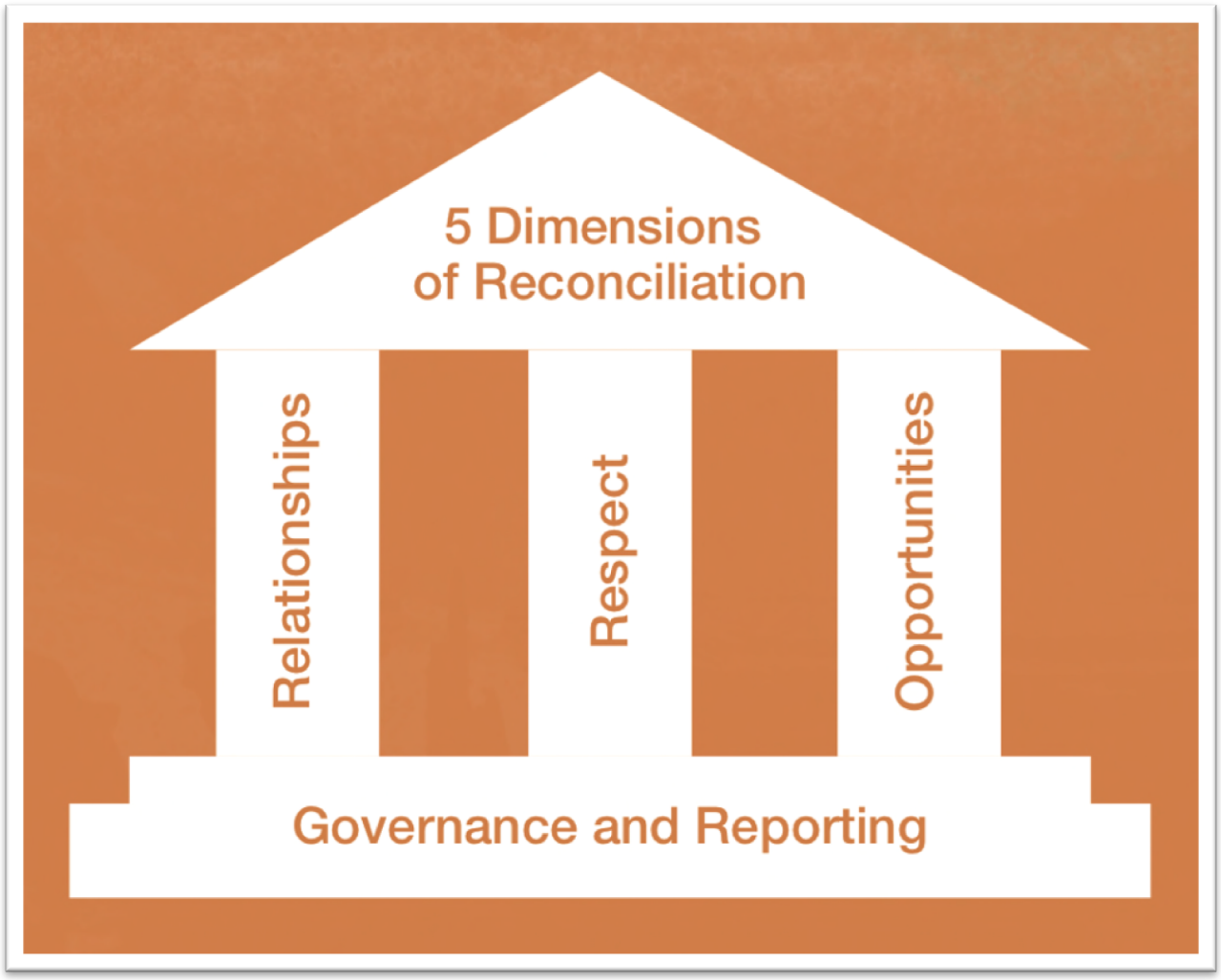


Figure 2.4 RAP Pillars
(RA 2017b: 4)

Where did this intricate RAP framework and program design come from? What did RAP adoption and participation look like in its first ten years of the program's existence? This chapter first provides background on the formal CAR period of reconciliation from 1991-2000 before turning its attention to the early years of RA and the beginnings of the RAP program in 2005. Using documentary sources as well as original interviews with key RA staff and consultants, the next sections identify the institutional and conceptual origins of the RAP program as well as its "innovations" in the practice of Australian reconciliation. Finally, data on 1,170 RAP documents from 671 organization who joined the RAP program between 2006-2015 is analyzed to identify major trends in RAP participation.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991-2000)

In 1991 the Australian Federal Government established the CAR to begin a national process of coming to terms with the traumatic past and present of the treatment of Indigenous people in the Australian settler-colonial state. By no means did genocidal violence against Indigenous peoples end with the frontier wars that followed early colonization. Nor did it end at the turn of the century with Australian Federation.[57] in the first two-thirds of the 20th century, thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their families to be raised in boarding schools, orphanages or with white families—facts that would later be brought to full public attention by a National Inquiry established in 1995 (Commonwealth of Australia 1997; Read 2006; Rigney 1998). Whether through violent death or forced assimilation, the state's "logic of elimination" towards Indigenous people is *the* constitutive element of settler-colonialism, which scholars consider to be an enduring structure of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Elkins and Pedersen 2005; Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006).[58] Strong Indigenous-led social movements, such as the Freedom Rides (1965) and the Wave Hill Walk-Offs (1966) did result in some positive change for Indigenous peoples: Australia's famous 1967 referendum to include Indigenous peoples in the census and grant the Commonwealth government the power to make laws for Indigenous peoples was passed with over 90% of the popular vote.[59] Nonetheless, as the 1972 Aboriginal

[57] Australian Federation went into effect on 1 January 1901 when the first Constitution elaborated a federal structure of government for the former British colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. Although similar to "independence", Australia has remained part of the Commonwealth of Nations with the British monarch, presently Queen Elizabeth II, as the official head of state.

[58] Critical Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars identify ongoing settler-colonial ideology, i.e. laws and beliefs that deny the sovereignty, autonomy and cultural values of Indigenous peoples, in many aspects of contemporary Australia ranging from daily life to politics to academia (Attwood 2005; Banivanua Mar 2012; Lovell 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2004; Potter 2012; Smith and Jackson 2006).

[59] Specifically, the referendum asked voters to decide whether two discriminatory references to Indigenous people should be changed in the Constitution:

51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to: [...] (xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.

127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives should not be counted.

After the May 27, 1967 referendum passed, the Constitution was officially altered on August 10, 1967 (NAA).

Tent Embassy made clear, sovereignty remained a pressing issue for Australia's Indigenous peoples, with whom the colonial government never made a single treaty—a stark contrast to British practices in Canada, New Zealand and the United States (Foley, Schaap, and Howell 2014; Langton 2001).

The reconciliation process in Australia placed this history of dispossession and violence at the center of discussions on contemporary Indigenous affairs. "Our nation must have the courage to own the truth, to heal the wounds of its past so that we can move on together," reads the CAR declaration of principles, "Reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians." In addition to acknowledging the unresolved history of colonial era violence and dispossession, the preamble to the Act frames the CAR's role in terms of coordinating a national effort to address Indigenous disadvantage in advance of the 100th anniversary of Australian federation:

> [A]s a part of the reconciliation process, the Commonwealth will seek an ongoing national commitment from governments at all levels to co-operate and to co-ordinate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission as appropriate to address progressively Aboriginal disadvantage and aspirations in relation to land, housing, law and justice, cultural heritage, education, employment, health, infrastructure, economic development and any other relevant matters in the decade leading to the centenary of Federation, 2001. (Australian Government 1991)

The Act outlines ten specific responsibilities of the CAR, including to promote reconciliation at the community level and to facilitate education and discussion of Indigenous history, disadvantage and reconciliation. The Council was also instructed to "consult Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community on whether reconciliation would be advanced by a formal document or formal documents of reconciliation" (Australian Government 1991). Thus, while the idea of a treaty was not officially precluded by the reconciliation process, neither was it guaranteed. The CAR's charge was simply to consult on the desirability of a reconciliation document of some kind.

This ambiguity regarding the place of a treaty in the reconciliation processes broke with Prime Minister Bob Hawke's (1983-1991) explicit promise for there to "be a treaty negotiated between the Aboriginal people and the Government on behalf of all the people of Australia", the preparations for which

were to be started immediately (Hawke 1988). Hawke's promise was made just two years earlier in 1988 at the Barunga Sports and Cultural Festival in the Northern Territory, where a team of Aboriginal artists and leaders from across Australia undertook an historical intercultural collaboration to create a "painted declaration" of political self-determination, compensation for stolen land, repatriation of Aboriginal remains and artefacts, and the upholding of cultural and social rights for Aboriginal peoples (AIATSIS 2018; Reece, Meyers, and Read 2006).

On one hand, the prime minister's positive response to the Barunga Declaration following the creation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody[60] in 1987 and establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission[61] (ATSIC) in 1990 marked a cautiously optimistic moment for Indigenous affairs. On the other hand, Hawke's government had already broken the Labour Party's endorsement of land rights after more than a decade of Indigenous activism and social movements for self-determination. In 1985, the Hawke government released the "Preferred National Land Rights Model" that sidelined Aboriginal consent for land use and was widely seen as caving to the pressures of the mining and pastoral industry before abandoning the pursuit of national land rights legislation altogether (Foley 2013; Foley and Anderson 2006; Libby 2003; Mercer 1993).

It was in this highly charged context, the same year of 1991 in which Yothu Yindi released their iconic song "Treaty Now," [62] that the CAR began its ten-year term. The Council pursued two main lines of action:

[60] The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was established in response to public concern about the deaths of Indigenous people in police and prison custody. Released in 1991, the report examined 99 deaths of Indigenous individuals in custody between 1980-89 and found that "their Aboriginality played a significant and in most cases a dominant role in their being in custody and dying in custody" (Commonwealth of Australia 1991:1; Williams 2001:1). The report was also significant in generating 339 recommendations, many of which articulated a vision of Indigenous self-determination, at least in administrative terms (Rowse 1992).

[61] ATSIC was established to increase the role of Indigenous people in policymaking and service delivery regarding Indigenous affairs, with 35 Regional Councils elected to represent Indigenous perspectives as well as hundreds of public servants to administer ATSIC's programs (Bennett and Pratt 2004:7–9).

[62] The original, unmixed version of the song contains the incisive line that "promises can disappear" presumably in reference to the Hawke's failure to follow through on his promise at Barunga that treaty negotiations would soon be underway (Corn 2010; Kerr 2015; Stubington and Dunbar-Hall 1994). In 2013, RA issued a press release regarding the "passing of Yothu Yindi frontman Dr Yunupingu", which it named as an "inspiration to all Australians; a passionate advocate for reconciliation […] and 1992 Australian of the Year for his commitment to reconciliation and work as a musician and educator." While mourning the loss of this "legendary Australian", RA highlighted more than 500 registered reconciliation

consultation on the eventual reconciliation document and fostering the "people's movement" for reconciliation. This latter activity involved many programs and campaigns, including *Reconciliation Study Circle* and *Reconciliation Learning Circle* kits with materials on Indigenous history and culture for self-directed discussion groups, the quarterly *Walking Together* newsletter of the CAR, and *Australians for Reconciliation* to create networks of coordinators and local communities to be involved with reconciliation (CAR 1992, 1993, 1999; Gunstone 2016). These high-profile education and awareness campaigns, as well as complementary movements such as Sorry Books, were generally seen as a success of the CAR despite ongoing ambivalence in public understanding and attitudes towards reconciliation (Brennan 2004).

In contrast to its relatively successful educational program, the CAR's efforts towards a reconciliation document were challenged, especially by the election of a Liberal-National coalition government under Prime Minister John Howard in 1996. By 1997 the "Father of Reconciliation" Patrick Dodson had resigned, reportedly stating "I fear for the spirit of our country" (Thorpe 2016), and the chairmanship of the CAR passed to Evelyn Scott. Delegates at the 1997 Reconciliation Convention turned their backs on a "visibly shaken" Howard (Behrendt 2010:175–76), whose speech laid out the principles of his government's "practical reconciliation" strategy:

> Reconciliation will not work if it puts a higher value on symbolic gestures and overblown promises rather than the practical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in areas like health, housing, education and employment.
>
> It will not work if it is premised solely on a sense of national guilt and shame. Rather we should acknowledge past injustices and focus our energies on addressing the root causes of current and future disadvantage among our indigenous people. (Howard 1997)

Whereas Howard's speech touches on the issue of Indigenous "disadvantage" no fewer than nine times, it did not mention the word "treaty" even once.

events and activities for that year's National Reconciliation Week, saying the "enthusiasm and goodwill displayed by the tens of thousands who took part is a tribute to the growing public support for reconciliation" (RA 2013).

As the deadline for the presentation of the reconciliation document at the 2000 Corroboree approached, Dodson gave voice to the growing public frustration with the reconciliation process in his Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Wentworth Lecture:

> Let there be no misunderstanding. The anger and disappointment that many Indigenous Australians have with the way the content of the 'Towards a Document of Reconciliation' proposal is being handled is not directed at the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. We are angry and disappointed at the cynical manipulation of the process that has been employed by the Federal Government and, in particular, the leader of that Government. A manipulation that is an affront to the millions of Australians of goodwill that have sought a genuine reconciliation between our peoples. (2000)

When the CAR's ten-year term expired, its final report admitted that "true reconciliation" was far from being achieved and pointed towards the "unfinished business" of reconciliation that that remained for the years to come (CAR 2000a). In the end, the CAR issued only a one-page "Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation" alongside a longer "Roadmap for Reconciliation" and four national strategies concerning sustaining reconciliation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, overcoming disadvantage and economic independence. Although roughly a quarter of a million people turned out for the famous Sydney Bridge Walk[63], the event was as much protest as it was celebration, with signs, banners and sky writing of the word "sorry" waving to the tune of "Treaty Now" (Edmonds 2016:94–97).

Reconciliation Australia (2001-present)

Despite the lack of progress on "substantive" reconciliation gains of a treaty, land rights and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty during the CAR's tenure, the Council recommended in no uncertain terms that the reconciliation process should be sustained going forward. Its *Roadmap for Reconciliation* outlined essential actions, including that a foundation named "Reconciliation Australia" be created to "maintain a national leadership focus for reconciliation, report on progress, provide

[63] The Sydney Bridge Walk was an event organized by the CAR as part of its final Corroboree events in 2000 at the end of its term. Roughly 250,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian joined the march over Sydney's iconic Harbour Bridge (NMA n.d.).

information and raise funds to promote and support reconciliation activities" (CAR 2000a). The full "National Strategy to Sustain the Reconciliation Process" released after the Roadmap described the mission of RA in further detail:

> Provide national leadership to the reconciliation process by:
> - promoting discussion;
> - producing and disseminating information;
> - raising funds to support other organizations' activities;
> - reporting to the nation on the progress of the reconciliation process;
> - providing a safe meeting place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians can come together to seek common ground and to identify the next steps in achieving reconciliation; and
> - working closely with national peak bodies and stakeholders, for example the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and Australia Local Government Association (ALGA).

Furthermore, guidelines for other reconciliation actors—explicitly including federal, state and local governments, voluntary and community organizations, private sector organizations, and local reconciliation groups—were directed to coordinate with, support and even donate to the RA.[64] This new foundation was clearly the lynchpin in the CAR's strategy for continuing leadership of an ongoing national project of reconciliation in Australia.

Shortly before the CAR's term came to a close at the end of the year, on December 7th 2000 Chairwoman Evelyn Scott announced Neil Westbury as the first General Manager of the new organization as well as nine inaugural board members, including two who would carry over from the CAR: Jackie Huggins, deputy director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at Queensland University in Brisbane, and the Djiniyini Gondarra, chairman of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (CAR 2000a). RA's first press release followed shortly to announce its appointment of Co-Chairs of the Board: Shelley Reys, an Aboriginal woman of the Djirbul people, an Australians for Reconciliation

[64] The only groups not directed to donate or otherwise contribute to the new RA foundation were state and territory reconciliation commissions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. However, the Federation of State and Territory Reconciliation Committees was directed to coordinate closely with RA.

Coordinator and a member of the NSW State Reconciliation Committee, and managing director of Arrilla Aboriginal Training and Development; and Fred Chaney, deputy president of the National Native Title Tribunal and a former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (RA 2000). Huggins would succeed Reys as co-chair of the board alongside Chaney the following year (RA 2002).

Seeking to establish a role and voice for itself, RA was very active in issuing approximately 35 media releases during 2001-2002 on topics ranging from media comments concerning child removal by Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue (RA 003) to Tasmanian land legislation (RA 004) to domestic violence in Indigenous communities (RA 014; RA 032). While continuing to make use of CAR frameworks and recommendations, RA engaged in consultative work to determine its own reconciliation goals. RA was highly aware of its distinctive institutional and funding position. As Chaney stated in an early media release, "[i]t's important to note the difference between this new foundation Reconciliation Australia and the old Council. Reconciliation Australia is fully independent of government; the board is not government appointed; we will not be dependent on government funding; rather, we will be reliant on community and corporate support" (RA 2001).

However, before the end of 2002 the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee chaired by Senator Nick Bolkus had called for and received over 100 public submissions for its inquiry into the post-CAR reconciliation process, publishing its *Reconciliation: off track* report in 2003.[65] The report advanced the argument that reconciliation in Australia could not progress without well-funded national leadership, and specifically recommended that "the Government provide ongoing funding to Reconciliation Australia, sufficient for it to meet its diverse range of responsibilities" (Bolkus 2003).

[65] This report was commissioned because of the *Social Justice Report 2001*, which recommended: "[t]he Senate empower the Legal and Constitutional References Committee to conduct an inquiry into the implementation and response to the reconciliation process. The terms of reference of the inquiry should require the Committee to examine the recommendations contained within the Roadmap to Reconciliation, the final report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Social Justice Report 2000 as well as the adequacy of the response of the Federal Government to each of these. In determining the adequacy of the response, the Committee should be required to consider processes by which government agencies have reviewed their policies and programs against the documents of reconciliation; as well as the adequacy of targets and benchmarks adopted and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms" (Rec. 11).

Although the report also identified RA's lack of statutory authority as a barrier to its mission, it did not formulate any specific recommendations on this issue, choosing to emphasize the importance of funding instead. Claire Tedeschi, RA's community relations director during 2003-2010, remembers of these early years as a trying time for the young organization:

> [Y]ou know, truth be told we probably struggled for a while. We went through a number of different chief executives […] more focused on fundraising so that Reconciliation Australia could be free of government control and support. It quickly became clear that nobody was going to pay our light bills, so the government had to, with some coercing, continue to come to the party in terms of those core operational funds. And as I say, it took quite a lot of effort for RA to be just keeping the doors open during that period. (Tedeschi 2016)

Bolstered by a commitment of four years of federal funding starting in 2004 (RA 2007: 25), by 2005 RA reported its engagement in 18 distinct projects varying duration and impact across its program areas of youth, education, Indigenous leadership and capacity development, economic independence and the "national interest" with a dazzling array of corporate, government and not-for-profit partners. The budding organization emphasized its mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, being careful to distinguish itself from Indigenous organizations and advocacy organizations in defining its mission as "[accommodating] differences of opinion while we work to make progress on the basis of increasing areas of common ground." Their annual report from this year contains many references to RA's efforts to diversify their funding sources and states their appreciation for financial and pro bono support in a full-page spread honoring 13 private organizations, prominently including ANZ Bank and BHP Billiton (RA 2006b). Despite many RA initiatives to increase its proportion of private donors, Chaney's declaration of financial independence from government would turn out to be aspirational: to this day RA continues to receive the majority of its funding from the Federal Government.

The RAP Program

During 2005, RA had also started to lay the groundwork for what would become one of its most well-known and far-reaching initiatives: the RAP program. The next section details how the RAP program emerged from the confluence of three institutional factors: RA's search for ways to attain *funding security*, increase *corporate and workplace engagement*, and the opportunity to launch a new program during the excitement of the *40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum*. At the same time, the formulation of the RAP program drew on two major conceptual bases: the long history of grassroots efforts in the *people's movement* for reconciliation and the quantifying ethos and action orientation of *practical reconciliation*.

RA's first annual report published in May 2006, contains a single brief mention of the future RAP program simply as a "[n]ational action project – a project to sign up organizations to measurable action plans that will achieve lasting results" (RA 2006a: 12). Just a few months later on July 25, 2006, the RAP program was launched with great fanfare—and in far more detail—at a luncheon hosted by RA in partnership with BHP Billiton. Prime Minister John Howard attended to announce and celebrate the eight organizations selected to create the nation's very first RAPs: ANZ Bank, BHP Billiton, Canberra Investment Corporation, Centrelink, Melbourne City Council, Oxfam Australia, South Australian Department of Administrative and Information Services, and Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation. A subsequent media release published details on the specific pledges each of the "trailblazing" organizations planned to make in their RAPs, which were still under development at the time. For instance, Oxfam Australia pledged to develop an "Indigenous Australia Program" in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ANZ committed to increasing the employment and retention of Indigenous employees, and staff at the South Australia Department of Administrative and Information Services who worked in Indigenous communities were to be given language and cultural training (RA 2006c).

Both due to this publicity and RA's sustained courtship efforts, the program saw immediate success. Less than one year after the launch, RA reported that 30 organizations had joined the program, and that "all Australian Government agencies had either completed or committed to completing a Reconciliation Action Plan" (RA 2007). RA had released a 16-page guide for organizations seeking to join the RAP program explaining the purpose of this "national plan of action", describing the "direct economic and social benefits" for businesses, and providing templates and checklists for the creation and registration of new RAPs (RA 2006d). By 2008, RA released an updated "RAP Toolkit" with further articulation of the program's three theme areas—respect, relationships and opportunities—and business benefits, a clarified template structure and new graphics showing the 14 steps in the "RAP Journey" for aspiring organizational participants (RA 2008c). In August 2008, a press release announced that the RAP program, which had grown to a membership of 90 organizations, had created 1,700 jobs (RA 2008b).

Institutional Origins of the RAP Program

The RAP program emerged, in part, from RA's institutional context and programming imperatives during 2005-2007 when the program was conceived, created and launched. For this section I rely on RA documents as well as interviews with key RAP architects and staff of RA at this time: Barbara Livesey, chief operating officer (COO) in 2004 and chief executive officer (CEO) from 2005-2009; "Julie Smith", a RAP program consultant from 2006-2007; and Claire Tedeschi, community relations director from 2003-2010. These sources reveal how RA's strategic goals and programming needs heavily influenced the creation of a program that would honor *the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum*, further *corporate and workplace engagement*, and provide *funding security* for the fledgling organization.

40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum

The first major public articulation of the RAP program by RA was published in January 2007 in the Co-Chairs Jackie Huggins' and Mark Leibler's forward to the 2005-2006 annual report and lauded the upcoming 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum as an "inspiration":

> We are shaping a program for the anniversary that will demonstrate the maturing of the reconciliation process over the last decade. By signing on to systemic, measurable, action-oriented plans through Reconciliation Action Plans, organizations across Australia will show what reconciliation looks like in many different settings. Nobody will get away with saying they don't know what reconciliation means, that it's "off the agenda" or that they'd like to help but don't know how. (RA 2006b)

As this statement suggests, RA judged that it needed to counter public perception that reconciliation had stalled or stopped with the end of the CAR. In Tedeschi's words, "I think the Bridge Walk in a sense, people felt like they'd done reconciliation, the job had been done. So, Reconciliation Australia then very much did have to chart a mission whereby it was clear that we'd only really just scratched the surface" (Tedeschi 2016).

The 40th anniversary of the referendum was therefore conceived by RA as a momentous, unmissable opportunity to launch a new program or activity to assert the continuing relevance of reconciliation. In fact, Julie Smith was hired as a consultant in 2006-2007 specifically to work on a program that could leverage the excitement around this historical moment:

> [W]e really wanted to use the 40th anniversary of the referendum to highlight where reconciliation in Australia was in 2007 […]. And it was just kind of a good set of events to bring corporate and government together around reconciliation and to lift the profile of reconciliation as an issue of concern for the Australian public. (Smith 2016)

Smith's recollection closely mirrors the language present in RA's 2006-7 annual review, which reported to stakeholders and the general public that the organization was "using the opportunity of the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum to invigorate reconciliation, raise awareness of what can and what is being done, and gather momentum for change" (RA 2007: 20).

The 40th anniversary was not only the impetus for RA to create a new program to reinvigorate the Australian reconciliation process—it was also a means of transforming the organization into a more high-profile, high-impact player in the reconciliation space on the national stage. Tedeschi describes joining RA in its "infancy" when it was "still a very small organization based in a tiny little office with 7 staff or something like that" (2016). Similarly, Smith recalls:

> Reconciliation Australia had really struggled to develop any kind of broader engagement, it was quite a small organization at that stage. […] So, they were like a secretariat for the Board and they were very much a kind of a lobbying organization. They were certainly punching well above their weight in that the commentary they were developing and promoting was still regarded as newsworthy, and they had a profile that really belied the small size of the organization. (Smith 2016)

Rather than treating the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum as a mere event to commemorate, RA set out to create a high profile, lasting reconciliation program—one that would remain at "core of our work for the next 10 – 25 years" (RA 2006d: 5). Certainly, the labor and resource intensive nature of the RAP program, which required RA to design minimum standards, assist with RAP development and maintain a database of officially approved RAPs led to growth in the organization. Annual reports from 2005-2008 document between 20 and 25 staff members of the organization (some part-time), with the number growing to 30-35 in 2008-2010. Much of that growth is accounted for by the increase in RAP program employees, which increased from 5 in 2007 to 14 in 2010.

The RAP program not only increased the size of RA, but also provided opportunities to expand the public profile of the organization. For instance, Co-Chair Jackie Huggins attended the launch of ANZ's first RAP (Huggins 2007) and RA issued numerous media releases about other RAP commitments and launches (e.g. RA 2008a, 2010a, 2010b). The RAP program undertook consultations with Indigenous stakeholders (RA 2009a:25), later releasing publications on private sector engagement with Indigenous communities and employment of Indigenous people co-authored with other organizations (DCA and RA 2013; GenerationOne, RA, and Social Ventures Australia 2013). Finally, the progress of the RAP program towards

social and economic outcomes became another consistent arena of public engagement: a comprehensive plan to measure RAP contributions was released in 2009 (RA 2009b), annual "RAP Impact Measurement" reports have been issued every year since 2012 and outside agencies including Auspoll have been contracted to provide biannual "Workplace RAP Barometer" reports (Nelson 2015, 2016; Stolper, Wyatt, and McKenna 2012).[66]

Corporate and Workplace Engagement

While the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum created a tantalizing programming opportunity for RA, the focus on corporate and workplace engagement was a deliberate strategy to branch out from local and community reconciliation groups, many of which already had strong relationships with state reconciliation councils or the Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) national advocacy group. In part due to her experience watching local political party chapters wither, CEO Barbara Livesey envisioned reconciliation being woven into the fabric of workplaces:

> My sense was this idea of creating place-based community groups was a dying mode of engagement and one of the things that motivated us around the RAPs was a sense that people spend so much time in their workplaces. If you could make it part of their workplaces and their everyday lives, then you were going to get further than trying to say to people that you've got to now go and create another group. (2016)

Expanding reconciliation activities into workplaces had another important advantage in Livesey's mind: reaching a diverse audience. "[T]here were small local reconciliation groups," Livesey told me, "but my sense was that a bit of the same people talking to each other, and [RA] had to get out there" (2016).

While the RAP program is pitched at organizations across private, public and not-for-profit sectors, RA has always had a special relationship with corporations because, as Smith explains, "there was that attraction to working with corporates, particularly the big ones, because of their large workforces" (2016).

[66] The "Workplace RAP Barometer" reports rely heavily on RA's biannual "Reconciliation Barometer" modelled on South Africa's survey and started in 2008 (Auspoll and RA 2009; Livesey 2016; Rowse 2009).

Additionally, corporations featured so heavily because RA had already established relationships with a number of corporate "supporters," the number of which nearly doubled from 13 to 24 in the 2006-7 financial year (RA 2006b, 2007). Thus, RA was easily able to reach out and extend the relationships it had already built with a number of corporations to find early recruits for the RAP program:

> There was a bit of a hook, I suppose, in that we were already doing some work with corporates. […] At the time we thought it could be school, a big company, a government department, it could be anywhere. It could be a football club. But we were kind of thinking of corporates to begin with. […] We used our corporate connections, so we went to ANZ, we went to the National Australia Bank, we went to BHP Billiton. (Livesey 2016)

Finally, Smith recalls that corporate culture during these years made corporations more open to participation for the RAP program due to the background of their leadership: "[a]t that point of time there were a number of heads of large corporates in Australia who were American and who had a history and an understanding of philanthropy that a lot of Australian heads of corporations just don't have" (Smith 2016). Whether or not corporate leadership really did affect the formulation or uptake of the RAP program, it is certain that corporations in particular and workplaces in general were perceived by RA as both important and available actors to be targeted for participation in the reconciliation process.

Funding Security

Although the 2003 Senate committee forcefully urged continued funding of RA (Bolkus 2003) and RA had just formed a four-year funding commitment with the Federal Government in 2004, in 2005 the organization was still very much concerned with how to secure its finances in future years. Thus, an early proposal for the RAP program was to create a direct funding stream by charging corporations a fee for RA's oversight of the program and one-on-one help during the RAP development processes, which in turn could have subsidized RAP services for government and not-for-profit organizations (Smith 2016).[67] RA

[67] A former RA staff member remembers discussing another funding strategy with Adam Mooney: "[W]e were talking about the possibility of Reconciliation Australia having a share portfolio that corporates, if they didn't want to make cash donations or pay fees to Reconciliation Australia, they could contribute shares to a share portfolio that Reconciliation

leadership ultimately rejected this idea, opting to rely on government funding to provide these services to corporations, public and not-for-profit organizations at no charge.

Instead, the RAP program was seen by its creators as a way to enhance RA's financial security by appealing to government funders interested in the outreach and results of programs and activities. Smith recalls that RA "wanted to leverage that [40th] anniversary to get the Australian government to make a commitment going forward to fund Reconciliation Australia and to fund reconciliation activities" (2016). From her memories as CEO, Livesey describes a similar sentiment regarding the RAP program:

> There was internal discussion at the time that if this grows, then it will start to define the organization and skew the organization's activities and was that where we really wanted to go. And I thought if it was successful that it would help to continue to define our reason for existence and therefore secure our ongoing funding because we could demonstrate to funders very tangible outcomes that we were achieving. (2016)

RA eventually did receive a funding commitment in 2009, alongside government commitments to close the gap targets,[68] and as Smith speculates, "the success of the Reconciliation Action Plan and the number of corporates that have signed up and that are actively working on Reconciliation Action Plans has provided more security to Reconciliation Australia's funding" (2016).

Conceptual Origins of the RAP Program

In addition to the confluence of organizational and programming imperatives discussed above, the RAP program was heavily theorized by its creators and subsequent managers and staff at RA as being a natural extension of two conceptual traditions of reconciliation. The first tradition is the *people's movement* comprised of state councils and local reconciliation groups fostered during the CAR period.

Australia would hold and would fund reconciliation activities. And ANZ thought that was a good idea, but again there was a feeling within Reconciliation Australia at the time that this was a bit beyond their ambit of work" (2016).

[68] RA heavily cautioned the government that real and lasting progress towards closing the gap would only be achieved with substantial Indigenous leadership and participation in using the allocated funds (RA 2009c, 2009a:8). Eight years later, RA CEO Justin Mohamed issued a similar media release, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions key to closing the gap" (RA 2017a).

These state and local groups were then directed to look towards RA for leadership on reconciliation after 2000. The second tradition integral to the RAP program was *practical reconciliation*, the quantifying ethos of which dovetailed with the height of the Close the Gap fervor and the setting of Council of Australian Governments (COAG) targets in 2008. As well as archival documents, this section makes use of four interviews with former RA staff Adam Mooney, RAP program director from 2008-2011; Sharona Torrens, programs and partnerships manager from 2011-2015; "Eric Miller", RA staff from 2011-2013; and Phoebe Dent, policy manager from 2012-2017.

The People's Movement

The RAP program was envisioned by RA as a modern-day extension of the grassroots "people's movement" for reconciliation. Although the people's movement is heavily associated with CAR-era activities such as the Sea of Hands and Sorry Books (CAR 1997; Giles 2002; Kennedy 2011; Metzenrath 2017; Short 2008), RA points back further to the 1967 referendum. The opening "Introduction and Purpose" text in RA's first publication on the RAP program stated:

> In the 1967 referendum, over 90% of eligible Australians voted to take count of and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as citizens and to give the Commonwealth Government power to make laws regarding Indigenous Australians. This event is often referred to as the first stage of the reconciliation movement in Australia.
>
> The 40th anniversary of the referendum, in 2007, is of national significance. To mark the occasion, we're inviting Australian organizations to accept their individual and collective responsibilities for reconciliation–and to take action to address this issue of vital importance to Australia's social, economic and political well-being and advancement. (RA 2006d: 4)

In this way, the RAP program was smoothly embedded into a long history of efforts for national reconciliation beginning with the well-loved story of the 1967 referendum.[69] The absence of any mention

[69] The outpouring of popular support for Indigenous peoples and issues during the 1967 referendum's "Yes" campaign (and the withholding of the usual Parliamentary support for a "No" campaign) resulted in an astounding 90.77% of Australians voting to pass the referendum (Bennett 1985; NAA; SMH 1967). However, the referendum is often misremembered as extending citizenship or voting rights to Indigenous people when in fact, the referendum's two legal changes were to include Indigenous peoples in the census and grant the Commonwealth government the power to make laws for Indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, the referendum is remembered and even "mythologized" by the public,

of the CAR in this explanation, and indeed the entirety of the first RAP publication, marks a noticeable shift in RA's narration of reconciliation history and its own contemporary mission. Although RA's publications from 2004 to mid-2006 are rife with references to the CAR as a touchstone for RA's work,[70] the CAR barely figures in publications from later in 2006 and 2007.[71] Instead, these documents refer frequently and evocatively to the 1967 referendum as the anchoring point of RA's ethos and activities, especially its new RAP program.[72]

The RAP program was more than simply embedded into the history of reconciliation starting with the 1967 referendum: RA took great care to present the program as an important way—perhaps *the* way–to keep the grassroots spirit of the referendum alive. Individuals and organizations alike were reminded that it was incumbent upon ordinary Australians rather than the government to change the course of history:

> The campaign that resulted in the 1967 Referendum didn't start like other movements for constitutional change, because a government wanted it to. It started because enough of the Australian people wanted it and it's a story Reconciliation Australia is retelling to Australians of today. (RA 2006b)

This message empowering individuals and organizations to take direct action on reconciliation recalled not only the 1967 referendum, but people's movement activities in the CAR era. During our interview,

politicians and media alike as a triumph for Indigenous citizenship and reconciliation more generally (Attwood and Markus 1998; McGregor 2008).

[70] For instance, CEO Mike Lynskey's forward states: "We will draw on the work of the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and on the goodwill of the community and its desire to change things for the better" (RA 2004:4). Similarly, Co-Chair Jackie Huggins' and Mark Leibler's forward states: "In planning activities for next year's 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, we will refocus attention on the Roadmap for Reconciliation released in 2000 by the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation" (RA 2006a:5). Finally, CEO Barbara Livesey's forward states: "This approach ensures that responsibility for reconciliation is rightly shared and owned across the Australian community, in accordance with the Roadmap left with us by the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation […]" (RA 2006a: 7).

[71] The CAR is mentioned only in RA's standard self-description and in the biographies of board members in the annual reports from 2006-8 and is not mentioned at all in the 2006 "Reconciliation Action Plans" publication (RA 2006d, 2006b, 2007).

[72] The word "anniversary" was used 5 times in the 2005-6 annual report, an astonishing 17 times in the 2006-7 annual report and 3 times in the 2006 "Reconciliation Action Plans" publication (RA 2006d, 2006b, 2007). The CAR is not mentioned at all in the RAP publication and is mentioned only in RA's standard self-description and in the biographies of board members.

Livesey spoke evocatively about having participated in the Sydney Bridge Walk and recalled some her initial thoughts after becoming CEO of RA: "My question was where is this people's movement, what are they doing?" (2016).

The programming opportunity occasioned by the 40th anniversary of the referendum was thus used not only to reinvigorate reconciliation in general, but to continue in the specific grassroots tradition of the people's movement. As Smith stated of the RAP program, "[I]t was basically reminding people of the great success of the '67 referendum and that was the result of a popular movement, so how could we reinvigorate that popular movement in some form or fashion" (2016).

The RAP program's evocation and revival of the people's movement for reconciliation came at a significant point of frustration with the lack of progress in Indigenous affairs in Australian politics when, by early 2006, the Howard government had been in power for a full decade. If anything, the government's dissolution of ATSIC in 2004 represented a step backwards for the project of Indigenous self-determination.[73] The RAP program was designed to tap into this frustration and to focus individuals and organizations on how they could further reconciliation goals within their own spheres of influence:

> [I]t was building up then to the time when the national apology finally took place, so I think that there was probably, as there still is and will remain, a sense that this will really only make progress if it's a people's movement rather than a movement that takes its lead from policymakers, from government. And I think that the RAP program was a way of giving organizations and individuals who said they wanted to be part of this—and there were many right up from the days of the bridge walks and since, there were lots of people who wanted to be involved—but would say, 'we don't know how.' (Smith 2016)

It was from this sentiment that the RAP program positioned itself as being open to participation from any and all kinds of organizations including "rock bands, billion dollar corporations, church groups, sporting

[73] ATSIC was disbanded by the Coalition under Howard, which had been publicly against ATSIC from the start. Accusations against ATSIC included its inefficiency and ineffectiveness in service delivery for Indigenous people. Scholars note that ATSIC was plagued from the beginning by unclear mandates and restrictive funding mechanisms, and that abolishing ATSIC instead of pursuing institutional reform overlooked other self-determination and democratic benefits of ATSIC, such as allowing over 1,000 Indigenous people to hold office as community representatives and the involvement of tens of thousands of Indigenous voters (Behrendt 2005, 2010; Bennett and Pratt 2004; Cunningham and Baeza 2005; Sanders 2004).

clubs, schools, hospitals, self-employed mums, government departments, associations, indigenous enterprises, local councils, charities and foundations" (RA 2008c: 20).[74]

Despite the remarkable innovation of calling for organizations to so actively participate in a national reconciliation effort—a practice that remains unique to Australia even today—RA sought to normalize the RAP program as a natural extension of the people's movement.

Practical Reconciliation

As prime minister, Howard became closely associated with the concept of "practical reconciliation" that sought to refocus reconciliation towards "practical" efforts to ameliorate Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage over what he considered merely "symbolic" Indigenous rights issues such as treaty and land rights (Gunstone 2007; Pratt 2005; Sanders 2002; Short 2003). Howard's address at the luncheon introducing the eight pilot organizations of the RAP program provides a representative taste of this vision:

> These diverse action plans include financial literacy initiatives, cross-cultural staff training and programmes to support effective governance and economic development among Indigenous people. While tailored to specific circumstances, they all rest on relationships of mutual respect which, as Mick Dodson said, are essential for genuine reconciliation. They remind us that reconciliation will not come as a result of eloquent rhetoric or high-level communiqués. It will come through indigenous and other Australians taking millions of small steps in the right direction. […]
>
> The gulf between the first Australians and other Australians on economic and social outcomes is a measure of the distance we still have to travel. These gaps can only be closed with practical action that delivers results. Although government structures are important, we should not spend undue amounts of time debating structures and process to the detriment of outcomes. We need to focus on what works, the practical action that delivers results on the ground.[75] (2006: 2–3)

The RAP program's original slogan— "turning good intentions into action"—as well as rigid target and outcome structure cohere neatly with the quantifying ethos and action orientation of practical

[74] According to the author's database, the RAP program has seen participation from all of these types of organizations with the exception of rock bands and self-employed mothers.

[75] The remaining two-thirds of Howard's speech focuses on the issue of Indigenous educational attainment without mention of reconciliation. At one point, Howard suggests that non-Indigenous Australians personally fund scholarships for Indigenous students: "[improving Indigenous education] means non-indigenous Australians, whose children have opportunities that the vast bulk of indigenous children could only dream about, also making a difference, perhaps by helping to fund scholarships that widen educational choices for indigenous young people" (2006: 7).

reconciliation, which demanded visible and tangible results. “I wasn't consciously applying any theoretical models,” said Smith of working on the early RAP program, “but it was definitely born of my background in social marketing and behavioral change and trying to develop a broader social proof of action and commitment” (Smith 2016).

In a similar vein, the first director of the RAP program Adam Mooney, who had previously worked as part of the RAP team at ANZ bank, explained that “one of the key things that we were very very keen to do was to make sure that actions were able to be assessed,” pointing to a formula he had written to incorporate the concepts of action quality, scale and significance into an aggregated “RAP indicator” (Figure 2.5):

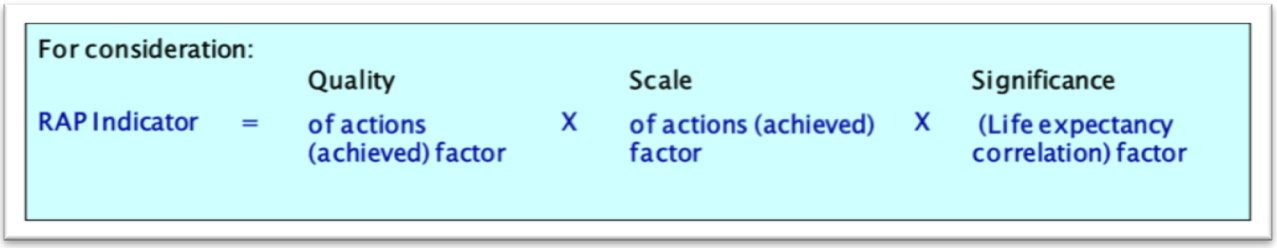


Figure 2.5 Proposed RAP Indicator Formula
(RA 2009b: 31)

This document preceded the measurement strategies for the RAP program that would facilitate not only the annual RAP impact measurement reports but the biannual Workplace Barometer reports as well. These RAP impact measurement reports have eventually become part of the way RA understands the program’s appeal to organizations: “What we try to say is that […] you’re joining a community of organizations who are working within a common framework and a common language and contributing to what we measure collectively, so you’re contributing to the greater community” (Dent 2016).

At this same juncture, Australia’s Close the Gap campaign was well underway. The publication of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma’s *Social Justice Report 2005* laid the conceptual groundwork for identifying a gap in social, economic and health indicators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and calling for a “health equality within a generation” (Aboriginal

& Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2006). A Close the Gap Steering Committee was shortly established and COAG agreed to six Closing the Gap targets in December 2007. After the Labour Party was swept into power and prime minister Kevin Rudd gave his historic apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, further agreements to implement Close the Gap targets were signed and the annual tradition of the "Prime Minister's Report" was inaugurated (Holland 2016).

While the RAP program was *not* designed as part of the Close the Gap campaign, there was a close affinity between the two efforts, especially around the issue of the life expectancy gap. "We were working in RA on the elevator pitch. I need something to say to people about what would it look like if we were reconciled," said Livesey, "And we kept coming back to the life expectancy gap, which at that stage the data was reporting a 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people" (2016).[76] Similarly, Mooney describes Close the Gap as an "enabler", a "very important mantra, an edict, a call to action", but clarifies that the RAP program was conceived with a much broader mission of reconciliation in mind:

> [The RAP program] was about Reconciliation Australia saying how do we bring together actions that will lead to reconciliation, that will lead to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in a place that respects each other, that works together, that lives in harmony, that understands the past, envisages a bright future together. Reconciliation was the overarching aim. The hook, if you like, for the contemporary moment in history, or moment in time, was Close the Gap and turning good intentions into action. So, it was more of an engagement strategy rather than the aim. (Mooney 2016)

Certainly, the enduring RAP framework of respect, relationships and opportunities distinguishes the plans from other kinds of Close the Gap initiatives laser-focused on quantitative economic, health and social indicators of inequality (Altman 2009; Black and Richards 2009; Kowal 2008; Pholi, Black, and Richards 2009). My interlocutors spoke passionately about the "genius" of the respect, relationships and

[76] Livesey continued: "Reconciliation is so much about the heart, but I also thought we should be going to the head—here's the numbers, makes good economic sense. […] If we close the gap in life expectancy, what would be the dollar savings to the economy from reduced spending on what you might call negative spending, prison, pensions, unemployment benefits etc.? We came up with a headline that got us a front-page story in the paper that it's worth something to the country economically to do this because it's worth 1% or 2% of GDP" (2016).

opportunities breakdown of reconciliation actions[77] and the program's ability to create synergies between practical and symbolic aspects of reconciliation.[78]

However, I argue that we should understand the RAP program as fundamentally aligned with the conceptual tradition of practical reconciliation and its demand for results, its action orientation, its quantifying ethos. Rather than directly challenging the idea that reconciliation is about measurable action, the RAP program integrates traditionally "symbolic" aspects of reconciliation, such as cultural awareness training, the acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and the importance of consultation with Indigenous elders and communities, into a system of goals, responsible entities, timelines and measurable targets. As conceived, practiced and especially *measured* by the RAP program, reconciliation is about actionable targets, be they practical, substantive or symbolic.

Growing the RAP Program: A Decade in Review

Ten years after the program began, I find that 671 organizations became official participants in the RAP program by registering their plans with RA. This count *excludes* at least 30 primary and secondary schools that published RAPs before RA's school-specific program Narragunnawali began in 2012 (Dent 2016). In addition to summarizing the status of the RAP program in its annual reports, RA contracted research consultants to issue two major reports on the RAP program during the 2006-2015 period (Nelson 2015; Stolper et al. 2012). However, the information presented here derives from my own independent collection of more than 1,170 RAPs and RAP reports created by 671 organizations between 2006-2015.[79]

[77] Miller stated: "[A]t the beginning, because everyone was starting out, just the idea of the three areas of respect, relationships and opportunities, it's a really nice way of thinking about things. […] [T]o be honest, the action planning bit of it, in terms of actions with dates and timelines and accountabilities, that's not that revolutionary or anything, I think that any good plan should have that. But it was the three topic headlines, the three sections that forced people to think about those things. I think that's the genius of [the RAP]—and still is" (2016).

[78] Tedeschi stated: "The idea of something being either symbolic or practical just doesn't work when it comes to reconciliation because the symbolic is part of what makes the practical possible, because it builds trust and respect and understanding" (2016).

[79] My method of data collection involved downloading RAP documents posted publicly in RA's online database periodically between 2011 and 2016. At the end of my data collection period in 2016, I checked my entire collection of documents

Examination of these RAP documents yields three major conclusions. First, the RAP program achieved broad appeal across a wide range of sectors whereas uptake was highly uneven according to geography. Second, participation in the RAP program grew steadily and significantly in the early years, especially through participation by not-for-profit "third sector" organizations. Finally, organizations were very likely to be delinquent or become altogether inactive in issuing the annual reports and refreshed RAPs as "required" by this voluntary program.

Organizational Characteristics

One of the most striking conclusions from the RAP document data is the strong representation of different organizational types[80] in the program (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: RAP Adoption by Sector, 2006-2015

Corporate		**149**	**22.2%**
	corporate	149	22.2%
Government		**242**	**36.1%**
	Federal Government	90	13.4%
	State/Territory government	105	15.7%
	local government	47	7.0%
Third Sector		**280**	**41.7%**
	community	188	28.0%
	PEAK	57	8.5%
	tertiary education	30	4.5%
	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	5	0.8%
Total		**671**	**100.0%**

against RA's database to make sure I had all documents published by 2015 (in fact, I found that RA's database was missing some documents I had previously collected). I then made spreadsheets of both the documents (n=1170) and organizations (n=671) with basic information such as industry sector and year of publication. My own figures match RA's reporting on RAP adoption fairly well: RA reports that by 2014 there were 593 organizations with RAPs whereas I find 572 organizations. These differences are likely attributable to the way that schools were counted or not counted as well as the techniques use to date RAPs. Whereas I base RAP dates off the date ranges of the RAP documents themselves, RA may use dates based on RAP approval or launches.

[80] I use RA's organizational 8-category organization classification system. However, the corporate, government and third-sector groupings are my own.

Although much of the program's rhetoric is targeted specifically towards "businesses", less than one quarter of participating organizations are classified as corporations in RA's records. Government organizations at the federal, state, and local levels comprise slightly more than one-third of RAP program participants. In fact, the largest single organizational type of participants are the 188 organizations classified by RA as "community" (28%). Non-corporate and non-governmental "third sector" organizations comprise a over 40% of organizations in the RAP program.

My data also show significant variation in RAP adoption according to geography (Table 2.2):

Table 2.2: Australian State/Territory Government RAP Adoption (2006-15) & Population*

State/Territory	2011 Population	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Pop.	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Pop. %	State/Terr. Gov. RAPs
New South Wales	6,917,658	172,624	2.5%	6
Victoria	5,354,040	37,991	0.7%	4
Queensland	4,332,737	155,825	3.6%	7
Western Australia	2,239,170	69,665	3.1%	59
South Australia	1,596,570	30,431	1.9%	22
Tasmania	495,350	19,625	4.0%	0
Aus. Capital Territory	357,219	5,148	1.5%	7
Northern Territory	211,944	56,779	26.8%	0
Australia Total	**21,507,719**	**548,370**	**2.5%**	**105**

**Population statistics reported according to the 2011 census (Australian Bureau of Statistics).*

For instance, a surprising pattern emerges in the origins of the 105 state-level governmental organizations that have adopted RAPs since 2006. Fifty-nine of these organizations come from Western Australia alone, while the three most populous states of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland had a combined total of only 17 organizations enrolled in the RAP program by the end of 2015. Furthermore, not a single state government organization in the Northern Territory created a RAP despite the fact that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up over a quarter of the population—by far the highest in Australia. This clearly demonstrates variation in RAP adoption due to state-level factors.

RAP Adoption over Time

Statistics on RAP adoption demonstrate that the RAP program grew significantly and steadily in the first decade after its founding (Figure 2.6). Starting with 8 pilot organizations in 2006, the RAP program averaged 72 new participants each year, with a high of 114 organizations creating RAPs for the first time in 2014. Participation was much greater in the second half of the program (2011-2015) with 475 organizations joining as compared to only 196 organizations joining in the first period (2006-2010). The three different organizational sectors—corporate, government, and third sector—display markedly different dynamics of RAP adoption over the program's brief history.

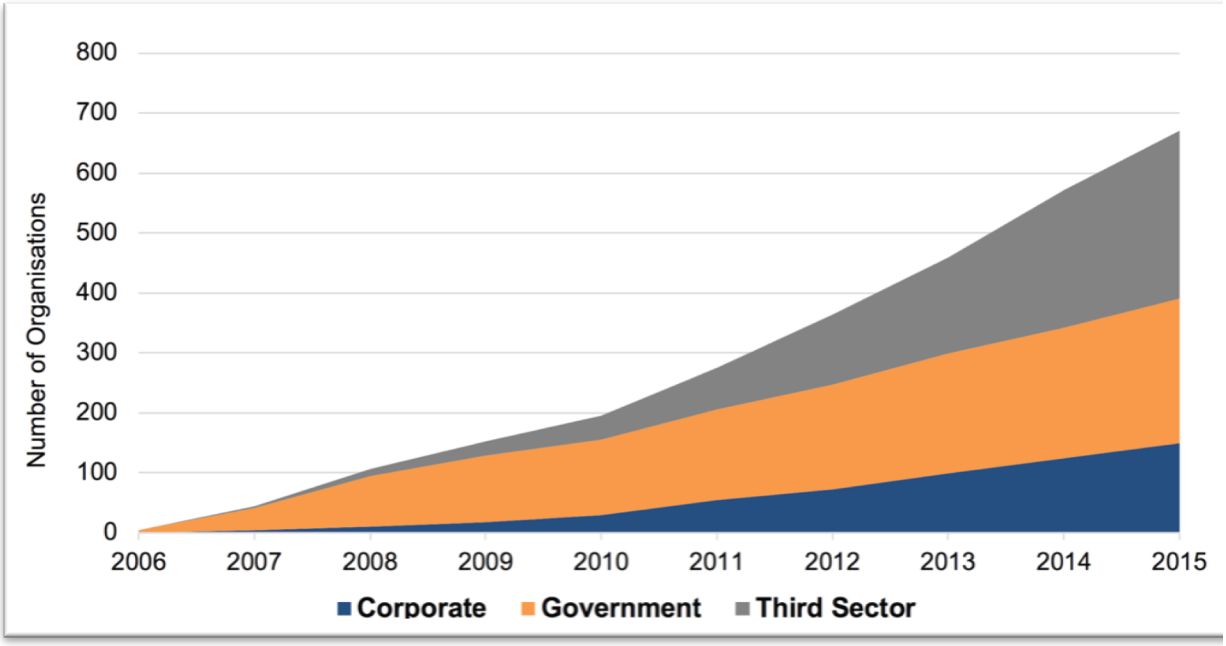


Figure 2.6 RAP Adoption by Sector 2006-2015 (n=671)

As Figure 2.6 demonstrates, government-affiliated organizations far outpaced corporations and third sector organizations in RAP adoption in the early years of the program. The fifth year of the RAP program in 2010 saw government organizations comprising roughly 64% of the nearly 200 enrolled organizations. Since 2010, the number of third sector organizations in particular has grown rapidly, increasing from only 40 to 280, and far outpaced the still considerable growth of corporate participants.

RAP Participation Activity

RAP adoption is an inadequate measure of an organization's ongoing participation in the program. Under the original, pre-RISE structure of the RAP program, organizations were asked to report on RAPs and to "refresh" their plans annually. "RAPs are living documents to be reviewed and updated annually," urged the 2008 RAP Toolkit, instructing organizations to "add in new ideas and actions, to set new targets and timelines and to reflect on what you have learnt over the past year and adjust your RAP accordingly" (RA 2008c: 7,9).

However, the data from RAPs and RAP reports issued during the first ten years of the RAP program suggests that this target was not often met. I present three different measures of RAP inactivity using a sub-sample of the 459 organizations that published their initial RAP before the start of 2014 (Table 2.3):

Table 2.3: RAP Inactivity for RAP Adopters 2006-2013 (n=459)

Measure of Inactivity	Corporate	Government	Third sector	Total
Initial RAP only	55 orgs (54.5%)	92 orgs (46%)	116 orgs (73.4%)	263 orgs (57.3%)
Inactive in 2014-2015	81 orgs (80.2%)	161 orgs (80.5%)	139 orgs (88.0%)	381 orgs (83.0%)
Avg. Years. Between RAP Docs.*	1.9 yrs	2.6 yrs	2.2 yrs	2.3 yrs

**n=196*

The first measure is a straightforward count of organizations that have never published a progress report or subsequent RAP, i.e. a "one and done" pattern of RAP activity displayed by 263 (57%) of RAP organizations. The figure is sufficiently similar—50.4%—if the sub-sample is restricted to organizations publishing their first RAP before the end of 2013. With the important caveat that these statistics do not track if organizations became active in the RAP program again in 2016 or later, the conclusion to be drawn from this limited time period is that a *majority of RAP organizations* published only one RAP as the extent of their engagement with the program during its first decade.

The second measure of RAP inactivity counts those organizations that did *not* publish a progress report or subsequent RAP in the 2014-2015 period, which comprises 83% of all organizations. In other

words, *fewer than one-fifth of RAP organizations were "active" in 2014-2015* (this excludes organizations that created their first RAPs during this period). This equates to only 78 of 459 organizations who had created RAPs in 2013 or earlier who were active in reporting on or refreshing their RAPs in the two-year period from 2014-15. Finally, a third measure calculates that for the 196 organizations that have published at least two RAP documents, i.e. an initial RAP and either a subsequent RAP or a RAP report, the average time between publication activity is 2.3 years rather than the one year or less expected from fully compliant organizations.

While all three measures demonstrate that inactivity from RAP organizations was common—in fact, the norm—across all organizational sectors, data suggests that third sector organizations were especially delinquent. Organizations that were late or altogether inactive in publishing progress reports and subsequent RAPs may still have been engaged in carrying out the goals and actions pledged in their initial RAP. Certainly, refreshing RAP documents yearly proved to be a taxing expectation that most organizations were unable or unwilling to meet. Perhaps for this reason, RA later adjusted its expectations for RAP renewals to longer increments in its RISE structure introduced in 2013.[81]

Conclusion

This chapter provides the first comprehensive history of the RAP program. It details how the RAP program emerged from the confluence of three institutional factors at RA—*funding security*, *corporate and workplace engagement*, and the *40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum*—as well as two conceptual traditions—the *people's movement* and *practical reconciliation*. While certainly not a causal explanation, these factors documented in archival sources as well as interviews with key informants offer important

[81] According to the RISE structure, the "scoping" stage of the Reflect RAP should take around one year. The more advanced Innovate and Stretch RAPs should last between two and three years each, and the Elevate RAP timeframe is simply negotiable with RA for organizations at this level (RA 2018). While these explicit written guidelines were published in 2018, the suggested timeframes have clearly been implemented in RAPs adopted since 2015.

insights into the emergence and success of the RAP program in seeing 671 organizations create over 1,000 RAP-related documents within a decade.

Furthermore, this chapter has brought original data to bear on the question of adoption during the RAP program's first decade. I find that, despite the language of "businesses" used in many RAP program materials, corporate organizations make up less than one quarter of RAP adoptees during this period. In contrast, over 40% of RAPs created from 2006-2015 were by non-governmental, non-corporate third sector organizations. Data from state- and territory-level government organizations demonstrates strong heterogeneity in RAP adoption according to localized factors, a topic which should be the subject of further research. Finally, the data shows that RAP organizations during the first decade of the program were more often than not delinquent in their annual reporting on and refreshing of RAPs. Understanding periods of inactivity or attrition from the RAP program are also important subjects for future research.

Finally, I argue that the RAP program's very public alignment with the people's movement tradition as well as its subtler adoption of practical reconciliation efficiency objectives and measurement instruments belie two remarkable innovations. First, the RAP program ushered in a new era of organizational participation in the reconciliation project, such that Reconciliation Australia designated "institutional integrity" as one of the five dimensions of reconciliation in 2016 (Figure 2.7).

The novelty and ingenuity of embedding reconciliation practices into existing organizations, rather than through specialized organizations or activities, may not be readily apparent due to RA's narrative of the RAP program as simply being an extension of the people's movement, in which all citizens are called upon to play their part in a national project of reconciliation. However, the engagement of hundreds of organizations with reconciliation was unique in Australia's reconciliation and is, to my knowledge, still a global singularity. Furthermore, RA's ability to easily recruit organizations within this framework of the people's movement raises interesting questions. Is organizational involvement in reconciliation best understood as part of a grassroots people's movement or as top-down participation led by CEOs and

boards of directors? Whatever the case, recruiting organizations to participate in the RAP program fulfils Reconciliation Australia's explicit purpose, which is to "inspire and enable all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation" (Figure 2.8).

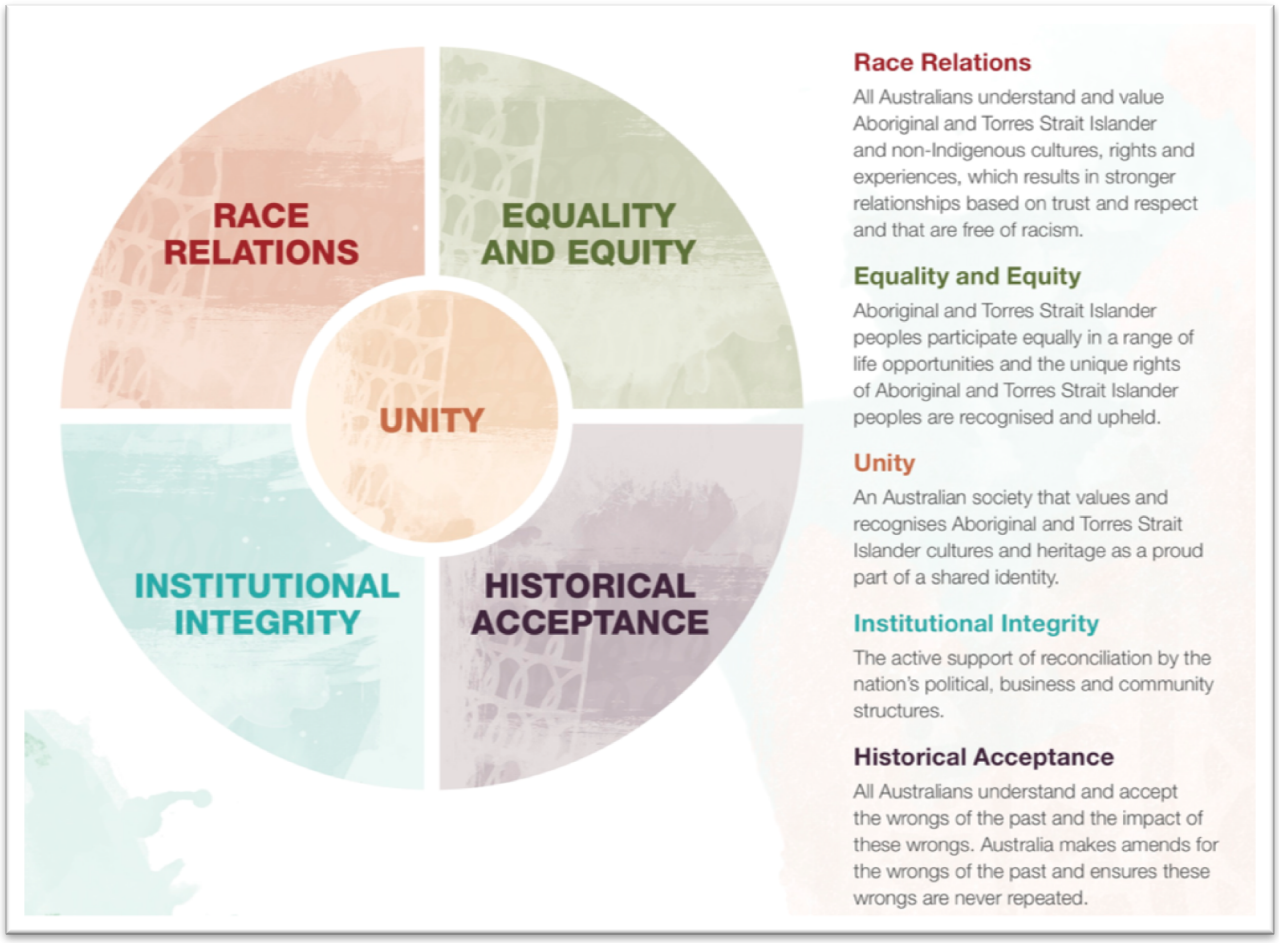


Figure 2.7 Five Dimensions of Reconciliation
(RA 2016b, 2017)

As a second innovation, I argue that the RAP program offers a unique resolution to the tension produced by the Howard government's push for practical reconciliation. Rather than sidelining or dismissing the importance of symbolic reconciliation related to historical acknowledgement and cultural respect, RAPs make room for symbolic actions alongside practical ones targeted towards reducing Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. The innovation here is that symbolic actions are treated according to the same quantifying ethos and action orientation as practical actions related to Close the Gap objectives: even

relationships, acknowledgement and respect are broken down into discrete actions, timelines and measurable targets. In some ways, this makes symbolic actions less vulnerable to the criticism of ineffectiveness by providing impact measurements, the contributions of which are all the more impressive at the aggregate level of hundreds of RAP organizations. The RAP program additionally creates a narrative defense against the Howard practical reconciliation narrative that pits symbolism in a zero-sum game against practicality by arguing that the three themes of relationships, respect and opportunities are all equally crucial for reconciliation. In sum, RAP documents provide a comprehensive rationale and instrument for the interrelation and mutual dependence of supposedly distinct symbolic and practical approaches.

The RAP program's importance to Australia's reconciliation landscape is clear: not only do millions of Australians work or study in RAP organizations, the RAP program is also a mainstay of RA's strategy for reconciliation over the next 25 years (RA 2016). In piecing together a comprehensive picture of the program's origins and trends in adoption over the first ten years, this chapter offers scholars and practitioners alike a better understanding the RAP program in the context of Australia's long reconciliation history—and a useful resource for beginning to raise any number of important questions about the program's past, present and future.

Figure 2.8 Reconciliation Australia Vision Statement
(RA 2017)

Chapter 3: RAP Dynamics in Case Study Organizations

There exists very little precedent for organizational participation in a conciliatory citizenship project such as national reconciliation. Even academics, politicians and practitioners familiar with the field of transformative justice[82] may struggle to envision how organizations, rather than individuals, could contribute to a state-supported reconciliation process. What, exactly, would organizations say and do in the name of reconciliation? As collective actors, can organizations be "authentic" in their reconciliation commitments? Does reconciliation even belong in the workplace or in the private sector?

As the last chapter demonstrated, Reconciliation Australia (RA) engaged carefully with these questions about the role of organizations in reconciliation and boldly provided its answers in 2008 by releasing the first RAP program template. The RAP program's structures, themes and minimum requirements provide a straightforward, though far from simple, process and clear language for corporate, government and third sector organizations to participate in the nation's reconciliation efforts. Just one decade later in 2016, RA formalized the role of corporate, government and third-sector organizations in reconciliation by making "institutional integrity" one of its five key dimensions of reconciliation (Figure P.4):

> "**Institutional Integrity**: The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures. *Goal*: Our political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation. *Action*: Capitalise on the RAP Program to create a wider range of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians." (RA 2019c)

Just as the RAP program is the first real-world model for organizational participation in a national reconciliation process, Australia's conciliatory citizenship project is also the first to cast the private, public and third sectors in a progressive, leading role of the reconciliation drama. Conversely, Australian

[82] I define transformative justice as the practice of justice undertaken for the purpose of social healing and transformation, such as in philosophies of conciliatory, restorative, transitional, holistic and reparative justice. Transformative justice processes are commonly imagined and suggested, trialed and tracked, resisted and challenged, imposed and improvised in post-conflict situations of peacebuilding as well as in cases of socio-economic rights abuse through structural violence (Czyzewski 2011; Evans 2016; Gready and Robins 2014; Lambourne 2014).

organizations have become the first into the world to step into the domestic arena of reconciliation as collective actors contributing to national reconciliation goals, as organizational participants in national reconciliation.[83] These approximately 1,000 RAP organizations, which based on my interviews were almost universally unaware of the global uniqueness of the program, looking closely to RA staff and RAP program materials for guidance on institutionalizing the practice of reconciliation within their workplace. As will become evident in this chapter and the next, RA's process of vetting and endorsing RAPs[84] leads to a great deal of standardization of organizational discourses and actions related to the RAP and reconciliation.

At the same time, RAPs vary greatly from organization to organization: the institutionalization and overall dynamics of the RAP are deeply influenced by organizational and environmental characteristics ranging from staff size to sector to senior leadership. Furthermore, RAP organizations enjoy considerable latitude in their articulation of reconciliation and their implementation of RAP actions within the broad thematic guidance and minimum requirements of the RAP program. Finally, organizations are explicitly *encouraged* by the RAP program to create customized RAP actions in their unique "spheres of influence" and are *praised* in RAP program media and documents for their creativity, extravagance and entrepreneurship as they both partner with and donate to Indigenous causes and people. On the ground, RAP organizations employ a diversity of strategies, structures and scripts to navigate this tension between conformity and creativity—among many, many other such tensions, frictions and ruptures between conciliatory ideals and real-world practice. RAP organizations are, in this sense, actors on the frontlines of reconciliation.

[83] Whereas many non-state collective actors have been involved in transformative justice processes as activists, organizers and archivists (e.g. REHMI in Guatemala), to the best of my knowledge organizations have not ever before *participated* in reconciliation as subjects, i.e. as participants on the road to reconciliation.

[84] Per the RA website's RAP FAQ page: "Developing a RAP is optional, and is by no means the only way to increase your workplace's contribution to reconciliation and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. If your workplace chooses to develop its own strategies concerning reconciliation, this is perfectly acceptable. However, in these instances please remember that the Reconciliation Australia and RAP logos, as well as the words 'Reconciliation Action Plan' or 'RAP' are registered trademarks owned by Reconciliation Australia through IP Australia, and must not be used. If you wish to call your plan a 'Reconciliation Action Plan' or 'RAP' and/or use the Reconciliation Australia or RAP logo, you must gain Reconciliation Australia's permission through compliance with the endorsement process" (RA 2019b).

The task of this chapter, therefore, is to illustrate Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation from an organizational (meso) level perspective—to paint colorful and detailed case studies of RAP dynamics in three very different organizations against a backdrop of the RAP program's standardized discourse about reconciliation.[85] Drawing on documentary, interview and ethnographic data from four case study organizations, this chapter sketches the answer to a basic but elusive question: *how do organizations practice reconciliation?* In other words, what does it mean for an organization, as opposed to an individual citizen or the state, to participate in reconciliation? To answer this question, approximately 100 contact hours of participant observation and 40 interviews were conducted with people who were involved with the RAP program in their workplace at one of four RAP organizations in the greater Sydney metropolitan area:

"Taylor & Smith": a top-tier national law firm;

"ABC Bank": one of "Big Four" banks in Australia;

the **Sydney Opera House**: a world-famous performing arts venue and heritage site; and

"Bright Futures": a semi-rural child and family services not-for-profit organization.

This chapter begins with a conceptual section explaining precisely what I mean by "RAP dynamics" and a section on data collection and analysis. I present each of the three primary case studies (Taylor & Smith, the Sydney Opera House and Bright Futures) in their own section that describes the organization's unique RAP dynamics. Finally, this chapter concludes with a section that reprises the chapter's key takeaways—namely how organizational characteristics, environmental factors and RAP participation may affect the localized "RAP dynamics" of each organization's unique action plan.

[85] The data for this chapter includes the analysis of data from all four case study organizations. However, only three descriptions will be presented in this dissertation, namely Taylor & Smith (private sector), the Sydney Opera House (public sector) and Bright Futures (third sector).

Conceptualizing RAP Dynamics

Through interviews and observational data, this chapter richly illustrates the emergent dynamics of the RAP program's institutionalization in four case study organizations. For this thesis, I define *RAP dynamics* as the totality of the official discourses, management structures, social interactions and engagements with the RAP program in a participating organization. Thus, this chapter's overarching inquiry—*how do organizations practice reconciliation?* —can be articulated as two specific research questions to be answered by my four case studies:

1. *What systems, themes, activities and interactions characterize organizations' RAP dynamics?*
2. *How and to what extent is the RAP program institutionalized within organizations?*

I break down the concept of "RAP dynamics" into two traditionally sociological categories of analysis: structure and culture. The *structure* of an organization's RAP refers to the official RAP targets, responsibilities and timelines as well as systems of coordination and production that are created to carry out the work of the RAP in the workplace. The *culture* of an organization's RAP refers to the organization's official articulation of the RAP's purpose and the organization's connection to reconciliation as well as the emotions, interactions, understandings and relationships circulating around the workplace's RAP. It is this process of translating the generic RAP program templates into the localized systems (structure) and vernacular idioms (culture) of a specific organization that I refer to as *institutionalization.*

RAP Structure

The RAP program has very explicit guidelines issued by Reconciliation Australia for how it ought to be structured, implemented and monitored. As we learned in the previous chapter, *respect, relationships* and *opportunities* are the three themes around which every RAP organization must articulate customized meanings of reconciliation and pledge tailored versions of the minimum required actions (Figure 3.1):

Figure 3.1 RAP Minimum Requirements
(RA et al. 2017: 18)

Through a fourth action area of *tracking*, Reconciliation Australia encourages organizations to carefully track progress towards the goals pledged in the RAPs. Voluntary annual reporting by RAP organizations allows Reconciliation Australia to compile national statistic on RAP organization activities that are widely disseminated via "RAP Impact Reports" (Figure 3.2). Prior to beginning the process of forming an internal RAP Working Group and drafting a first RAP, organizations must register a statement of intent with RA to express their commitment to what is often more than one year of preparatory work. Multiple drafts of a first or "refreshed" subsequent RAP are exchanged between the organization's RAP Working Group and their assigned "RAP Officer" from RA. Eventually, the RAP must be approved with sign-offs both by RA and the organization's top executive. These are non-negotiable elements of the RAP program's "structure" to which participating organizations must accede in some way.

Figure 3.2 RAP Impact Report 2017
(RA 2017)

Although the RAP program is highly standardized with required "minimum elements" for every RAP stage, organizations participating in the RAP program must go through a lengthy, iterative process of customizing generic RAP templates and targets and integrating the RAP into local structures of management, action and accountability. RAP organizations integrate the structural features and substantive demands of the RAP program with existing systems, workflows and units to varying degrees: in any given organization, differently structural elements of the RAP may be weakly or strongly institutionalized—or somewhere in between. Table 3.1 below enumerates some of the many structural elements of the RAP program and provides criteria for evaluating if those structural elements have been strongly or weakly institutionalized in a given organization.

Table 3.1 Strong versus Weak Institutionalization of RAP Program Structural Elements

Org. RAP Structure Element	Strong Institutionalization	Weak Institutionalization
Distribution of RAP Labor	RAP program present in most/all divisions of the organization	RAP program limited to a few individuals and divisions
RAP Decision-making, Consensus-building	Regular quarterly meetings well-attended and efficient	Quarterly meetings are canceled or become perfunctory or ineffective
RAP Monitoring and Evaluation	Effective measurement and tracking for RAP targets	Insufficient or ineffective measurement and tracking for RAP targets
Strategic RAP Leadership	Comprehensive annual reports discussed by Board & stakeholders	Insufficient, limited or low-profile annual reporting
RAP Responsibilities, RAP-based Role Definition	RAP targets as individuals' KPIs	RAP targets remain completely voluntary
Daily RAP Leadership, RAP Management	RAP point-person at least a part-time job responsibility	No clear go-to RAP person or RAP point-person is a volunteer
Indigenous RAP Involvement	Multiple Indigenous employees involved in RAP Working Group	Few or no Indigenous employees involved in RAP Working Group
Indigenous RAP Leadership	Longtime employment of senior-level Indigenous people or advisory bodies	Irregular or short-term senior-level Indigenous advisors
RAP Communications, Visibility, Publicity	Quality content regarding RAP program activities is regularly distributed through appropriate media	Content of insufficient quality irregularly or infrequently distributed through media

RAP Culture

RAP program materials are rife with values, cues and even scripts for RAP "culture", i.e. the discourses and norms of speech and behavior surrounding the planning, implementation and monitoring of the RAP at each case study organization. Just as RAP actions are structured around the three key action areas *respect, relationships* and *opportunities,* so too is the culture of the RAP program centered on these value-laden themes (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 RAP Themes: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities
(RA 2017)

Especially through the careful watch of RAP officers assigned to help organizations through the process of completing a first or refreshed RAP, RA requires RAP organizations to espouse a certain set of conciliatory values with regards to Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples. The RAP program also tracks the attitudes of RAP-organization employees compared to the general populations (Figure 3.4):[86]

[86] These statistics do not, of course, provide any evidence that the RAP program causes improvements to trust, pride, prejudice etc. They are, however, representative of the marketing of the RAP program.

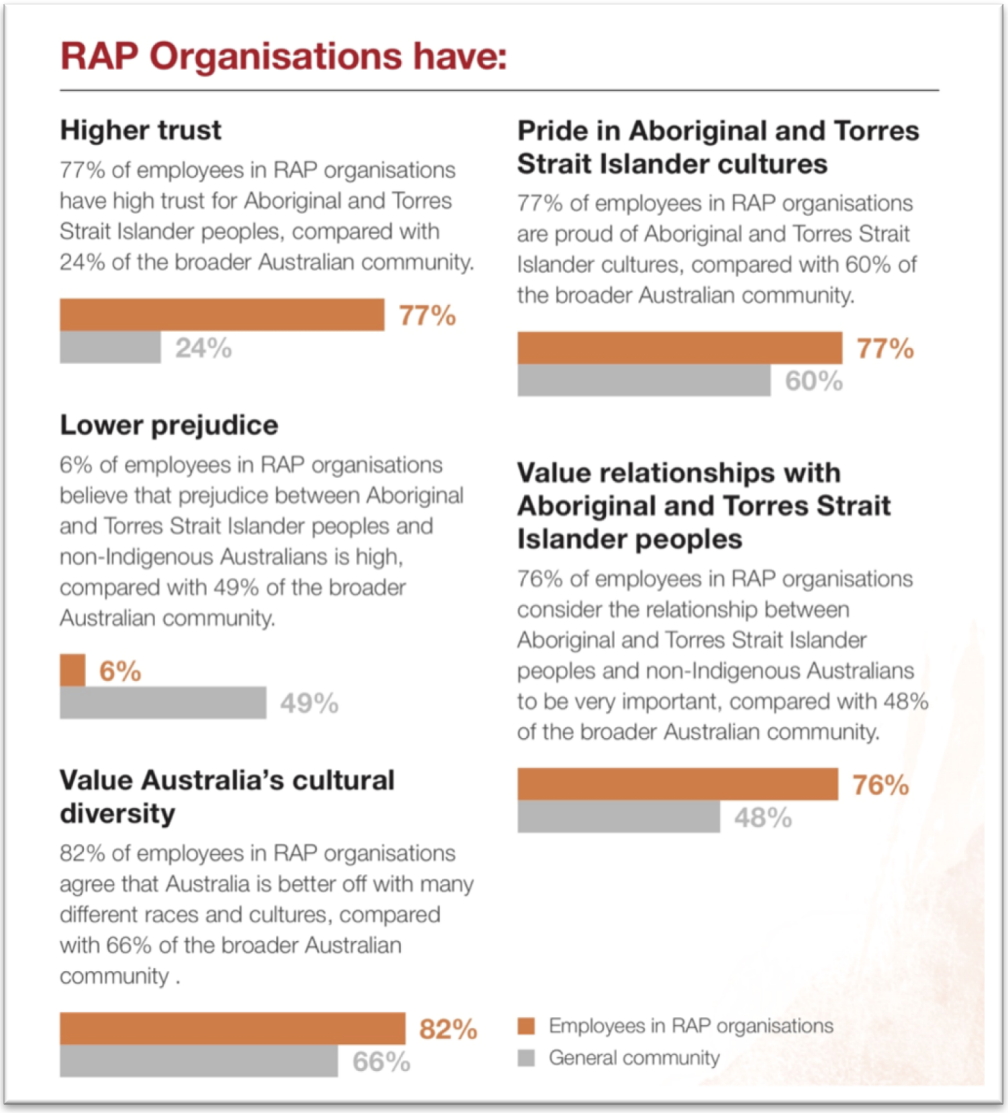


Figure 3.4 "RAPs Are A Powerful Tool for Advancing Reconciliation"
(RA 2017:3)

The articulation of the organization's identity and goals as well as their concept of reconciliation in the RAP program document sets an important official baseline for the culture of the RAP program at an organization. However, the RAP document itself cannot tell us about how these articulations of values have (or have not) been institutionalized at a given organization. Speaking in terms of ideal types, weakly institutionalized RAP culture will be a workplace in which the RAP and reconciliation are poorly understood and in which the conciliatory values of the RAP program are unknown or even contradicted. A strongly institutionalized RAP culture will be one in which discourses about the RAP and reconciliation

proliferate amongst a wide set of social connections and in which the values and identities of the organization are aligned with the RAP program's conciliatory values.

Table 3.2 Strong versus Weak Institutionalization of RAP Program Cultural Elements

Org. RAP Culture Element	Strong Institutionalization	Weak Institutionalization
RAP Origin/Participation Story	Consistent, well-known narrative of RAP involvement	RAP involvement not well-known or understood
Organizational Alignment with RAP values	The culture, values and goals of the organization & RAP program are discursively linked and aligned	Disinterest or conflict between the culture, values and goals of the organization and the RAP program
Creating and/or Strengthening of Social Ties via the RAP Program	RAP involvement helps to create or strengthen social ties and cultural capital.	RAP involvement does not generate or increase social ties or cultural capital.

In the following case studies, I focus on three main aspects of how RAP culture is institutionalized, namely via origin stories, alignment between organizational and RAP program values and the proliferation and/or strengthening of social connections and cultural capital (Table 3.2).

Data & Methods

This section explains why the organizational case study method was chosen for this project. It also details the case selection principles that guided my choice of case study organizations and provides an overview of the data collected for each case study.

Case Study Method

The importance of case study organizations in this mixed-methods project cannot be understated. In fact, the other types of data collection and analysis—the detailed history of the RAP program's emergence and change over its first decade of existence, an industry case study of RAPs more than 30 professional sports organizations, and "informational interviews" with 13 randomly selected RAP organizations—all served to support these four case studies. Although there is little agreement about the

purpose, analysis and even definition of the case study method, the idea of using a small number of carefully selected "cases" to study social phenomena is a long-honored sociological tradition (Becker and Ragin 1992; Ragin, Nagel, and White 2004).

The documentary data I collected and the 15 "RAP process" interviews I conducted at organizations from various sector-geographies in the lead-up to the organizational case studies provided several important advantages for the processes of research design and data collection. First, my initial interviews with current and former RAP staff members as well as a broad range of RAP organizations provide crucial context and background of the RAP program, which has never been the subject of serious scholarly research. These "scoping" exercises provided me with the broad context necessary to make informed decisions about organizational characteristics and trajectories during the sampling process. Second, my initial documentary and interview research allowed me to design a case study process that could get to the heart of some of the most pertinent and puzzling aspects of workplace RAPs. What are the tensions between organizational and individual understandings of RAPs and reconciliation more broadly? How do individuals understand and feel about participating in the RAP activities organized in their workplaces? Finally, my initial documentary and interview research created a rich interpretive context that allowed for more incisive inquiry and grounded analysis of RAP dynamics in case study organizations.

Case Selection

Since it was only feasible to conduct fieldwork in three to five organizations, I focused on forging relationships with organizations that were *dissimilar* to each other in sector, size and situation while holding constant organizations' long-term participation in the RAP program and location in New South Wale's greater Sydney metropolitan region (Table 3.3). My first criterion was to select at least one case study from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors as well as a variety of industries within those

sectors industries (law, banking, performing arts, social services). I also selected organizations on the basis of heterogeneity in locations (urban and semi-rural) and geography (local, national and multinational). Finally, I sought organizations that ranged in size (20 to 1,000 to 40,000 employees).

Table 3.3 Case Study Organization Characteristics

	Taylor & Smith	ABC Bank	Opera House	Bright Futures
Industry	variety law firm	consumer banking & financial services	cultural institution and performance venue	child and family services provider
Sector	private	private	public (NSW trust)	not-for-profit
Location	metro Sydney	metro Sydney	metro Sydney	semi-rural NSW
Geography	national	multinational	one location	local area
Employees	1,000	40,000	900+	20

Although RAP program history was not my primary selection criteria, I was fortunate to find case study organizations that also feature variation in their engagement with the RAP program (Table 3.4). My case studies encompass all four different stages of the program (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate) as well as different histories of RAP program adoption (2007-2014) and engagement (1st vs. 5th RAP). In addition, these organizations vary considerably with respect to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, which ranged from 0 to 200 Indigenous employees (equivalent to 0%-2% of all employees).

Table 3.4 Case Study Organization RAP Program History

	Taylor & Smith	ABC Bank	Opera House	Bright Futures
# (%) Indigenous staff	10 (1%)	200 (0.5%)	20 (2%)	0 (0%)
First RAP	2013	2007	2011	2014
2016 RAP	3rd	5th	3rd	1st
2016 Stage	Innovate	Elevate	Stretch	Reflect
Current RAP	4th	5th	4th	2nd
Current Stage	Innovate	Elevate	Stretch	Innovate

Therefore, these four case studies offer diverse perspectives on RAP participation from the standpoint of the following aspects of organizational characteristics, environment and RAP history:

Size (number of staff)**:** 20, 900+, 1,000, 40,000

Sector & Industry: private (law, banking); public (arts); not-for-profit (family services)

Geography: single location, local municipal area, national, multinational

RAP Participation History circa 2016: 2007-2014 start dates; 1-5 RAPs completed

RAP Stage: all four "RISE" stages represented (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch, Elevate)

Despite the diversity of these case study organizations in terms of their most basic organizational characteristics and RAP histories, these four organizations are decidedly *unrepresentative* of the overall population of RAP organizations, as described for the 671 organizations who created RAPs in the first decade of the program's existence (see Chapter 2). The most prominent factors held constant across all four cases are:

Location in the greater Sydney Metropolitan Area: All four case studies took place in Sydney's Central Business District or in the greater metropolitan area as defined by the ability to reach the organization using a Sydney Opal public transportation card. This does not reflect the overall national geographic spread of RAP organizations.

Long-term RAP program participation: My case study organizations have all maintained their participation for at least a five-year period (ranging from 5-12 years of participation) and producing an average of 3.75 RAP documents by the end of 2018 (ranging from 2-5 total RAPs). This defies the modal experience of RAP participation, which, as detailed in Chapter 2, is best characterized as partial and sporadic (57.3% of organizations who joined the RAP program 2006-2013 never went on to create a second RAP).

The following analysis of RAP dynamics and lived experiences of reconciliation in each of these four case studies relies heavily upon this understanding of the complex convergence and divergence between this small-n sample and a much larger population of RAP organizations.

Case Study Data Collection

The data collected for these four case studies consisted of three types: public and internal documents relating to the organization's RAP program activities, transcribed group and individual interviews, and ethnographic fieldnotes taken from meetings and public events at which I was invited to observe and/or participate. On average I conducted 12 interviews and attended 2 events per organization with a mean of 26.5 contact hours for each case study (Table 3.5):

Table 3.5 Case Study Organization Data Collection

	Taylor & Smith	ABC Bank	Opera House	Bright Futures	Total
Interviews					
Total Interviews	9	10	16	14	59
Individual Interviews	6	8	13	11	38
Participant Observation					
Events Attended	3	2	2	2	9
Event Hours	6	10	10	6	32
Total Interview & Participant Observation Contact					
Approx. Visits	6	9	12	8	35
Approx. Contact Hours	20	25	34	27	106

This table does not reflect the extensive documentary and archival source collection that also took place at each case study, where I both asked for internal documents as well as sought public documents, posters, advertisements, videos, and other publicity materials related to the RAP program at each organization.

Case Study Analysis

My analysis of each organization's RAP dynamics takes into account documentary, interview and ethnographic evidence collected between 2015 and 2019. My findings in the following four sections pertaining to each case study organization are presented according to the following scheme:

Case Background

background information about the organization and my personal connection to the case

RAP Dynamics I: 2015-16 Snapshot

structure: RAP targets & tracking; RAP organization & activities; RAP leadership & labor

culture: RAP origin narratives; organizational identity; RAP-based interactions

RAP Dynamics II: 2017-19 Update

reflections on case study organization RAP dynamics based on follow-up data

Case Summary

analysis of RAP program integration with organizational systems, narratives and identity

The goal of this chapter is to provide a mere suggestion of the complex RAP dynamics at each of my three primary case study organizations, highlighting what I find to be the most salient or unique elements of RAP dynamics of these four case study organizations. As will become apparent, the Taylor & Smith case study description in the following section is more elaborate than those about RAP dynamics at the Sydney Opera House and Bright Futures, in part because many contextual details on the RAP program as well as further explanation of my investigative and analytical methods introduced in this first case description to not need to be repeated. The second factor in my decision to devote additional detail to the Taylor & Smith case is due to concerns about the privacy of my respondents at ABC Bank, which is an easily identifiable organization. Since Taylor & Smith and ABC Bank in fact share many ties, however, the presentation of RAP dynamics at Taylor & Smith provides important insight into some elements of RAP dynamics that are shared within the dense networks of Australian corporations.

Private Sector Case Study: Taylor & Smith

Organizational Characteristics	RAP History	Data Collection
Location: CBD, Sydney, NSW	First RAP: 2013	Total Interviews: 9
Geography: national	2016 RAP: Innovate (3rd RAP)	Events Attended: 3
Employees: 1000+	2019 RAP: Innovate (4th RAP)	Approx. Contact Hours: 20

"Taylor & Smith" is a prominent, well-respected national law firm employing over 1,000 people across offices in multiple major Australian cities whose doors I entered in Sydney due to a strange coincidence:

having finally received ethics approval from both the University of Western Sydney and Harvard University in mid-2016, I had eagerly begun contacting tens of randomly selected RAP organizations to schedule informational "RAP process" interviews (see Ch. 1, methods). My very first respondent was Logan, the head of a tourism company in Australia's famously rugged and enchanting Outback. Assuming we would schedule a phone interview due to his remote location, Logan surprised me by offering to meet in Sydney the following week at a downtown address which he said was a law firm.

Nothing could have prepared me for the astonishing juxtaposition of sitting with Logan, looking every inch the Outback tour guide with his weathered tan and heavy boots, in an opulent lobby sipping complimentary top-notch espressos and discussing reconciliation. As I soon learned, Logan had facilitated small group tours led by local Aboriginal guides as well as educational trips and volunteer projects in partnership with a remote Indigenous community called "Red Hill." In 2011, Taylor & Smith helped create the Red Hill Community Foundation and by the time I came into the picture in 2016, Taylor & Smith had become one of Logan's regular clients, annually booking a large volunteer trip for select staff, clients and associates to the Red Hill community as well as educational tours of surrounding natural wonders and sacred sites (Figure 3.5). Taylor & Smith had then assisted Logan in creating a RAP for his tour company, all while continuing to lend pro bono support to the Red Hill Community Foundation.

Figure 3.5 Tourism at Red Hill
(Image source withheld.)

At the end of our meeting, Logan introduced me to Joseph, his champion at Taylor & Smith, a charismatic senior partner at the firm who never failed to greet me with a wide smile and a hearty handshake. Joe, bubbling over with enthusiasm for his firm's annual trip to Red Hill and an internship program for Aboriginal college students (Figure 3.6), immediately offered to speak with me about Taylor & Smith's involvement with the RAP program and to facilitate a case study. After speaking more formally with Joe and agreeing upon a memorandum of understanding laying out the purpose, privileges and responsibilities of conducting research at Taylor & Smith, I conducted two group interviews and six individual interviews during 2016.

During my fieldwork at Taylor & Smith I also attended three RAP-related activities at the office as a participant-observer: a planning meeting for the firm's annual volunteer trip to the Red Hill community, a celebration of the firm's Indigenous interns, and a lunch seminar on the progress of the law firm's pro-bono work for the Red Hill Community Foundation. During a follow-up trip to Sydney in 2018 I conducted one additional group interview about changes, successes and challenges with the law firm's RAP process. For documentary data, I carefully considered Taylor & Smith's four RAP documents as well as RAP reports

and publicity materials, documents related to RAP activities including the volunteer trip and, finally, Taylor & Smith annual reports, financial reports and website text, images, videos and links.[87]

Figure 3.6 Taylor & Smith RAP Excerpts

[87] I repeated this process of meeting a key contact, establishing a memorandum of understanding, conducting interviews, collecting documents and attending events at my three other case study organizations.

RELATIONSHIPS

At [redacted] our success depends on strong relationships with our clients and between our people. We view strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as essential to achieving reconciliation.

Likewise, the success of our Innovate RAP will depend on relationships between our organisation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
1. The [redacted] RAP Working Group (RWG) continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	**National RAP team**	May 2016	• Meets at least 4 times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation and measure targets. • Individuals to be assigned with responsibility for initiatives in each office
2. Celebrate NRW by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.	**National RAP team**	May 2015	• An evening celebration in our Sydney office for National Reconciliation Week, with an update on our national Innovate RAP
3. Maintain working relationship with Legal Profession Reconciliation Network (LPRN)	**National RAP team**	May 2016	• [redacted] will continue to participate in the LPRN meetings
4. [redacted] will continue to provide pro bono work to various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations	**Pro bono Partner**	Ongoing	• [redacted] will continue to provide pro bono support with the Arts Law Centre of Australia and on wills trips to Aboriginal communities
5. Continue to strengthen our partnership with the Aboriginal community in Central Australia including the [redacted] community	**National RAP team**	May 2016	• Delivery of the 2015 [redacted] Festival • Continued partnership with the [redacted] to support the foundation's objectives outlined in this plan

Figure 3.7 Taylor & Smith RAP Excerpt ["Relationships"]

RAP Dynamics I: 2015-16 Snapshot

At the time of my principal fieldwork with Taylor & Smith during 2016, the law firm was operating under their third RAP, which was at the "Innovate" stage – the second of the four "RISE" stages of the RAP program. Progress towards RAP targets was discussed quarterly by Taylor & Smith's RAP Working Group (RWG), one of the RAP minimum requirements and a standard practice amongst the RAP organizations I interviewed. Although the RWG was *explicitly* national in purview, the Sydney branch office was clearly the physical and spiritual hub of RAP activity at Taylor and Smith (e.g. Figure 3.7), in no small part due to Joe's leadership role.[88]

Participating in the RAP program was not always reported to me as a seamless experience at Taylor & Smith due to the program's strict requirements and "bureaucracy" regarding the formulation of RAP actions, articulation of RAP goals and formatting of RAP documents. There were also, on multiple occasions, allusions to conflict between Taylor & Smith and the central RAP program over the appropriate RISE stage of Taylor & Smith's RAP. Nonetheless, the Taylor & Smith employees with which I spoke made it unequivocally clear to me that the personalized support provided by dedicated Reconciliation Australia RAP officers had made the process "very worth it" overall.

At Taylor & Smith, the RAP program origin narrative took as its starting point the serendipitous meeting and childhood proximity of Joe and Logan. As Joe himself explained, the two had a "completely chance" meeting and subsequent discovery that they were roughly the same age and had been neighbors as children in the Sydney suburb of West Kimball, likely riding the same bus to school. The meeting catalyzed Joe's long-standing desire to learn more about Aboriginal people, culture and issues[89] and

[88] Despite the fact that I did not ask any specific questions about Joe's role in the RAP at Taylor & Smith, the RAP-involved employees I interviewed in Sydney extolled his "passion" and "enthusiasm" in helping the Red Hill Community Foundation with its many projects—which have included goals of expanding the primary school, establishing a community garden and improving sports infrastructure—no matter the setbacks, delays or frustrations.

[89] Joe explained: "I can't point to a direct experience that I've had that's led me down this path of feeling a deep sense of obligation to help Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders enjoy the same lifestyle advantages that I enjoy. There's

before long, Logan had taken Joe out to the remote Red Hill community where Joe fondly recalled memories of taking walks and painting with the local Aboriginal Elders during a rare three-day spate of rain in this arid region. Receiving support from the firm to explore ways to support Red Hill, Joe went ahead with the purchase of paintings from a Red Hill artist to finance a food van to provide meals to children at the local school, which Logan and the community were lobbying to have re-opened.

Not long after Taylor & Smith began their work with the Red Hill Community Foundation, they were approached by a corporate contact about joining the RAP program, as Joe remembers here:

> Well, people were finding out, the word spread that we were doing here at Taylor & Smith was pretty special. Direct engagement with a remote Aboriginal community and getting a school reopened for Aboriginal kids—no one else in the country is doing that. For a law firm especially it's like, wow! […] And then someone who was from Westpac actually came and saw me and they said oh, you've got to have a RAP.

Overall, the RAP origin story emphasized the firm's participation in the RAP program out of an *authentic* and *passionate commitment* to supporting Indigenous Australians.

The RAP program at Taylor & Smith was quickly blended into the organization's identity. My interviews and observations revealed multiple instances of *organizational identity work* undertaken by RAP-involved employees to both *normalize Taylor & Smith's participation in the program* and to *reinforce the image of an "organic" fit between Taylor & Smith and the RAP program* on the basis of shared goals and values. For instance, during one of my initial visits to Taylor & Smith,[90] I asked a group of several employees including Joe to tell me about Taylor & Smith's history with the RAP program as well as what the idea of reconciliation meant to their organization. My field notes from this day (on which I did not yet have permission to record) reveal a flurry of starred quotations and underlined phrases: "outward-looking

not some watershed moment. It was just something that at an early age occurred to me that there was a problem in Australia."

[90] My first backgrounding session at Taylor & Smith took place with Joe, his assistant, and a few other staff from across the organization who had been invited to the meeting, presumably on the basis of their involvement with the RAP program and/or their role in managing external researchers.

RAP", "***grew organically", "wanting to do the RAP makes it successful." I also learned that Taylor & Smith considered its RAP to be a highly authentic, especially compared to the RAPs of other law firms.

Another striking vignette of this organizational identity work to narratively align the RAP program and Taylor & Smith comes from an individual interview I conducted with Joe in 2016. Joe spoke to me about his first interactions with RA as he worked with them to prepare Taylor & Smith's first RAP in 2012-2013. Having worked intensively with Logan in 2011-2012 on organizing and funding the Red Hill Community Foundation, Joe recalls being happy to link Taylor & Smith to a well-respected and well-known national movement. He especially appreciated the program's conceptualization of Taylor & Smith involvement with Indigenous issues as *reconciliation*, a word that Joe described as immensely "positive" and "collaborative" and credited with increasing the capacity of individuals and organizations to get involved with issues of justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. "[T]he concept of a Reconciliation Action Plan, that's wonderful language. Everyone wants a plan—corporate Australians, businesses, they want to see what the plan is," said Joe, adding that the RAP program is "a very very powerful and very clever use of language to really galvanize what people like me are trying to achieve in a way that resonates right across the spectrum of corporate Australia."[91]

This statement makes clear Joe's understanding of the RAP program as a good match or seamless fit for the values, culture and even language of Taylor & Smith. As the senior champion of the RAP program at Taylor & Smith, Joe's views no doubt influenced how other RAP-involved employees articulate the cultural and purposive synergies of Taylor & Smith—and corporate organizations more generally—with Reconciliation Australia's RAP program. Here I highlight three additional examples of the ways in which RAP-involved employees carried out this "identity work" to normalize Taylor & Smith's participation in the

[91] Joe remarked that without the RAP program, his alternative framings for his and Taylor & Smith's work with the Red Hill Community Foundation would likely have been "making a difference", "problem-solving" and "justice".

RAP program and to strengthen the impression of a natural, organic fit between the values and cultures of the two organizations.

First, RAP-involved employees argued that *Taylor & Smith's RAP participation was eminently routine for a top-tier corporate law firm.* All six of the individuals I interviewed at Taylor & Smith characterized a law firm's involvement with a national reconciliation movement as entirely unsurprising—as a normal activity of a professional corporate organization such as Taylor & Smith. At least for individuals in the orbit of the RAP at Taylor & Smith, the fact of a corporate organization's spending significant monetary and human resources on a social project was passé.

Second, RAP-involved employees mobilized explanations that *Taylor & Smith's RAP participation made good economic sense for the firm.* Whether by coincidence or some kind of causality, RAP-involved employees at Taylor & Smith's assessment of the benefits of RAP participation closely mimic Reconciliation Australia's promotion of developing the "business case" for RAPs. In extolling the benefits of the RAP program, Joe admitted that it was hard to measure the value-added of the RAP to Taylor & Smith but pointed to the frequent positive comments about the RAP from job applicants as a signal of its efficacy. And although it did not come up in my interviews with RAP-involved individuals at Taylor & Smith as a benefit of participation in the RAP program, I heard anecdotes and personally observed the reputational benefits to Taylor & Smith for their involvement with Red Hill, Career Trackers and the RAP program. For instance, Joe recounted the praise from Taylor & Smith's clients and professional contacts when they began their work on the Red Hill Community Foundation:

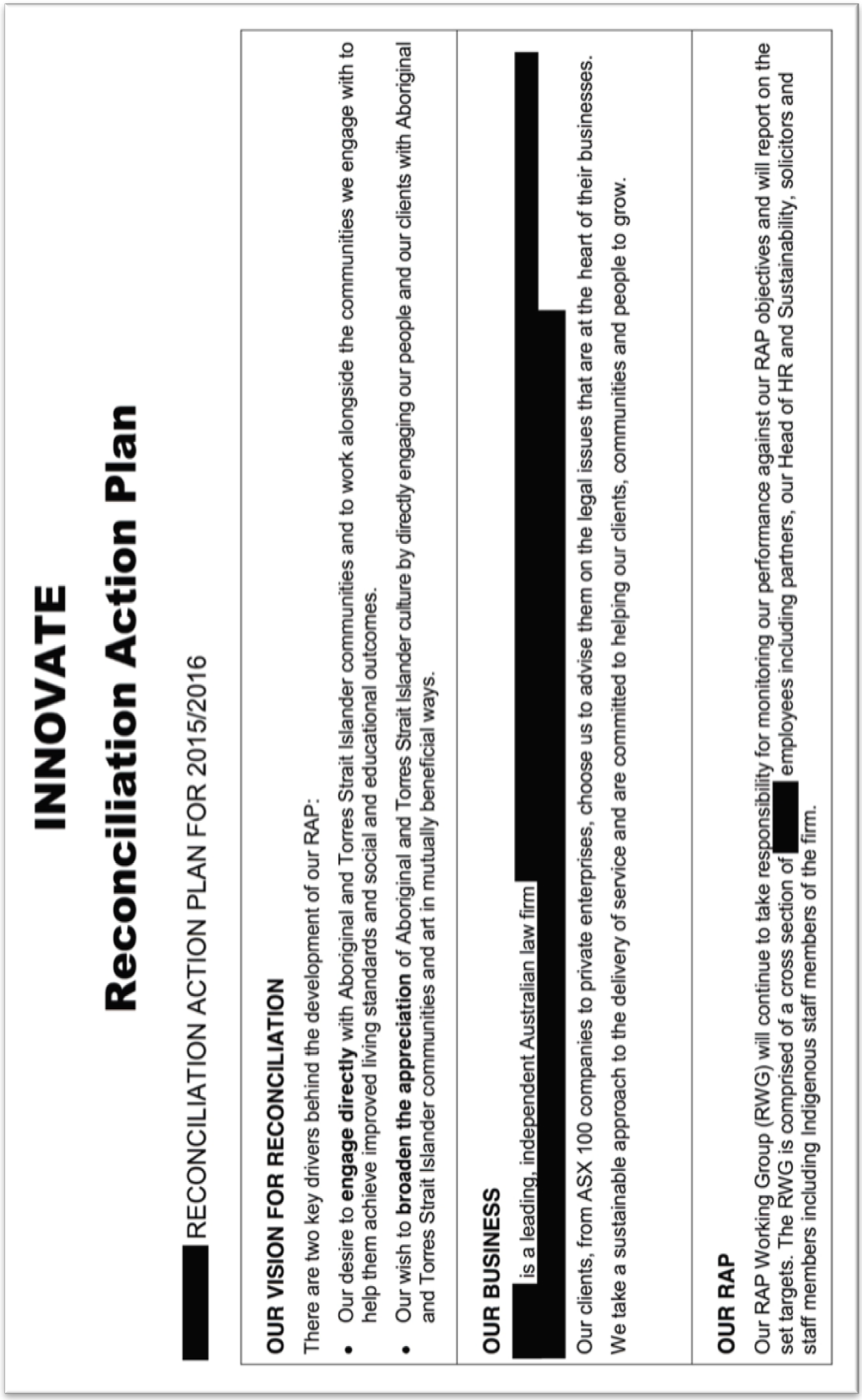
> "Well, people were finding out, the word spread that what we were doing here at Taylor & Smith has been pretty special. Direct engagement with a remote Aboriginal community and getting a school reopened for Aboriginal kids—no one else in the country is doing that! For a law firm especially… People were coming to me and saying, 'Wow, this is amazing story!'

As Joe continued the story, it was revealed that even Taylor & Smith's involvement with the RAP program started as a result of a recommendation from the law firm's dense network of corporate clients.

"Someone who was from [a bank] actually came and saw me, and they said, 'Oh you've *got* to have a RAP,'" continued Joe, "So, it was actually one of our clients who came to us and said, that's great what you're doing, but have a look at this program."

Finally, RAP-involved employees emphasized to a significant degree the authenticity of Taylor & Smith's engagement with the Red Hill Community Foundation, the RAP program and the goals of national reconciliation. Even though my questions never asked participants to reflect on the authenticity of the actions of their organizations, their colleagues or themselves, RAP-involved employees at Taylor & Smith frequently volunteered their positive opinions of the authenticity of their firm's commitment to reconciliation and the genuine passion by which Joe in particular was driven to support the Red Hill community. These values and narratives are also present in the Taylor & Smith RAP operating during the time of my fieldwork in 2016 (Figure 3.8).

Taken together, these interview, documentary and observational data demonstrate that Taylor & Smith existed in a professional corporate environment in which organizations were fully expected to take part in CSR activities and where instrumental versus authentic rationales were frequently and openly discussed as complementary strategies. While the highest moral value was placed on authentic commitments and genuine passion for making a difference in the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, explanations of the RAP as a routine form of professionalized "corporate social responsibility" as well as an instrumental strategy to enhance the firm's reputation and attract qualified workers were also frequently mobilized by RAP-involved employees.



INNOVATE

Reconciliation Action Plan

[redacted] RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN FOR 2015/2016

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

There are two key drivers behind the development of our RAP:

- Our desire to **engage directly** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to work alongside the communities we engage with to help them achieve improved living standards and social and educational outcomes.
- Our wish to **broaden the appreciation** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by directly engaging our people and our clients with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and art in mutually beneficial ways.

OUR BUSINESS

[redacted] is a leading, independent Australian law firm [redacted]

Our clients, from ASX 100 companies to private enterprises, choose us to advise them on the legal issues that are at the heart of their businesses.

We take a sustainable approach to the delivery of service and are committed to helping our clients, communities and people to grow.

OUR RAP

Our RAP Working Group (RWG) will continue to take responsibility for monitoring our performance against our RAP objectives and will report on the set targets. The RWG is comprised of a cross section of [redacted] employees including partners, our Head of HR and Sustainability, solicitors and staff members including Indigenous staff members of the firm.

Figure 3.8 Taylor & Smith RAP Excerpt [“Our Vision”, “Our Business”, “Our RAP”]

One final note about the RAP dynamics at Taylor & Smith concerns synchronization of the emotional high and low points of interviewees[92]: without exception, RAP-involved Taylor & Smith employees reported their RAP-related emotional high points as having to do with making personal connections with Aboriginal children and Red Hill community members on the service trip, whereas their RAP-related emotional low points were all related to the magnitude and entrenchment of the socio-economic disadvantage of Indigenous communities in Australia. This emotional landscape of RAP participation at Taylor & Smith is likely due to their RAP's heavy focus on the Red Hill Community Foundation and the Career Trackers program—two activities that seek to reduce Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage and that emphasize personal interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

RAP Dynamics II: 2017-19 Update

During my follow-up fieldwork in 2017-2019, I discovered that Taylor & Smith had merged with a global law firm but had nevertheless remained engaged with the RAP program. In fact, their 4th RAP was published in two versions—the first featuring the Taylor & Smith name and the second featuring "Action Law," the global law conglomerate with which they had merged, featuring an updated graphic design as well while leaving the content of the RAP document virtually untouched.

This "translation" of the RAP document from Taylor & Smith logos into new Action Law branding was a sign to me from afar that the RAP program was likely to remain intact, at least in the Sydney branch office. Indeed, when I made a visit to the office for a follow-up interview in 2018, I was greeted by many familiar faces of people I had previously interviewed and was excitedly given updates about the two features of the RAP that had dominated back in 2016: the annual Red Hill volunteer trip and participation in the Career Trackers program.

[92] Although I do not systematically address this data in my thesis, my interviews with RAP-involved individuals at case study organizations included questions about the emotional highs and lows of participants' experiences with the RAP program in their workplace.

At the same time, the RAP program had not remained stagnant at Action Law. Its 2016-2018 RAP reflects a much broader distribution of responsibilities for the RAP across the organization. At the same time, the organization did not progress from an Innovate to a Stretch stage in the RAP program. This could suggest that RA did not feel that some elements of the RAP had been sufficiently institutionalized at the Innovate stage since the RAP officer assigned to Taylor & Smith would have had the authority to determine the most appropriate RAP stage. At the same time, this could also suggest that Taylor & Smith opted to consolidate and strengthen aspects of their RAP working group and management process at the Innovate stage, a choice that is not uncommon and often wise for organizations undergoing periods of stress or transition, such as an important merger.

Case Summary

In summary, the Taylor & Smith's RAP origin narrative is steeped in expressions of the firm's *authentic, passionate commitment* to Indigenous issues catalyzed by a senior partner's serendipitous connection to a remote Aboriginal community, which was later nurtured by the RAP program. The RAP origin narrative steeped in authenticity and passion served as a way for Taylor & Smith to both generate and channel employees' commitment to the moral values of equality and the substantive issue of Indigenous Australians' socio-economic disadvantage into participation in the RAP program.

The RAP program became a way to network more closely with other organizations in the well-heeled firms of the Sydney CBD, with the constant generation of (social) capital through exchanges of RAP expertise and advice, attendance at RAP launches and celebrations, partnering up to carry out cross-organizational RAP actions. In this corporate environment, participation in the RAP program carried the social and moral currencies of best practices and social goods. Thus, Taylor & Smith's RAP origin narrative of authentic commitment supports the integration of the RAP program into the organization's identity as a synergistically prudent and altruistic activity. There is virtually complete alignment between the

"corporate-aware" culture and values of the RAP program and the classically corporate culture and values of Taylor & Smith, which makes strong institutionalization possible.

Figure 3.9 Taylor & Smith RAP Excerpt
Aboriginal children from the Red Hill community during Taylor & Smith's annual volunteer trip
.

Public Sector Case Study: Sydney Opera House

Organizational Characteristics	**RAP History**	**Data Collection**
Location: CBD, Sydney, NSW	First RAP: 2011	Total Interviews: 16
Geography: single site	2016 RAP: Stretch (3rd RAP)	Events Attended: 2
Employees: 800+	2019 RAP: Stretch (4th RAP)	Approx. Contact Hours: 34

Describing itself as a "community asset that belongs to us all", the Sydney Opera House is one of the most recognizable UNESCO World Heritage Sites and a well-respected performance venue with over 800 staff:

> [T]he Opera House attracts more than eight million visitors a year, of whom almost 1.5 million attend performances. The celebrated work of our seven flagship Resident Companies is complemented by a diverse program from Sydney Opera House Presents that ranges from classical music and dance to contemporary performance, theatre for children and First Nations art and performance. (2017:9)[93]

The Opera House is managed by a trust on behalf of the state government of NSW and, although it is a not-for-profit, the Opera House covers the majority of its operating revenue.[94] As a public organization reporting to the Minister for the Arts of NSW, the Opera House can be compared to other heritage and arts organizations. "[T]he Opera House takes its responsibilities as a cultural leader seriously," states the 2017 Annual Report, "Reconciliation with Australia's First Nations people, education, access and care for the environment are embedded both strategically and in daily operations."

During the time of my fieldwork in 2016, the Opera House was in the process of drafting their fourth 2017-19 RAP. Thus, when I contacted the Opera House for an initial interview about their RAP program experience, I was quickly and enthusiastically taken under the wing of Linda, an Opera House employee in the government relations department where the RAP sat alongside plans on accessibility and

[93] Another self-description on the "Visit Us" page of the Opera House website states: "One of the most iconic buildings in the world – the Sydney Opera House is an architectural masterpiece and vibrant performance space. It's a place where the past shapes the future, where conventions are challenged and cultures are celebrated. Step inside and discover the stories that make the Opera House so inspiring" (SOH 2019c).

[94] "The Opera House is maintained and operated on behalf of the NSW Government and the people of NSW by the Sydney Opera House Trust. It is a not-for-proft public trading entity that this year generated nearly 87% of operating revenue through its own activities. The NSW Government provides the rest of its operating revenue and also funds the building's maintenance." (SOH 2017:10)

environmental sustainability. The RAP had been started five years prior in 2011 by a woman who had overseen the Opera House's first three RAPs, but who was on maternity leave. Emphasizing the need for "personal passion" in the RAP coordinator role, Linda helped me establish a memorandum of understanding so I could conduct interviews and observe events.

RAP Dynamics I: 2015-16 Snapshot

In our initial meeting, Linda explained to me that although the Opera House's RAP Working Group was "originally thinking about moving onto an Elevate RAP," they had decided to remain at their current Stretch stage for their fourth RAP.[95] According to Linda, the Opera House had grown leaps and bounds in their efforts to publicly represent Indigenous cultures through major new programming efforts including Songlines (Figure 3.11), Homeground (Figure 3.12) and Dance Rites (Figure 3.13) in addition to their long-time resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance company, Bangarra (Figure 3.14):

Figure 3.11 "Lighting the Sails, Songlines at Vivid Sydney"
Artwork by Donny Woolagoodja. Photo by Daniel Boud (SOH 2019)

[95] Linda told me that she consulted with Reconciliation Australia about her doubts concerning the Elevate level minimum requirements and praised their reaction: "I felt like we needed three more years to really get it," explained Linda, adding, "Reconciliation Australia were totally on the same page. They said yeah, we appreciate the fact that you don't want to rush yourself. So they were really supportive of myself."

Figure 3.12 "NAISDA performer at 2014 Homeground"
"NAISDA performer at 2014 Homeground." Photo by Prudence Upton. (SOH 2019)

Figure 3.13 "2015 Dance Rites winners"
"2015 Dance Rites winners, Naygayiw Gigi Dance Troupe. Yuin Ghudjargah perform at 2015 Dance Rites." Photos by Prudence Upton. (SOH 2019)

Figure 3.16 "Bangarra celebrates 25 years in 2014"
Photo by Edward Mulvihill. (SOH 2019)

With the RAP program, the Opera House had easily settled into an origin narrative of the RAP as seeking to reinstate and protect the traditions of meeting to sing, dance and celebrate culture that had been practiced on this site by the original Gadigal custodians. For instance, the Opera House's website and annual reporting educate casual visitors and stakeholders alike about the Gadigal heritage of the site also known by the Euro-Australian appellation "Bennelong Point" (Figure 3.14):

> [The Opera House] stands on Bennelong Point, which the local Gadigal people knew as Tubowgule, meaning "where the knowledge waters meet". Tubowgule has been a gathering place for storytelling, feasting, culture and celebration for thousands of years. Its name is a reference to the magical energy liberated where salt and fresh water combine. (2017:8)[96]

[96] Similar text on the Opera House website states: "Fusing ancient and modernist influences, and situated on a site sacred to the Gadigal people for thousands of years, the sculptural elegance of the Sydney Opera House has made it one of the symbols of twentieth century architecture - a building that, to quote US architect Frank Gehry, "changed the image of an entire country" (SOH 2019a).

Despite these successful public-facing programs, Linda was worried that "internally the culture hadn't caught up yet" in terms of the RAP and Indigenous knowledge of the majority of Opera House employees. To that end, Opera House staff had been given more opportunities for both face-to-face and virtual training in cultural competency regarding Indigenous people, history and cultures.

Rhoda Roberts AO, the Head of Indigenous Programming at the Opera House since 2011 and a member of the Australian Order since 2016, was a key yet elusive figure in the Opera House RAP. Many of the organization's RAP targets were apparently met through her extensive network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and professionals as well as her vast cultural competency in all kinds of Indigenous and settler-colonial settings. "Rhoda is the head of Indigenous programming, […] she's a creative. However, she is involved in every other project we do here," said Linda, continuing, "I don't think that's fair. She's part time. She can't do everything here. So, we are now fighting for a cultural liaison officer role […], someone whose job it is to provide that guidance, to provide those introductions and relationships."[97]

After hearing so much about Rhoda during my interviews with other Opera House participants, I finally managed to schedule an interview with her during the last week of my fieldwork. She recalled her involvement with creating the Opera House's first RAP:

> "I was quite resistant to it initially because we're just so busy and it does require a lot of commitment and personnel. Anyway, of course, we knew we had to do it. And six years later, I would say it's one of the greatest tools we have as an organization because […] you're actually consistently with meetings checking where you're up to redefining, really re-evaluating.

Mostly, though, we spoke about the RAP as a vehicle to enable Rhoda's dedication to Indigenous arts programming: "So here I am in a great position where we have a platform. What voice am I going to put on that platform? […] It can be fun, but I have to use that platform to ensure that as the oldest living race

[97] Linda continued, "It's what we discussed exactly this morning, the fact that we need the money to do that. And how do we how do we make people prioritize this role?"

on the planet, we are maintaining, revitalizing and making our culture relevant for another thousand generations."

Follow-Up and Case Summary

When I reviewed the Opera House's 2017-19 Stretch RAP and interviewed Linda again in 2018, it seemed that much had stayed the same with respect to the organization's RAP dynamics (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Sydney Opera House RAP Covers (2011, 2012, 2014, 2017)

On one hand, the Opera House's Indigenous programming had continued to flourish. The most recent addition to their already impressive line-up under Rhoda's guidance was Badu Gili, a collaboration between five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists inspired by the a prior project called Songlines (AiM 2016; KM 2018; SOH 2016). At sunset along with dozens of other visitors, I stood on the main steps of the Opera House and watched, slack-jawed, as a stunning seven-minute animation was projected on to one of the sails overlooking the cove (SOH 2017).[98]

[98] "On 28 June 2017 the Opera House launched Badu Gili, a seven-minute animation that celebrates Australia's First Nations culture and history. It is projected daily on to the eastern Bennelong sail. Badu Gili, which means "water light" in the language of the site's traditional owners, the Gadigal people, explores ancient stories in a contemporary form made accessible to all. Badu Gili was curated by Rhoda Roberts AO, the Opera House's Head of First Nations Programming, and weaves together the work of five great artists from across Australia and the Torres Strait Islands." (SOH 2017:55)

On the other hand, the RAP dynamics at the Opera House were still defined, in part, by dependence on Rhoda.[99] Although Linda was still on the RAP Working Group,[100] her colleague in Government Relations had returned from maternity leave and resumed her role "looking after" the RAP. "The one thing that we haven't achieved yet is to have a full-time person looking after the RAP," said Linda wistfully during our follow-up interview. She also spoke about the many challenges of meeting the Opera House's RAP target for 3% Indigenous employment.

Despite these continuities in RAP dynamics, several new developments had also emerged. As part of their implementation of their fourth RAP, the Opera House had taken several steps to strengthen the internal culture of their organization to be more aligned with RAP values and goals. These efforts included increasing the appeal and attendance of National Reconciliation Week events and bestowing highly visible reconciliation awards for Opera House employees who went above and beyond in their RAP contributions. Linda also excitedly shared with me that several of the Opera House's resident performance companies were even interested in developing their own RAPs.

Overall, the Opera House has maintained a highly institutionalized RAP structure with a strong governance body (RAP Working Group) limited by lack of full-time and Indigenous leadership. The Opera

[99] As a *Koori Mail* profile of Rhoda, "Queen of the Festival", recounts:
She left school and trained as a registered nurse before coming involved in theatre in the mid-1980s. Rhoda went on to co-found the Aboriginal National Theatre Trust in 1988 and from 1990 had stings on television and radio in various roles, appeared in stage shows and also kept busy writing and producing. Today she is one of the most recognizable arts executives in the country, having been a creative director for the 2000 Sydney Olympics […]. She attributes her success to the lessons passed on by Elders. (Coyne 2018)
Another recent profile of Rhoda in the *Sydney Morning Herald* is subtitled, "Indigenous arts leader Rhoda Roberts has a remarkable life story, from facing racism to the brutal murder of her twin. Now, at 60, she's taking stock – and going home" (Baker 2019).

[100] The Opera House's 2017-19 Stretch RAP states: "The RAP touches every aspect of the OperaHouse business: Building; Finance; Engagement & Development; People & Culture; Performing Arts; Visitor Experience; and Safety, Security & Risk. The 2017–19 RAP was developed by the Opera House RAP Working Group (RWG), a team of staff members who represent all organisational portfolios, and was approved by the Opera House Executive Team. It reflects written and verbal consultation with Reconciliation Australia and key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander industry stakeholders and organisations. As at June 2016, the Opera House's RWG was comprised of 24 members, including four Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff, as well as an Aboriginal representative from Bangarra Dance Theatre […]."

House has also strongly institutionalized their identity as a RAP organization as, for example, in this text on their website:

> At its 40th Anniversary in 2013, the Opera House embarked on a Decade of Renewal. It includes not only major capital works to safeguard the building for future generations, but also work across the organisation to ensure a deeper, richer and more fulfilling experience for 21st century artists, audiences and visitors.
>
> Our RAP is fundamental to achieving this vision. Our fourth RAP (2017-19) builds on the foundations established through our RAP journey and sets out a clear path to further embed reconciliation values across the full spectrum of what the Opera House offers, from art and experiences to education and employment. (SOH 2019b)

Figure 3.14 Sydney Opera House 2014-16 RAP Back Cover
"Cover Design: This specific design is about connecting with each other on this, the land of the Gadigal, and the importance of the Bennelong site. The arrows indicate moving forward into the future together." (SOH 2014)

Third Sector Case Study: Bright Futures

Organizational Characteristics	**RAP History**	**Data Collection**
Location: semi-rural NSW	First RAP: 2014	Total Interviews: 14
Geography: local area	2016 RAP: Reflect (1st RAP)	Events Attended: 2
Employees: 20	2019 RAP: Innovate (2nd RAP)	Approx. Contact Hours: 27

"Bright Futures" describes itself as a "community-based non-government" organization dedicated to the wellbeing of families and children. Despite only employing 20 part-time staff members, Bright Futures provides a number of childcare, pre-school and parenting classes in a semi-rural area outside of Sydney (Figure 3.17). As a not-for-profit organization reliant on government funding and small private grants, Bright Futures constantly faces a precarious financial situation. However, Bright Futures has managed to survive for over three decades.

Figure 3.17 Bright Futures (2017)

My initial meeting with Rosie quickly confirmed her description as "the internal driving force behind the RAP" in Bright Futures' first Reflect document for 2014-16 that was posted on RA's website (see also Figure 3.17). Like many of the staff at Bright Futures, Rosie had been passionately involved with reconciliation since its emergence in the 1990s[101] and had significant ties with two different local Indigenous communities. As I would later discover in Canberra, Rosie had even made a submission on behalf of Bright Futures to a Parliamentary committee investigating the post-CAR fate of reconciliation in the early 2000s. After our first meeting, Rosie graciously accepted my proposal that Bright Futures be one of my case study organizations and connected me to Bright Futures staff as well as board members and long-time associates and advisors. Taking the train out of Sydney nearly to the end of one of the long lines and then walking through beautiful, naturally forested areas on the way to Bright Futures' small office soon became one of my favorite fieldwork activities.

RAP Dynamics: 2015-16 Snapshot

Bright Futures as an organization, as well as many of its staff members in their personal capacities, has been involved in reconciliation since the 1990s. For instance, Bright Futures helped found their community's "local reconciliation group" and has been significant supporters of the group's participation in the national movement coordinated by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) for over two decades. Yet Bright Futures was not a particularly early adopter of the RAP program. Compared to my other case study organizations, Bright Futures was extremely small in size, geographic reach and funding. Not even Rosie, the manager of Bright Futures, was a full-time employee. How was an organization like Bright Futures able to participate in the RAP program? "It did all seem to be the big end

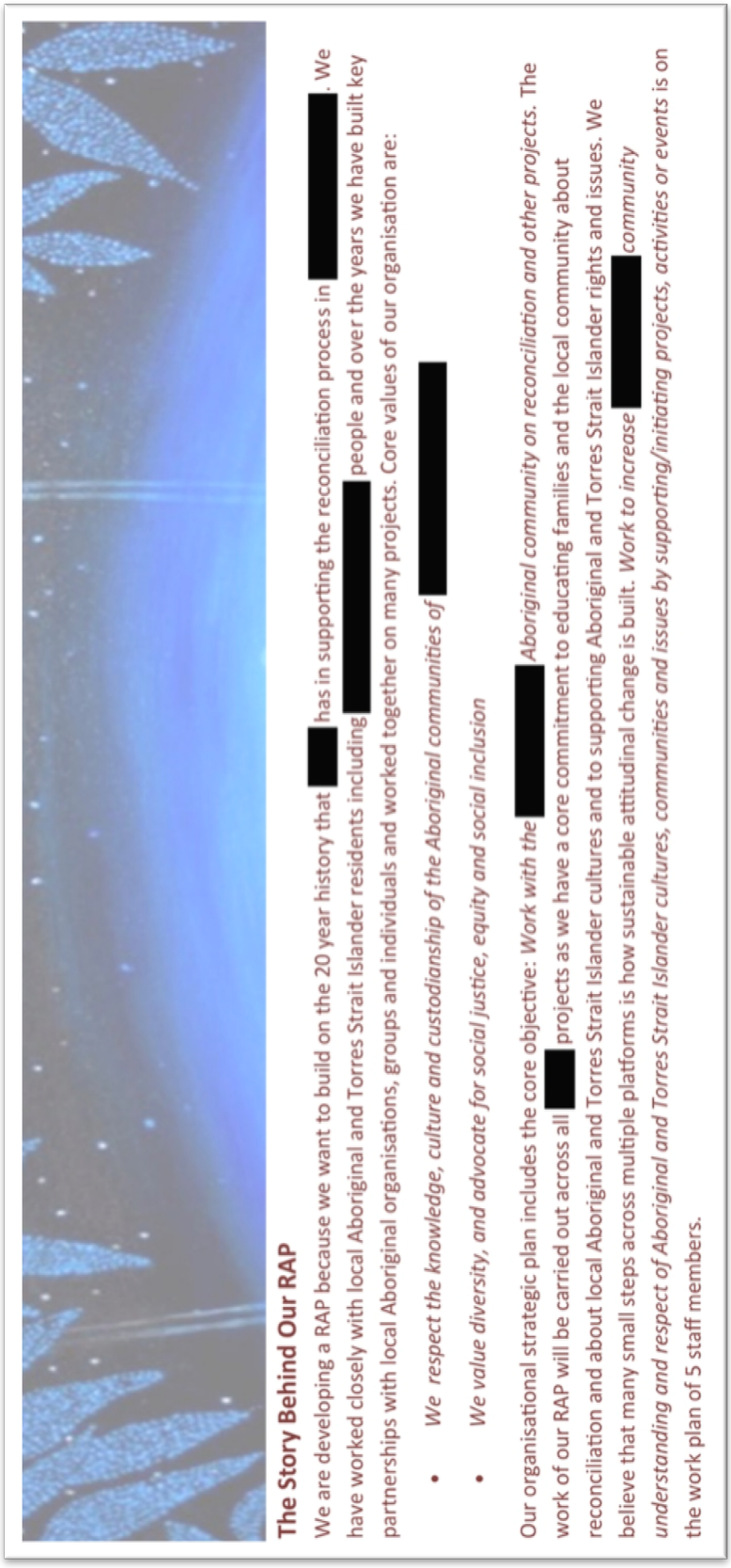
[101] As Rosie told me, shortly after she started working with Bright Futures in 1995 another community organization had offered Bright Futures "what was called Culture and Contact Training to organizations to work together with the management committee and the staff to look at those sort of true history of Australia really in relation to Aboriginal experience and the impact of white practices and policies on Aboriginal people and then how as an organization you were going to do something about that. So we did those three days of culture and contact training back in 1995 and it was really a significant turning point for the organization."

of town," recalled Rosie about her impression of the first years of the RAP program, "The Westpac's and BHP's and places like that were doing it."

In 2014 Bright Futures created their first Reflect RAP after a member of their management committee suggested they look into the program (Figure 3.16). "She had found it a really good process," said Rosie, adding, "She was right that it gives a wider recognition to the work that we were doing already because then it's on Reconciliation Australia website and out in the public domain." When I later interviewed the management committee member, she described the RAP as having brought "a lot more depth and sustainability" to the organization's reconciliation long-standing commitment:

> Because I was chairperson, I did encourage them to formalize their work into a RAP Plan. They were already--you know Rosie. She had always been involved in working with the Aboriginal Community and so [Bright Futures] were already doing a lot of that work. It just wasn't formalized and that whole idea of sustainability putting it into their strategic plan and into their everyday business. […] And so that's the role that Reconciliation Action Plan has done for [Bright Futures]. They were seen as an organization already advocating on behalf of Aboriginal community. But Reconciliation Action Plan has given it a lot more depth and sustainability."

My interviews at Bright Futures revealed that staff generally felt positively about the RAP as an extension and formalization of the organization's commitment to reconciliation. For instance, one staff member explained to me, "The fact that we've formalized across the organization our commitment to reconciliation so that it's more in the front of our minds and it has to be part of our work plans—I think that's a really the most important thing. […] Just an extra incentive to try a bit harder." Another staff member praised the way that the RAP had brought more awareness around cultural respect and understanding for casual workers, who comprised about half of the employees at Bright Futures. "The thing about the RAP which is good but also challenging is it makes you look across all the areas of your endeavor," explained Rosie, "We've always thought in terms of more community type stuff, but it makes you think about other aspects of your work and how you can be supportive of Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal employment and things."



The Story Behind Our RAP

We are developing a RAP because we want to build on the 20 year history that [redacted] has in supporting the reconciliation process in [redacted]. We have worked closely with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents including [redacted] people and over the years we have built key partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations, groups and individuals and worked together on many projects. Core values of our organisation are:

- *We respect the knowledge, culture and custodianship of the Aboriginal communities of* [redacted]
- *We value diversity, and advocate for social justice, equity and social inclusion*

Our organisational strategic plan includes the core objective: *Work with the* [redacted] *Aboriginal community on reconciliation and other projects.* The work of our RAP will be carried out across all [redacted] projects as we have a core commitment to educating families and the local community about reconciliation and about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and issues. We believe that many small steps across multiple platforms is how sustainable attitudinal change is built. *Work to increase* [redacted] *community understanding and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, communities and issues by supporting/initiating projects, activities or events* is on the work plan of 5 staff members.

Figure 3.18 Bright Futures 2014 RAP Excerpt [“The Story Behind Our RAP”]

Unprompted by my sociological framing, Rosie discussed the RAP's program's influence at Bright Futures explicitly in terms of culture and structure:

> It's really about structural change for organizations, I think. One thing that it's led us to be much more diligent about is cultural awareness training across the whole organisation. The RAP gets you thinking about how much your staff know […] and how Aboriginal-friendly you are. But also, how accessible, in terms of people using your service, and also, as I said, using suppliers, employing Aboriginal people. So yeah, I see it as about sort of a cultural-structural change.

However, many staff acknowledged that the RAP program was a serious commitment and time-consuming process for an organization of their size. Other staff spoke of the difficulty of maintaining "momentum" in morale and enthusiasm for the RAP as time went on after the launch in 2014.

As part of my fieldwork I was fortunate to have the chance to interview one of the Aboriginal Elders, "Aunty G.," who has a close personal friendship with Rosie. Following in the footsteps of her mother, Aunty G performed Welcome to Country ceremonies, helped with educational and language preservation activities, and provided cultural counseling to Bright Futures (as well as other local organizations). During our interview, she shared her thoughts with me on the topic of my study:

> "I don't like the word reconciliation. I don't like it at all, simply because what happened years ago—they're never going to admit that taking Aboriginal land was the wrong thing to do. […] Sorry Day is more like it. They should say sorry more often, that we've done the wrong thing and we've made your life hell because we've done it for years. It's always going to be hell. It's hard even with our men in Parliament. And Linda Burney[102] is great, I like her a lot."

Despite her reservations about reconciliation as a political movement, Aunty G did not find it a conflict to work with local organizations and community members she trusted on activities that took place under the banner of this fraught concept.

[102] Linda Burney became the first Aboriginal woman in the Australian House of Representatives in 2016.

Follow-Up and Case Summary

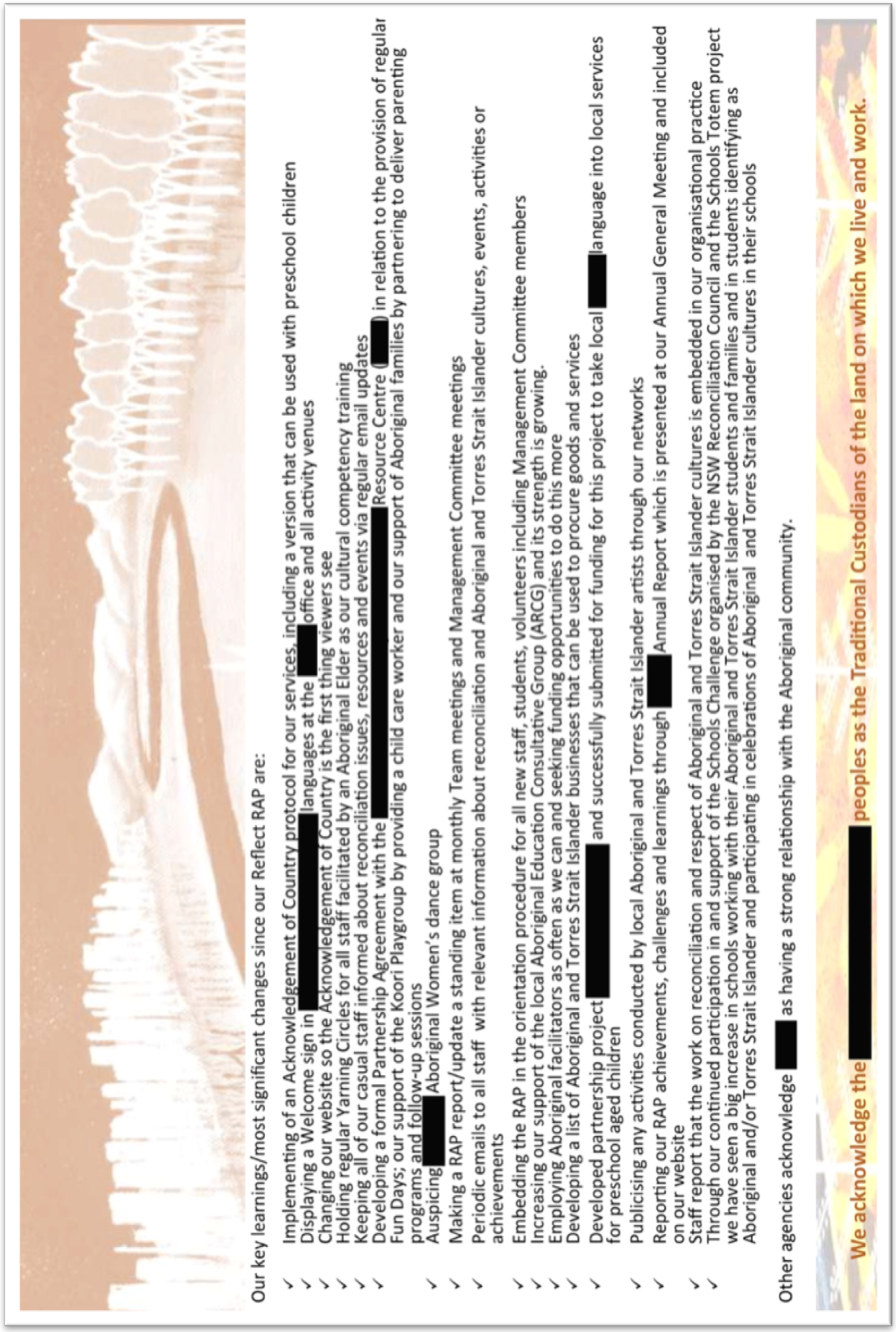
In 2018 I returned down the familiar winding road to the Bright Futures offices and found Rosie discussing the organization's wildfire emergency plans for the many locations where they held programs for parents and children. "We're moving onto an Innovate RAP, which is the next one up," Rosie told me as we started our interview, "It should have happened sooner, but we just got distracted by stuff to do with funding. That's alright—we're back on track."[103] Rosie had already been in touch with RA to develop the Aboriginal employment strategy required by the Innovate level RAP. "What we've decided to do, to attempt to pursue in this RAP is see if one of our casual mobile minders can be an Aboriginal person and make sure that we set up appropriate supports for that person," explained Rosie.

As Rosie brought up a flurry of other plans and preparations for Bright Futures' second RAP, I asked her why Bright Futures had chosen to re-engage with the RAP program despite needing to catch up with the not unsubstantial work of creating a second RAP.[104] "There isn't a good reason to withdraw from it," said Rosie in response to my query, mentioning that the purpose of the RAP program was to be held accountable for following through on pledged actions, even during difficult times. She also mentioned the RAP program as a "seal of approval" that provided benefits of public recognition of the long-standing work of Bright Futures in the area of reconciliation. She also mentioned a cultural awareness training with a beloved local Aboriginal Elder that had reinvigorated Bright Future's commitment to reconciliation.[105]

[103] Rosie continued: "Basically the funding reforms that was started when you were last here are still in process and so we're still carrying on as usual but it's still sort of hanging over our heads that things may change. […] They're just taking forever. So, we're just continuing with the work but the impact that it had was that our Reflect RAP proposal that should have got reviewed in 2016, we are now reviewing at the moment."

[104] According to my statistics over half of RAP organizations never go on to create a second RAP, I was surprised to find that Bright Futures—an organization with no full-time staff— had been able to get back on track with the RAP process in the midst of so much financial instability.

[105] "We hadn't done any formal Aboriginal cultural awareness training since we first introduced the RAP and so we had a discussion and decided that Auntie X and would be great to lead such training. So we rang her and she said look I just like to do this thing I call the "yarning circle" where people can just feel free to ask whatever questions they want of me as an Aboriginal person. […] Anyway, it went really well and it just seemed to really inspire everyone to sort of pick up their energy and commitment around our reconciliation work again."



Our key learnings/most significant changes since our Reflect RAP are:

- ✓ Implementing of an Acknowledgement of Country protocol for our services, including a version that can be used with preschool children
- ✓ ✓ Displaying a Welcome sign in [redacted] languages at the [redacted] office and all activity venues
- ✓ ✓ Changing our website so the Acknowledgement of Country is the first thing viewers see
- ✓ ✓ Holding regular Yarning Circles for all staff facilitated by an Aboriginal Elder as our cultural competency training
- ✓ ✓ Keeping all of our casual staff informed about reconciliation issues, resources and events via regular email updates
- ✓ ✓ Developing a formal Partnership Agreement with the [redacted] Resource Centre ([redacted]) in relation to the provision of regular Fun Days; our support of the Koori Playgroup by providing a child care worker and our support of Aboriginal families by partnering to deliver parenting programs and follow-up sessions
- ✓ Auspicing [redacted] Aboriginal Women's dance group
- ✓ ✓ Making a RAP report/update a standing item at monthly Team meetings and Management Committee meetings
- ✓ ✓ Periodic emails to all staff with relevant information about reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, events, activities or achievements
- ✓ ✓ Embedding the RAP in the orientation procedure for all new staff, students, volunteers including Management Committee members
- ✓ ✓ Increasing our support of the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (ARCG) and its strength is growing.
- ✓ ✓ Employing Aboriginal facilitators as often as we can and seeking funding opportunities to do this more
- ✓ ✓ Developing a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services
- ✓ ✓ Developed partnership project [redacted] and successfully submitted for funding for this project to take local [redacted] language into local services for preschool aged children
- ✓ ✓ Publicising any activities conducted by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists through our networks
- ✓ ✓ Reporting our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings through [redacted] Annual Report which is presented at our Annual General Meeting and included on our website
- ✓ ✓ Staff report that the work on reconciliation and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is embedded in our organisational practice
- ✓ ✓ Through our continued participation in and support of the Schools Challenge organised by the NSW Reconciliation Council and the Schools Totem project we have seen a big increase in schools working with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families and in students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and participating in celebrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in their schools

Other agencies acknowledge [redacted] as having a strong relationship with the Aboriginal community.

We acknowledge the [redacted] peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work.

Figure 3.19 Bright Futures RAP Excerpt ["Key Learnings"]

As part of the process of creating their second RAP, Bright Futures generated a list of "key learnings/most significant changes since our Reflect RAP," which eventually became part of their Innovate RAP launched in 2019 (Figure 3.19). Bright Futures also pledged to expand their partnerships with Aboriginal organizations in their local area and to continue to hire and/or work with Aboriginal educators, facilitators and artists to integrate local Aboriginal histories, traditions and worldviews into their programming. However, in my eyes, the most significant change in the RAP dynamics of Bright Futures was their detailed plan for hiring an Aboriginal childcare worker in the next 1-2 years (Figure 3.20).

This represented a significant evolution from Bright Futures' previous decision that the organization was unable to provide adequate support for an Aboriginal employee—a change unlikely to have occurred without Bright Futures' desire to comply with the requirements of the RAP program.[106]

Action	Deliverable	Timeline
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within [redacted]	Collect information on our employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and contractors to inform future employment opportunities.	Progress Reports May Sep 2019, 2020
	Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and contractors to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.	Dec 2019
	Review [redacted] Equal Employment Opportunity and Recruitment policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	Dec 2019
	Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and include 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are encouraged to apply'.	Oct 2019
	Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations to develop a strategy to employ an Aboriginal child care worker in our [redacted] and [redacted] teams.	Review Sept 2019, 202
	Develop and implement appropriate supports in place for such a worker and ensure their professional development needs are met.	Sept 2019
	Continue to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as external facilitators/presenters for relevant activities	Report May & Sep 201 2020

Figure 3.20 Bright Futures RAP Excerpt ["Opportunities"]

[106] During our first interview in 2016, Rosie explained that Bright Futures had reflected on hiring Aboriginal workers during a cultural awareness workshop: "We did those three days of culture and contact training back in 1995 and it was really a significant turning point for the organization. We talked a lot about employing an Aboriginal worker and talked with Aboriginal people about it as well and decided that being a white organization, which we are, that probably wasn't such a good idea to have one Aboriginal worker within a white organization. So, we decided that the approach we would take would be to be actively Aboriginal friendly, to make sure that our organization was welcoming to Aboriginal people that we had sort of resources and signage and partnerships. That's what we've gradually been working on all that time since."

Conclusion

These case study organizations share a fundamental exceptional characteristic—their defiance of the modal "one and done" pattern of RAP inactivity discussed in Chapter 2 ("Growing the RAP Program"). Another striking commonality amongst these four organizations is their well-developed origin narratives and incorporation of the RAP process into the organization's identity. Using the RAP program's terminology, some of these organizations described this trajectory as "weaving the RAP program into the DNA of the organization." This is likely related to the selection of case study organizations with long and stable histories of engagement with the RAP program—a *non-modal* experience amongst the population of RAP organizations overall, the majority of which never complete more than one RAP. I hypothesize that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the extent and degree of institutionalization of the RAP program in an organization and that organization's likelihood to continue its participation in the RAP program. I further hypothesize that certain characteristics or the organization and its environment, such as size, financial stability, leadership style, workflow organization, industry norms and state regulation, predispose organizations to institutionalize the RAP program at various degrees of completeness and levels of strength.

Perhaps most importantly, the RAP dynamics illustrated in this chapter clearly demonstrate that organizational participation in the RAP program is an evolving and non-linear process and that the institutionalization of RAPs tends to be highly uneven, especially at early stages of the program. This means that very little can be presumed about the dynamics of the RAP program within an organization. Multi-method research studies with long-term qualitative components, therefore, offer a privileged source of insight into the translation of RAP and reconciliation ideals into local organizational structures, systems and idioms.

Chapter 4: RAPs in Professional Sports

More than 25 years after the founding of Australia's Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR), reconciliation remains a national touchstone for imagining Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations and an anchoring framework for Indigenous affairs. Sports organizations constitute some of the most high-profile participants in the RAP program. In total, 36 professional sports organizations—including sport clubs (teams) and sport governance bodies—adopted RAPs from 2006-2018. Like other RAP participants, these sports organizations pledge to implement roughly one to two dozen actions with measurable targets to recognize, celebrate and manage Indigenous difference. Yet one of the reasons this chapter explores sport as a case study of the RAP program is because, unlike many typical corporate and community participants, sports organizations maintain an exceptionally strong presence in the public eye bolstered by guaranteed screen time, constant media commentary, and devoted popular followings. Additionally, the hallowed place of sport in Australia's own identity as a "sporting nation" makes sports organizations' negotiation of Indigenous difference all the more salient on a national scale.

The task of this chapter is, therefore, to illustrate Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation from an industry (meso) level perspective, namely the multi-million dollar professional sports industry in Australia. I ask the following research questions: *how does the RAP program encourage organizations to conceptualize and represent Indigeneity? How does the RAP program encourage organizations to manage Indigenous staff? And finally, how does the RAP program encourage organizations to approach and conduct intergroup relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?* In answer to these questions, I closely researched and analyzed the RAP participation of 36 professional sports teams and sport governing bodies to showcase the similarities and differences in RAP ideals and practice.

Background: RAPs, Reconciliation, Indigeneity and Sport

Sport has been an important, if not central, element of Australian national identity since the time of Federation, when it played a crucial role in nurturing national sentiment on the world stage (Cashman 2002; Jobling 1988). Politicians, the media, and scholars commonly refer to Australia as a "sporting nation," and government support for sport from the grassroots level to world-class facilities and training programs has generally been forthcoming since the 1970s (Bloomfield 2004; Stewart 2004).

Figure 4.1 Cathy Freeman lights Olympic cauldron
(Zaccardi 2015)

Recently, the preparation and hosting of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney reinvigorated Australia's relation to sport by popularizing narratives about the exceptional place of sport in the nation's history and character (Magdalinski 2000). The 2000 Olympics was also an occasion to publicly stage national unity after a decade of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples starting with Cathy Freeman's lighting of the Olympic Flame during opening ceremonies adorned by Indigenous cultural symbols (Figure 4.1) and culminating in her victory lap with both the Aboriginal flag and the Australian flag after winning gold in the 400m (Figure 4.2) (Bruce and Hallinan 2001; Gardiner 2003; Heinz Housel

2007; White 2008, 2011, 2013). The invocation of reconciliation and racial equality in the triumphant space of the Olympic games lent a sense of accomplishment to the end of the CAR's tenure despite the fact the little or no progress had been made on serious issues including finalizing a treaty, addressing land rights, and securing an official apology (Elder, Pratt, and Ellis 2006).

Figure 4.2 Cathy Freeman Walks a Lap of Honor
"Cathy Freeman walks a lap of honour, carrying the Australian and Aboriginal Flags, after winning Gold in the Women's 400 meters Finals." (AAP) (Marlow 2015)

However iconic, these images belie how sport is deeply troubled over the role of Indigenous difference, the same tension that deeply affects Australian history and national identity more generally. This is why another one of the most iconic images of Australian sport is footballer Nicky Winmar lifting his jersey and pointing to his chest—a powerful, proud affirmation of his Indigenous heritage in the face of repeated racial abuse hurled at him during a 1993 Australian Rules match (Figure 4.3) (Eva 2013; Klugman and Osmond 2009; McNeill 2008).

Figure 4.3 Nicky Winmar's famous protest
"Nicky Winmar's response became a powerful symbol of defiance against racism." (Ludbey 2019)

Scholars note a persistent symbolic relation of sport and national identity in media representation of athletic competitions, particularly in international contexts (Miller et al. 2001; Rowe 2004; Rowe, McKay, and Miller 2002:133). Given this context, it is unsurprising that survey-based research reports that Australians deem sports heroes to have influenced the way that they see themselves nearly as much as ANZACS—suggesting that sport provides "day to day reinforcement crucial for maintaining national identity" (Donoghue and Tranter 2016; Tranter and Donoghue 2007:180). Thus, the cues about Indigenous difference and Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations provided by sports governance bodies and clubs, and their players, coaches and executives, feed into a context that already plays a strong role in shaping the symbols, meanings, narratives, myths and scripts of Australian identity and national history.

Sport and Racism in Australia

Just as Australian history and national identity bear an uneasy relation to Indigenous difference, sport remains an arena where ongoing racial tensions in Australia erupt virulently in extremely visible and publicized episodes. Even while Indigenous players are celebrated as some of the nation's top athletes, seven major racist incidents against Indigenous players have occurred since 2011 in the AFL alone (SMH 2017). The most well-known of these recent episodes centers on the Sydney Swans star Adam Goodes, who pointed at a 13 year-old girl in the audience after she yelled the racial slur "ape" at him (Crawford 2013).

Despite Goodes' ready acceptance of the girl's apology and his plea for the public to support her going forward,[107] national furor ensued and even increased the following year in 2014 when Goodes received the prestigious Australian of the Year award in commendation of his leadership in the Indigenous community (Devine 2014; Farrell 2014; O'Brien 2014). After two years, the controversy seemed to remain as fresh as ever, with sustained booing of Goodes by audiences during competition, vandalism of his Australian of the Year marker in Canberra and the girl's mother publicly calling on Goodes to apologize (Davey 2015; Gee and McKeon 2016; Parry 2015). "The history wars are back with us," lamented one article, "This time, the chosen battle ground is the MCG on a Friday night two years ago when a young girl called Adam Goodes an ape" (Le Grand 2015).

[107] On May 25, 2013, Adam Goodes tweeted: "Just received a phone call from a young girl apologizing for her actions. Lets support her please #racismitstopswithme #IndigenousRound" (@adamroy37).

Figure 4.4 Adam Goodes "Incident"
The racist taunt aimed at Sydney player Adam Goodes from a young fan provides an opportunity for education rather than humiliation. Twitter/Channel 7 (Johns 2013)

The "Goodes incident" troubled many commentators and observers by revealing the clearly unresolved tension surrounding Indigenous difference and sparking virulent, if not blatantly racist, public debates (Burdsey and Gorman 2015; Faulkner and Bliuc 2016; Johns and McCosker 2015). The issue of racial vilification policies in sport clubs and governance bodies came to the fore, and prompted Dr. Tim Soutphommasane, the Race Discrimination Commissioner, to publicly address the issue of booing Goodes and reaffirm the importance of a strong legal framework against racism to support voluntary codes adopted within organizations.[108] Public stances against the booing poured in from individuals using the "#IstandwithAdam" hashtag to a condemnation of fans' "unacceptable behaviour" by all 18 AFL club captains to Prime Minister Tony Abbott's call for "basic respect" (Figure 4.5) (ABC 2015a, 2015b). The

[108] Commissioner Soutphommasane explained: "We should remember that it can become a lot harder to exercise 'social sanctions' when the law isn't on your side. When people make private complaints about racism, having the implicit support of the law can be decisive in securing a response. And when organizations adopt voluntary codes about racial vilification, they appear to frequently turn to the law for guidance. In short, we cannot conveniently separate the law from civil society. I would even venture to suggest that civil society is much stronger for having laws that clearly broadcast society's values."

Australian Human Rights Commission offered its national "Racism: It Stops with Me" campaign as a resource for those wishing to make a difference.[109] It also issued a joint statement entitled "Australia must and can be better than this" co-signed by 150 other organizations, primarily Australian non-profits, arguing that "a line has been crossed to racial abuse" with the booing of Goodes (AHRC 2015a).

Figure 4.5 Adam Goodes is congratulated by Tony Abbott on his Australian of the Year award.
Credit: Rohan Thompson (Wood and Elliot 2014)

In addition to anti-racism, Goodes and many others channelled energy and public interest towards the long-standing movement for reconciliation. To give just a few examples, prominent scholars and activists published articles citing the racialized abuse against Goodes as a reason to renew efforts for reconciliation (Adair 2015; Habibis and Taylor 2015; Habibis, Walter, and Taylor 2016; Mundine 2014) and artist Aaron Tyler featured Goodes on a fake commemorative two-dollar coin as a way to "continue the conversation about reconciliation" in his 'Straya Shrapnel pop art series (Callinan 2016). [110] Goodes himself had

[109] The "Racism: It Stops with Me" campaign began in 2012 after the Australian government commissioned a "National Anti-Racism Strategy" to be implemented from 2012-2015 (AHRC 2012, 2015b).

[110] An NITV article interviewed Tyler about his decision to feature Goodes: "'I had a few Indigenous Australians in consideration for the coins. Archie Roach, Deborah Mailman, even Eddie Mabo, but sometimes a single minded execution

supported Reconciliation Australia's "Unfinished Oz" campaign in 2010 (RA 2010) and in 2014 he lent the weight of his considerable public profile to the launch of the Sydney Swans' first RAP. His mother, Indigenous artist Lisa Sansbury, contributed striking artwork to the RAP, also featured on the Swans' Indigenous Round guernsey (Figure 4.6) (Swans Media 2014).

Figure 4.6 Sydney Swans Stretch RAP 2016-2019

The artwork represents the Indigenous communities of Sydney. It tells the tale of Indigenous people coming together around Sydney's harbour and estuaries, portraying the way of life that many Sydneysiders experience today. Artist Lisa Sansbury is the mother of Sydney Swans champion and 2014 Australian of the Year Adam Goodes.

has the most impact,' said Mr Tyler. He decided that 'Goodesy' was the best fit for the two dollar coin. 'Adam Goodes on an Australian coin would continue the conversation about reconciliation. I'd like to think recognising a modern leader on the issue in a permanent way would keep the discussion going'" (Callinan 2016).

Additionally, Goodes contributed a statement that was featured along with a special message from Reconciliation Australia's Chief Executive in the AFL's third RAP adopted in 2014.[111] Upon his retirement from the AFL, Reconciliation Australia issued a public farewell to Goodes as an "exemplary role model and a dedicated supporter of reconciliation in Australia" (RA 2016a), and announced their support for Goodes' post-retirement engagement as "reconciliation advisor" for retail giant David Jones as they planned their first RAP (Figure 4.7) (AAP 2015; Mohamed 2015).

Figure 4.7 Adam Goodes, the fresh face of David Jones
"In his first professional role since retiring from the AFL in September, Adam Goodes has signed on as a Brand Ambassador and adviser on Indigenous reconciliation for the retail giant." (Clarke 2015)

Reprise: What RAPs do

The groundwork for this somewhat unlikely combination—a footballer collaborating on reconciliation with a department store—was laid over a quarter of a century ago in 1991 when the Federal government created the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) to oversee a national process of reconciliation. Some of the most important work of reconciliation—an ongoing Australian citizenship

[111] Goodes' statement in the AFL RAP praises how "Indigenous Australians and the AFL not taking each other for granted" as a consequence of recent developments (2014).

project—concerns the legitimation of new, official narratives: both narratives that acknowledge and commemorate victims' experiences of suffering and narratives that put forth new, more inclusive accounts of national history, culture and identity (Auerbach 2009; Buckley-Zistel 2014; Little 2011; Moon 2008). In most countries that have practiced reconciliation, truth commission hearings and final written reports provide official platforms for such narratives. In contemporary Australia, the RAP program constitutes one of the most important means through which new narratives are created, disseminated, and embedded within a variety of public, private non-profit organizations.

Reconciliation Australia's 20-page RAP Toolkit released in 2008 explained the philosophy of the program "to turn good intentions into measurable actions that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" and provided a template for organizations to create their own RAP document (RA 2008:6). The Toolkit defined three areas of action for reconciliation within organizations: demonstrating *respect* for Indigenous history and culture, forming *relationships* with Indigenous communities, and creating *opportunities* for Indigenous people.

Organizations are asked to resolve actions related to each category by filling in charts that specified the person or unit responsible for the action, a timeline for implementation, and a measurable target to evaluate the success of the actions—which they were asked to report to Reconciliation Australia and use to guide the creation of future RAPs. The template also prompted organizations to articulate a customized vision for reconciliation and tell the story of how their RAP was developed. Reconciliation Australia expanded its staff to work with organizations throughout the RAP development process and reviewed each document individually, often asking for changes before issuing its final approval alongside the "executive sign off" within the organizations. In 2013, after hundreds of organizations joined the program, Reconciliation Australia implemented the "RISE" structure with four levels of RAP participation (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch, Elevate), each with increasingly stringent "minimum elements".

The RAP program has become the most far-reaching initiative since reconciliation was announced as government policy in 1991. RAPs have touched the lives of more than 3 million Australians through their employment and membership through roughly 1,000 participating organizations by the end of 2018.[112] Each organization must secure approval from their top executive as well as RA on customized RAPs that pledge to implement roughly one to two dozen actions with measurable targets to recognize, celebrate and manage Indigenous difference. Although many organizations become temporarily or permanently inactive in the RAP program,[113] an astounding figure of more than 1.4 million Australians and 24,000 Indigenous Australians work or study in an organization with a current RAP and an estimated 3 million work or study in an organization that has adopted a RAP at some point in the past decade, corresponding to about 25 per cent of the Australian workforce (RA 2015, 2016a, 2017).

RA reports that RAP organizations developed 9,579 partnerships with Indigenous organizations, procured $265 million goods and services through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business and contributed $28 million in charitable donations, scholarships and pro bono work for Indigenous people and organizations in the past year alone (RA 2017). The 'Workplace RAP Barometer' conducted every two years consistently finds more favourable attitudes towards Indigenous people and reconciliation in RAP workplaces compared to the general population (Nelson 2016; RA 2017).

These and many other outcomes of the RAP program are proudly reported to stakeholders by RA and by RAP participants. However, this chapter focuses on a different set of RAP outcomes: the narrative

[112] In 2018 there have been inconsistent reports regarding whether the RAP program has surpassed 1,000 member organizations. For instance, an 18 December 2018 media release by RA on the Australian Labor Party's RAP states "almost 1,000" RAPs (https://www.reconciliation.org.au/alp-becomes-first-political-party-to-launch-reconciliation-action-plan/) whereas RA CEO Karen Mundine's introduction to BP's 2018-2020 RAP references "over 1,000" RAPs (https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp-country/en_au/environment-society/reconciliation/RAP.pdf).

[113] According to an independent database of RAP adoptions compiled by the author, of 459 organizations that published their initial RAP before 2014, 263 (57.3%) had not published a second RAP by the end of 2015. In the 2014–2015 period, 381 (83%) of organizations did not publish any RAPs. The average time between RAP publication for the 196 organizations that published more than one RAP was 2.3 years. Taken together, these statistics suggest that many RAP organizations follow a 'one and done' pattern of RAP adoption (Lloyd 2019).

organization of Indigenous / non-Indigenous difference and inter-group relations in the Australian professional sports industry.

Data & Methods

What themes and concepts are most prominent in professional sports organizations' visions for reconciliation? How do professional sports organizations position Indigeneity in their RAPs, both in word and action? The task of this chapter is to explore the knotty intersection between sport, Indigeneity, and reconciliation, with the RAP program serving as a concrete entry point into this complex territory.

To answer these questions, I have analyzed the reconciliation vision statements from 34 professional sports organizations that adopted RAPs between 2006 and the end of 2018 (Table 4.1). Since RAPs tended to be rather long (the average length of RAPs in this sample was 14 pages), the analysis was limited to the most recent 'Our Vision' statement for each organization rather than the full text of each RAP. Ranging from one sentence to several paragraphs, these statements responded to the standard prompt in each RAP template: 'State your organization's vision for reconciliation, how it relates to your business and the wider community.'[114] These statements, often deeply inflected by the 'respect, relationships, opportunities' elements of reconciliation embedded in the structure of the RAP program, offer a cross-section of the themes and concepts of sports organizations most closely associate with reconciliation.

My sample of 36 RAP organizations (Table 4.1) includes professional or semi-professional sport clubs and sport governing bodies.[115] These 36 professional sports organizations include four national governing

[114] All four current RAP templates, published for the first time in 2013, contain the same 'Our Vision' prompt across the four Reflect, Innovate, Stretch, and Elevate levels. The original 'RAP Toolkit' published by Reconciliation Australia in 2008 used a similar prompt formatted as a question: 'What is your vision for reconciliation? How does it relate to your business?'

[115] I created an independent database based on the RA website and additional research of all RAPs adopted by organizations with approval from Reconciliation Australia. In total, I identified 36 professional sport teams and governing bodies with approved RAPs recognised on RA's website between November 2011 and December 2018. I excluded players' associations, sport service organizations, and regulatory agencies in order to focus on the most powerful organizations that set the tone – internally and publicly – for the relation of sport to Indigeneity.

bodies (AFL, ARU, Cricket Australia, NRL) and four regional governing bodies (AFL Queensland, Netball SA, QRU, West Australian Football Commission). The 28 professional teams come from only three sports: Australian football (15), rugby league (12) and rugby union (1).

These teams primarily include professional clubs in the AFL (13) and NRL (8) as well as some semi-professional clubs in the WAFL (2), NSWRL (2) and QRL (2). Between 2006 and 2018, these organizations produced 54 RAP documents, with 11 organizations adopting a renewed RAP at least once and 5 organizations adopting a renewed RAP at least twice. However, 12 teams have been inactive in the RAP program since 2015 or earlier. The majority of sports organizations fall into the mid-level tiers of the RAP program's 'RISE' structure, with 16 at the 'Innovate' level and 6 at the 'Stretch' level. Six clubs are currently at the introductory 'Reflect' phase and only one club – Richmond FC – has adopted an advanced level 'Elevate' RAP. The state with the most club participation was New South Wales (8), followed by Victoria (7), Queensland (6), Western Australia (4), South Australia (2) and the Australian Capital Territory (1).

Method

This chapter employs a content analysis technique known as coding, or the systematic application of clearly defined thematic labels pertaining to manifest and latent content present in text-based data (Bailey 2007; Berg 2006; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Warren & Karner 2010). Coding entails a much-discussed quantitative aspect in its ability to provide insight into the frequency and distribution of qualitative elements (Berg 2006, pp. 241–2) and can be used to test hypotheses. However, this chapter follows a well-trodden path of using coding within the larger context of a 'grounded theory' tradition (Charmaz 2014; Cho & Lee 2014; Strauss & Corbin 1990), which stresses the importance of discovering themes *emergent* from data rather than the strict imposition of pre-defined categories and concepts (Strauss & Glaser 1967; Suddaby 2006).

Table 4.1 Professional Sport Organizations with RAPs 2006-2018 (n=36)

Name	State/Territory	Type	Sport	League	No. of RAPs	Current Level	Year Joined	Last Year Active
AFL	[national]	governing body	Australian football	–	1	Innovate	2014	2014
AFL Queensland	QLD	governing body	Australian football	–	1	Reflect	2017	2017
ARU	[national]	governing body	rugby union	–	2	Innovate	2013	2016
Cricket Australia	[national]	governing body	cricket	–	1	Innovate	2014	2014
Netball SA	SA	governing body	netball	–	1	Innovate	2017	2017
NRL	[national]	governing body	rugby league	–	4	Stretch	2008	2014
Queensland Rugby Union	QLD	governing body	rugby union	–	1	Innovate	2017	2017
West Australian Football Com.	WA	governing body	Australian football	–	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Adelaide FC	SA	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Aquis Gold Coast Titans	QLD	team	rugby league	NRL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Brisbane Broncos	QLD	team	rugby league	NRL	3	Stretch	2012	2016
Brisbane Lions AFC	QLD	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Reflect	2018	2018
Brumbies Rugby	ACT	team	rugby union	Super Rugby	1	Reflect	2017	2017
Carlton FC	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Reflect	2015	2015
Cronulla Sharks	NSW	team	rugby league	NRL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Essendon FC	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	3	–	2009	2013
Fremantle Dockers	WA	team	Australian football	AFL	1	–	2013	2013
Geelong Cats	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	2	Stretch	2013	2014
Gold Coast SUNS	QLD	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Innovate	2017	2017

Table 4.1 Professional Sport Organizations with RAPs 2006-2018 (n=36) *cont'd*

Name	State/Territory	Type	Sport	League	No. of RAPs	Current Level	Year Joined	Last Year Active
Ipswich Jets	QLD	team	rugby league	QRL	1	–	2012	2012
Melbourne FC	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Melbourne Storm RLFC	VIC	team	rugby league	NRL	1	–	2011	2011
North Melbourne FC	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	1	Reflect	2016	2016
Northern Pride RLFC	QLD	team	rugby league	QRL	1	–	2010	2010
NRL	[national]	governing body	rugby league	–	4	Stretch	2008	2014
Queensland Rugby Union	QLD	governing body	rugby union	–	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Parramatta Eels	NSW	team	rugby league	NRL	1	–	2014	2014
Penrith Panthers	NSW	team	rugby league	NSWRL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Port Adelaide FC	SA	team	Australian football	AFL	2	Stretch	2014	2017
Richmond FC	VIC	team	Australian football	AFL	4	Elevate	2011	2018
South Sydney Rabbitohs	NSW	team	rugby league	NSWRL	1	Innovate	2018	2018
St George Illawarra Dragons	NSW	team	rugby league	NRL	1	Innovate	2017	2017
Subiaco FC & District	WA	team	Australian football	WAFL	2	–	2011	2013
Swan Districts FC	WA	team	Australian football	WAFL	2	Innovate	2013	2016
Sydney Roosters	NSW	team	rugby league	NRL	1	Reflect	2018	2018
Sydney Swans	NSW	team	Australian football	AFL	2	Stretch	2014	2016
West Coast Eagles FC	WA	team	Australian football	AFL	3	Stretch	2014	2017
Wests Tigers RLFC	NSW	team	rugby league	NRL	1	Innovate	2017	2017

Coding is a highly iterative process that cycles between the generation of coding categories and definitions, the systematic application of these codes to standard units of analysis in the data, reflection on how precisely and accurately the codes capture phenomenon present in the data, and subsequent adjustment of the coding system. For this reason, researchers applying the coding method should be clear about their conceptual frameworks and questions of interest that inevitably shape the results of analysis (Weston et al. 2001). Practitioners of coding also emphasize that even after a robust coding system is applied to the data, a careful process of making connections, developing interpretations, and validating analysis remains (Warren & Karner 2010, pp. 208–18).

In keeping with common practice, I first used a technique known as 'open coding' to loosely label all themes and topics I noticed while initially reading the vision statement for 34 of the 36 organizations for which vision statements were available (Bailey 2007, pp. 128–9; Berg 2006, pp. 251–3; Strauss & Corbin 1990, pp. 204–11).[116] My goal was to identify the discrete concepts that organizations relied upon to articulate the nebulous concept of reconciliation whether directly, that is, 'Our vision for reconciliation is an inclusive AFL community', or indirectly, such as in the Parramatta Eels RLFC's pledge to 'work tirelessly towards ensuring all Australian children have an equal opportunity to live a long, healthy and happy life'. I also paid close attention to when and how Indigeneity was deployed in the text and when more general language, such as 'members' or 'society', was used instead.

The next step I took was to carefully review each code to make sure it referred to a distinct theme that did not overlap with other codes. For instance, I decided to combine the two codes of 'inclusive sport/club' and 'Indigenous participation in sport/club' into a single code ('inclusive sport/club with Indigenous participation') because of the similarity of the underlying concepts expressed in the vision

[116] Of the 36 professional sports organizations, only 1 did not provide a vision statement (Sydney Roosters' 2018 Reflect RAP). Two RAP documents were unavailable: the Penrith Panther's 2017 Innovate RAP and the Swan Districts Football Club's 2016 Innovate RAP. In the latter case, the vision statement from the Swan District Football Club 2013 RAP was used in the sample instead of the most recent RAP. Therefore a total of 34 vision statements were analysed.

statements. I also decomposed some codes into more precise categories, such as dividing an initial code of 'positive social change' into 'positive social change, improve community (general)' and 'improve lives of Indigenous people' when it became clear that organizations had different target groups in mind as the beneficiaries of their reconciliation efforts. I then reviewed every vision statement to ensure that each of the remaining 24 codes had been applied accurately and again reviewed each code for internal consistency.

Findings

While the 24 codes generated inductively during the coding process each refer to a distinct concept, these concepts in turn speak to one of four emergent themes: working and walking together, social and economic change, sports organizations as national social actors, and celebrating Indigeneity (Table 4.1.).

These overarching themes were each found in 82–97 per cent of the 34 vision statements, demonstrating a strong consensus on how sports organizations articulate reconciliation in the RAPs. Because of the small sample size of only 34 sports organizations, I will avoid comparing the relative importance of themes and will refrain from suggesting that certain themes may be more salient in particular sports compared to others.

Despite the finding that four thematic categories feature prominently in the RAPs of most sports organizations, the identification and treatment of Indigenous difference varies significantly across the themes. Therefore, the goal of this section is to illustrate how each theme positions Indigeneity in sports organizations' RAPs, in terms of both discourse and actions pledged. Although the themes were generated inductively by content analysis restricted to the vision statements, the discussion of these themes will draw on all the textual and visual elements.[117] In the explication of each thematic category, special

[117] Sports organizations' RAPs tended to have high production quality, with the majority of the RAPs appearing to be professionally designed, replete with high-quality photographs, striking colour schemes, and clean layouts.

attention will be paid to the way that Indigenous people are imagined to be different in statements, pledged actions, and images used by sports organizations in their RAPs.

Table 4.2 Themes in Sports Organizations' RAP Visions for Reconciliation (n=34)

Category	Code	# of orgs	% of orgs
social & economic change		**33**	**97**
	economic opportunities for Indigenous people	16	47
	positive social change, improve community (general)	13	38
	support Indigenous players & employees	10	29
	close the gap	9	26
	improve lives of Indigenous people	9	26
	support children & youth	7	21
	equality	6	18
	fairness & justice	2	6
walking & working together		**31**	**91**
	strong relationships with Indigenous people & communities	25	74
	inclusive sport/club with Indigenous participation	15	44
	working together, collaboration, teamwork (general)	10	29
	unity (general)	9	26
	mutual respect & trust	8	24
	inclusive communities/society (general)	7	21
	cultural safety & accessibility	4	12
	mutual benefits	4	12
celebrating Indigeneity		**30**	**88**
	acknowledge, respect & celebrate Indigenous cultures	22	65
	understanding & knowledge of Indigenous cultures	14	41
	affirm Indigenous history & contributions in sport/club	11	32
	recognize unique position of First Peoples	9	26
sports organizations as responsible national actors		**28**	**82**
	embrace public responsibility & leadership	18	53
	contribution to national reconciliation effort	10	29
	demonstrate formal commitment to reconciliation	10	29
	set goals & measure success of RAP	5	15

Celebrating Indigeneity

The RAP vision statements of sports organizations present Indigeneity as something to be understood, acknowledged, respected, recognized, valued and celebrated. There were nine direct references in the vision statements – and many more in the full text of the RAP documents – highlighting the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Peoples of Australia. Roughly one-third of the vision statements recognized the value of Indigenous contributions to the organization or acknowledged Indigenous participation in the history of their sport or club. Fourteen organizations also said that understanding and learning about Indigenous cultures and traditions was part of their vision for reconciliation. RAPs rarely mention any other kinds of ethno-racial, cultural or religious difference: one of the few that did, the Geelong Cats FC's RAP, makes sure to emphasize the 'special place' of Indigeneity amongst other kinds of diversity.[118]

In highlighting Indigenous difference as an object of respect and celebration by non-Indigenous people and organizations the statements are specific, detailed and even evocative. The ARU's vision statement 'acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the oldest living continuous culture in this world and pays respect to First Australians' ongoing connection to the lands and waters of this country.' Indigenous cultures are often described as 'rich' and 'diverse' in the full text of the RAPs. The RAP documents also featured visual elements saturated with Indigenous cultural symbols and photographs of Indigenous people. Twenty-nine of the RAPs covers featured works commissioned from Indigenous artists, whether expressly for the RAP document or for the AFL's Indigenous Round guernsey. While all organizations acknowledged the origins of the cover art, several teams also dedicated full-page spreads with a photograph of the artist and a detailed description of the artwork's symbolism (Figures 4.8-4.9).

[118] The Geelong Cats FC's RAP states: 'We recognise and value all cultural backgrounds but also understand the special place that Aboriginal people have in the history of our nation and our game.'

Figure 4.8 National Rugby League Stretch RAP 2014-2017

Figure 4.9 Gold Coast Suns Innovate RAP 2017-2019

The other seven RAP covers were based on photographs that prominently included Indigenous individuals, five of which feature *only* Indigenous people: an Indigenous dancer in traditional dress performing on a grassy sports field under stadium lights, Indigenous teammates holding an Aboriginal flag dramatically flapping in the wind, two wide-eyed Indigenous children participating in a club's community outreach program, and Indigenous administrative staff standing should to shoulder with the club's Indigenous players on the field. Such cover photographs featuring Indigenous people are also typical of the many images in the RAP documents that celebrate Indigeneity (Figures 4.10-4.12).

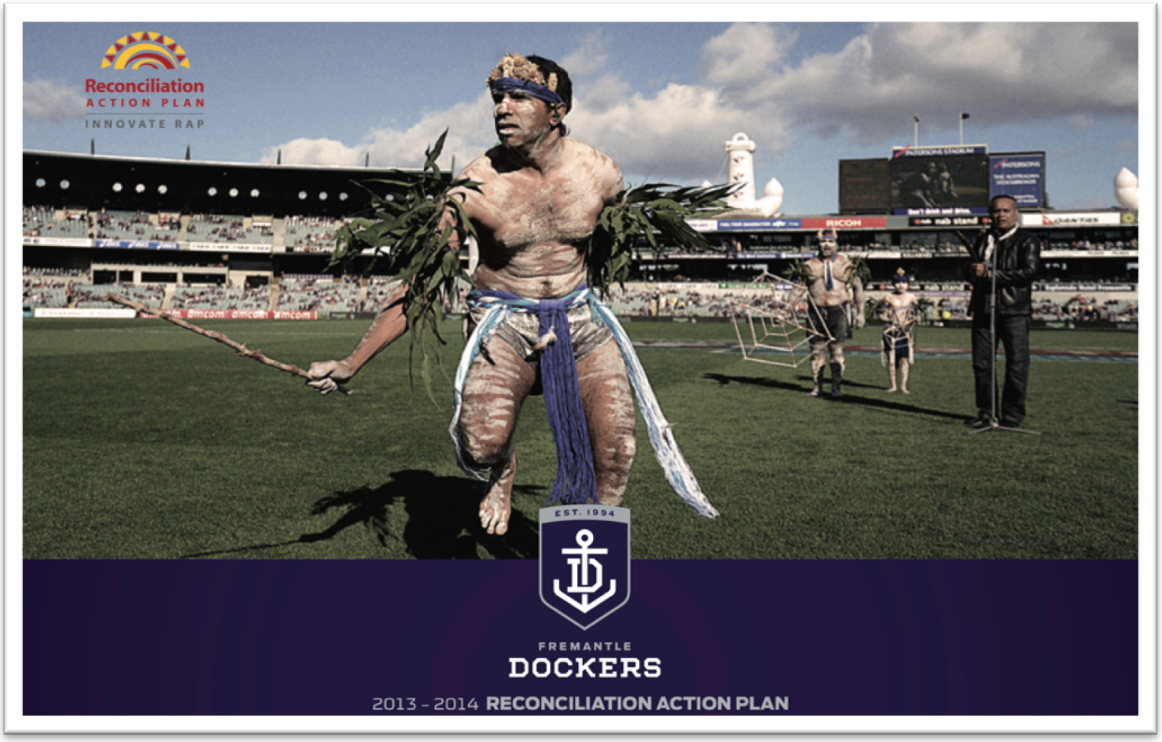


Figure 4.10 Fremantle Dockers RAP 2013-2014

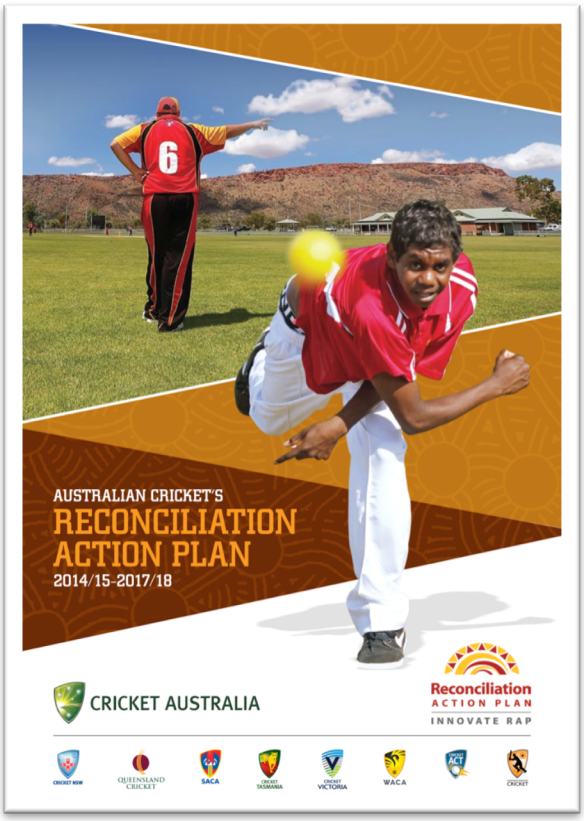


Figure 4.11 Cricket Australia Innovate RAP

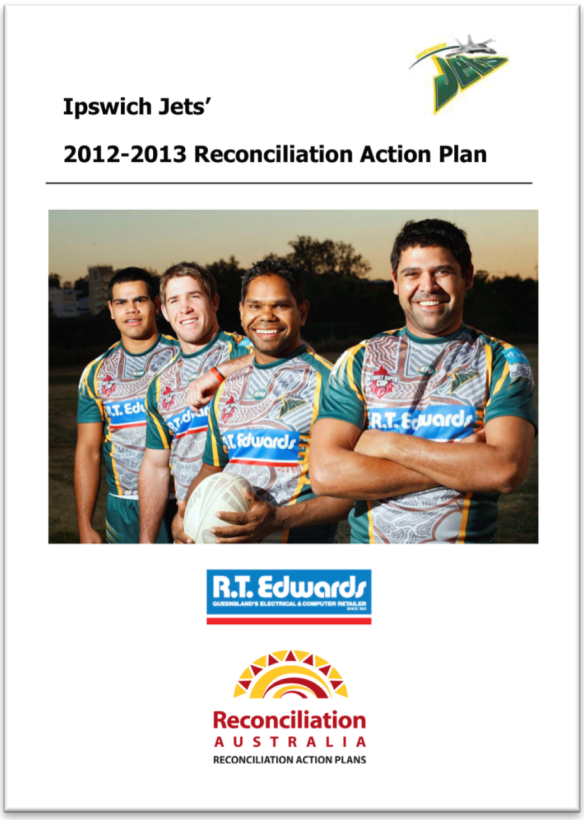


Figure 4.12 Ipswich Jets RAP 2012-2013

Since identifying Indigenous staff is a required 'minimum element' for all levels of the RAP program, many sports organizations report this information in their RAP: 'We currently have the following Aboriginal employment outcomes: 6 staff who work across PAFC – 2 full time, 3 casual, 1 trainee; 5 current players; 5 past players on a casual employment register; and other Aboriginal athletes in (beach volleyball and softball) who support our community programs' (Port Adelaide FC). Many organizations even named or provided photographs and profiles for all current Indigenous players or dedicated sections to Indigenous history in the sport or club.

The Richmond Tigers FC took the unique step of naming their RAP the 'Richmond Football Club Maurice Rioli Reconciliation Action Plan'. The club's full-page spread starts: "Maurice Rioli stood only 175cm tall, but he was a giant in terms of his influence in both sporting and public life for his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" (Figure 4.13). Similarly, the Cricket Australia RAP provides a section on the 'History of Indigenous Cricket' citing the famous 1868 team of Indigenous players who competed overseas and the AFL RAP's 'Iconic Moments' page features photographs of Sir Doug Nicholls and Nicky Winmar as well as a statement written by Adam Goodes (Figure 4.14). In its first RAP, the ARU committed to 'a historical review of ARU and other records to identify and acknowledge any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander players' in order to 'recognise achievements of any Classic Wallabies that were unable to identify their Indigenous ancestry while playing'.

Sports organizations in the RAP program pledge, in addition, to respect Indigenous cultures. Many sports organizations include 'Acknowledgements of Country' in their RAP documents, as well as in other types of internal and external communications, and they install plaques at offices and stadiums to honor Traditional Owners. Organizations at all RAP levels observe National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC

Week and organizations at the 'Innovate' level or above invite Traditional Owners to perform Welcome to Country ceremonies at important events, included in television coverage of such events.[119]

Figure 4.13 Richmond FC Elevate RAP 2015-2016

Figure 4.14 Australian Football League Innovate RAP 2014-2016

[119] Over the past decade, these competitions have included: the Indigenous Round, Indigenous All Stars, and Dreamtime @ the G (AFL); the Ella 7s Tournament (ARU); the Indigenous Round, Indigenous All Stars, Close the Gap Round and 'Reconciliation Cup' (NRL); the National Indigenous Cricket Carnival and the Imparja Cup (Cricket Australia).

Walking and Working Together

The 'walking and working together' thematic category groups together eight codes that focus on positive relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Twenty-five of the sports organizations use RA's language of 'strong relationships' in the RAP vision statements, and many organizations mention existing or longstanding ties with Indigenous communities and people. Statements also prominently featured language of welcoming Indigenous participation in 'inclusive' sports and clubs as well as the general ideals of social inclusion, trust, unity, and shared futures. Several RAPs used a language of reciprocity: 'mutual respect' and 'mutual benefit' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

Indigenous difference is thus represented in a peaceful, productive relationship with the non-Indigenous. For instance, the West Coast Eagles FC's statement envisions 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal Australians working together towards reconciliation for the mutual benefit of all'. Many statements do not name Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders but use vague terms such as 'working together', 'social inclusion', and 'unity' without any direct reference to Indigenous difference. Statements such as '[b]y working together we can provide more opportunities and pathways now and in the future' (Northern Pride RLFC) and goals to 'build and create future relationships and opportunities in Australia that will be characterised by trust, unity and prosperity' (Port Adelaide FC) evoke a shared, collective future. Visually, this theme is represented through photographs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people smiling together at important events or in triumphant moments, or photographs in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are hard at work together (Figure 4.15-4.16).

Figure 4.15 Gold Coast Suns Innovate RAP 2017-2019

Figure 4.16 Brisbane Broncos RAP 2012-2013

In the theme 'walking and working together', clubs and sports pledged to create opportunities for dialogue with Indigenous people. A 'minimum element' shared across all sports organizations is creating a RAP working group, an internal body that meets at least quarterly to discuss progress towards RAP targets with a requirement for mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous membership. For example, the Ipswich Jets RLFC's goal is to form a 'RAP Working Group with input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stakeholders and non-Indigenous staff, and with executive support'. In addition, each of the four sport governance bodies pledged to set up or to continue at least one Indigenous advisory group.[120] Other actions related to 'walking and working together' include that 'all new staff and players complete cultural awareness training as part of their induction' (Essendon FC) and providing 'a welcoming environment for current players, their families, and Community' through invitations to a family induction and the AFL Indigenous Round (Geelong Cats).

Social & Economic Change

The Howard government (1996–2007) promoted the idea that reconciliation should be 'practical' rather than 'symbolic'. RAPs concede something to this emphasis in a thematic category that includes eight codes that envision reconciliation through 'social and economic change' in the organization's local community or in Australia more generally. Sixteen organizations use the RAP program's language to specify creating opportunities for Indigenous people, with 13 vision statements referring to positive social change in general, such as North Melbourne FC's pledge to 'bring about positive lasting benefits locally'. Nine organizations use the language of the national 'close the gap' campaign, including the Melbourne Storm RLFC: 'an Australia where there is no gap between the life opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres

[120] These Indigenous representative bodies include: the National Indigenous Advisory Group (AFL); the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council and the Indigenous Players Reference Group (NRL); the National Indigenous Rugby Reference Group and the Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team (ARU); state and territory Indigenous cricket advisory committees and 'high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation' on the National Cricket Advisory Committee (Cricket Australia).

Strait Islander and other Australians'. The idea of social change through talent and career development for Indigenous players and employees is also mentioned by 10 RAPs. Finally, a small number of RAPs refer to socio-political ideals in their vision statements: six RAPs mention the theme of equality while two reference fairness and justice.

Images and text in sports organizations' RAPs frequently portray aid to Indigenous individuals and communities. Whether in introductions written by executives or in 'case studies', organizations take pride in presenting their current involvement in initiatives such as mentoring students or contributing to community development programs. For example, the Brisbane Broncos partnered with the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health to sponsor the 'Deadly Choices' program to promote 'to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices' in which 'specially designed jerseys are used to incentivize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to visit their local doctor for preventative health checks to prevent chronic diseases rather than the common reactive approach'.[121] Alongside a description of the program featuring praise from Oxfam, the Broncos' RAP displays two full-page pictures of excited Indigenous children wearing the special jersey and standing next to players in uniform. Other RAP actions related to social and economic change include pledges to hire more Indigenous staff, to advertise positions in Indigenous communities, to ensure culturally sensitive human resource policies for current staff and to procure goods and services through Indigenous business.

The invocation of Indigenous difference in this thematic category tends to cast Indigenous people and communities as underdeveloped and in need of assistance to rise to the standards of other Australians. The phrases 'creating opportunities', 'partnerships' and 'two-way relationships' used by RA emphasize Indigenous agency in the reconciliation process, but language in sports organizations' RAPs often slips into identifying Indigenous people not as actors but as objects in development, as in Subiaco

[121] In fact, concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and health is a common theme in RAP vision statements: 12 (35%) make direct reference to Indigenous health and wellbeing and 7 (21%) mention children or youth as specific target groups for reconciliation initiatives.

FC & District's pledge to 'achieve a significant improvement to the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal population within our district Zone.' Photographs of barefoot children, presumably Indigenous, abound (Figure 4.17-4.19).

Figure 4.17 AFL Queensland Reflect RAP 2017-2018

In fact, eight RAP vision statements make reference to improving or enriching the lives of Indigenous people in addition to nine that reference the 'close the gap' campaign. The combination of such direct statements as well as the more subtle implications of organizations' focus only on contributing to Indigenous causes and communities (at least within the pages of the RAP document) thematizes Indigeneity as deficit (Fforde et al. 2013). Lawrence Bamblett calls attention to the way that this 'deficit discourse' in sport limits representations of Indigenous individuals and their many agentic victories (2013, p. 14).

Figure 4.18 Brisbane Broncos Stretch RAP 2016

Figure 4.19 West Coast Eagles FC Stretch RAP 2017-2020

Sports Organizations as Responsible Social Actors

Finally, a prominent theme in the RAP vision statements is that sports organizations are important social actors with a responsibility to promote reconciliation. More than half of the vision statements affirm the influential role of sport in Australia and pledge that the organization will use its role to promote reconciliation. Ten organizations explicitly link their RAP actions to a national effort or agenda in their reconciliation vision statements. Additionally, vision statements position organizations' RAP participation as evidence of their participation in social change: ten organizations position the RAP as a demonstration of formal commitment to national reconciliation and five suggest their adherence to the RAP program's method of setting goals and measuring outcomes is further proof of commitment to the cause.

Figure 4.20 Port Adelaide FC & Power Community Ltd Innovate RAP 2014-2015

Without being explicit about the nature of Indigenous difference, statements in this category evoke sports organizations as responsible and progressive national actors. Even local sports clubs recognize

their national standing, as in the Parramatta Eels RLFC's statement '[a]s one of the most recognized sporting brands in the country and the biggest in Western Sydney, the Eels aim to use our influence to promote respect and a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, both national and in our local community' and in the Sydney Swans FC's commitment to 'playing an active role in Australia's reconciliation journey'. The sport governance organizations describe their own roles in unabashedly grandiose terms, such as '[o]ur purpose as a sport is to unite and inspire Australia, and there is a no more important endeavour to bring our nation together than that of reconciliation' (Cricket Australia) and '[f]rom the outset, Rugby League has been a game that challenged social barriers to include everyone who loved sport' (NRL). The many mentions of the Close the Gap campaign also link sports organizations' RAP actions to a well-established 'national agenda', in the words of the Essendon FC vision statement.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

On behalf of the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council, I am delighted to support and congratulate the South Sydney Football Club and Souths Cares on committing to their Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This is a momentous occasion for a club that already boasts significant cultural and community initiatives aimed at improving the lives of many and the RAP will only add to the off-field strengths of the Rabbitohs.

Rugby League has a proud history of support and inclusiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and it is encouraging to witness growing recognition across our game for Australia's First Peoples.

Currently, more than 17% of grassroots players' and 12% of NRL players hail from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. This number will only continue to grow as our game is a fundamental part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives.

The Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council, together with the Australian Rugby League Commission and the National Rugby League will provide guidance and assistance to the South Sydney Football Club and Souths Cares as they deliver on their RAP and we wish the club well on their Indigenous journey.

The Honourable Linda Burney MP
Chairwoman
Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council

Figure 4.21 Aboriginal MP Linda Burney Introduces the South Sydney FC Innovate RAP 2018-2020

Conclusion

As the Goodes affair demonstrated, the public can be polarized when the topic of racism is raised. The reconciliation discourse in these 34 vision statements does not explicitly name racism as an obstacle to reconciliation, although sports organizations, particularly those in the AFL, have begun to implement policies for handling discriminatory and racist incidents as part of their RAP actions. Indeed, politics and the related themes of justice and truth, the most prominent topics of debate in other nations' reconciliation processes (Bloomfield 2006; Gibson 2002; Radzik & Murphy 2015; Rotberg & Thompson 2000), are all but absent from these vision statements – only two (6%) mention the themes of fairness and justice.

Thus, the social responsibility and public leadership embraced by RAP organizations is quietly circumscribed to private, non-policy realms. The thematic category of social and economic change, and its close relationship to practical reconciliation, emphasize voluntary commitments of corporate and community organizations to achieve the goal of closing the gap rather than changing funding structures and resource distribution at the political level. While symbolic actions such as plaques recognizing Traditional Owners, Welcome to Country ceremonies and the display of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags may be read by some as political statements, they are not actions that change legislative or legal frameworks. The RAP program's many references to organizations' local 'spheres of influence' does not demonstrate hostility to political elements of reconciliation – but neither does it encourage organizations to think of themselves as political actors. The one exception is support for RA's 'Recognise' campaign for constitutional recognition, pledged by six organizations, including the Richmond Tigers FC, the only organization to explicitly mention constitutional recognition as part of a reconciliation vision statement in a previous RAP. Overall, the RAP program positions Indigenous difference as an object for private voluntary action rather than public political obligation.

This chapter cannot comment on the many reasons that sports organizations join the RAP program, nor can it distinguish authentic from instrumental reasons for joining the RAP program—if intention or authenticity of action can even be ascribed to a collective (organizational) actor. However, this chapter does put forward the observation that RAP adoption across sports is highly uneven: of the dozens of sports with significant participation and spectators in Australia, only five sports are represented as RAP participants. The football codes most engaged with the RAP program, the AFL and NRL, attract some of the largest television and in-person followings in the country (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010; Australian Sports Commission 2016; Roy Morgan Research 2012, 2014). However, the RAP engagement of cricket, also one of the most viewed sports, is low. Soccer, tennis, horse-racing, golf, and swimming are among some of the most watched and played sports in Australia, but they have not engaged with the RAP program.[122] Evidently, national popularity alone does not compel sport governance bodies and clubs to develop RAPs, so future research could explore the factors driving RAP adoption.

Furthermore, I do not make claims about the effects of joining the RAP program, that is, the extent to which the RAP program is the cause of changes in organizations' inclusivity, cultural practices or social contributions. To consider the efficacy of sports organizations' RAPs presents difficulties similar to investigating a jogging exercise plan prescribed to a patient. Whether the patient loses weight, suffers injury or improves their performance would require a much deeper study of each patient's unique conditions and trajectory – and even then, it could be difficult to isolate jogging as a causal factor producing particular outcomes given the impact of diet, sleep, genetics and social networks. Nonetheless, I am confident in saying that the RAP program's requirements make certain differences to any sports organization that achieves the required executive sign-off and RA approval. To return to my analogy: simply from the nature of jogging we know that the patient will experience a temporary increase in heart

[122] At least several of these sports do support programs designed to encourage Indigenous participation, according to a 2007 report 'What's the score? A survey of cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport', by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

rate, blood circulation and metabolism, the release of endorphins, and some degree of impact stress on the knees and ankles.

The immediate effects of RAPs are to popularize a discourse of reconciliation in which Indigenous difference is identified, marked, and celebrated as part of an expression of local and national unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Strong, collaborative relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are put forward as a way to achieve positive social change and RAPs link sports organizations to a national agenda for social change and bolster sports organizations' public and self-images as public leaders with social responsibilities.

At the same time, the RAP program associates Indigenous difference closely with deficit through its focus on socio-economic inequality and closing the gap. The RAPs produced by sports organizations do not lend much space to discussing the violent and racist policies of the Australian state that led to current inequalities, nor do they associate reconciliation with structural political change such as land rights, Indigenous sovereignty or treaty. Although increasing numbers of RAPs condemn and make provisions for addressing racism and supporting players who experience racial vilification, reconciliation visions statements and the majority of RAP documents employ highly positive, collaborative and unifying language, avoiding even the mention of polarity or contention that other discourses, such as anti-racism, tackle directly.

In fact, RAPs promote understandings of reconciliation and Indigenous difference that may leave organizations and their members ill-equipped to understand persistent sources of conflict in Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, particularly those stemming from Indigenous aspirations for social change that would have to be driven by structural political reform rather than by voluntary gestures from the private sector. While RAPs have undoubtedly helped sports and other organizations improve in the areas of building relationships, showing respect and creating opportunities for Indigenous people, these documents must not be understood as containing the essential ingredients of national reconciliation on a

smaller organizational scale. Ultimately, reconciliation efforts by organizations must be contextualized within a challenging, violent past and present of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations and an imminently political struggle to appropriately recognize Indigenous difference – and all the power-sharing and resource distribution such recognition might entail.

Figure 4.21 National Rugby League Stretch RAP 2014-2017

Chapter 5: Lived Experiences of RAPs and Reconciliation

This chapter presents original findings about individual-level understandings and experiences of RAPs and reconciliation. Drawing on 40 interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals involved with the RAP program in four case study organizations, this chapter delves into the *sense-making and lived experiences of national reconciliation*, a topic virtually unexplored by sociologists. These interviews, despite the non-representative sample of RAP-involved employees and organizations, illustrate for us some of the many perspectives on reconciliation, personal identity, Australian nationhood and Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup. In the proposed parlance of this thesis, these 40 interviews give voice to what it is like be on the frontlines of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation.

Whereas the previous chapters investigated the RAP program at a national (macro) level as well as industry and organizational (meso) levels, this final substantive chapter illustrates conciliatory citizenship dynamics on an *individual* (micro) level. Ultimately it is individuals who, in large numbers, carry out the work of starting and sustaining RAP Working Groups, meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait advisors and cultural consultants, building consensus for RAP activities, motivating and encouraging co-workers to follow through on RAP targets, publicizing, supporting and attending RAP-related events and, finally, engaging in the difficult work of assessing the successes and failures of RAP targets during the process of "refreshing" an expired RAP. These actions may be part of employees' key performance indicators (KPIs) or, as was much more common during my three years of fieldwork, employees, especially non-Indigenous individuals, may voluntarily to join the RAP Working Group or to participate in RAP-related activities. As will be discussed in the next section on "Data & Methods", there is good reason to question the extent to which the participation of Indigenous employees can be assumed to be voluntary—or as voluntarily, on average, as the participation as non-Indigenous employees—in the face of perceived obligation and actual pressure from employers to be involved with the RAP-program.

Rather than tracing the pathways through which employees come to be involved with the RAP program, however, this chapter focuses on how individuals understand and experience their participation in the RAP and reconciliation in Australia more generally. Specifically, this chapter answers two research questions related to personal understandings and experiences of reconciliation in Australian workplaces: *How do individuals involved with their workplace RAP define reconciliation? To what extent do these individuals consider themselves participants or actors in Australia's reconciliation process?* Despite the very different backgrounds and RAP program participation of my respondents across four case study organizations, overall my results demonstrate a strong consensus amongst RAP-involved individuals about the meaning of reconciliation as "making things right" and personal identities as participants or actors in reconciliation. The chapter concludes by briefly considering participant responses to a third research question, namely, *how do RAP-involved individuals imagine the future of reconciliation in Australia?*

To investigate RAP-involved employees' personal understandings and experiences of reconciliation, I interviewed 39 people who were involved with the RAP program in their workplace at one of four case study organizations in the greater Sydney metropolitan area: the Sydney Opera House, a world-famous performing arts venue; Bright Futures, a semi-rural child and family services organization; ABC Bank, one of the largest financial institutions in Australia; and Taylor & Smith, a top-tier national law firm (see Chapter 3 for case descriptions).

My results show that RAP-involved individuals reached broad consensus about the meaning of reconciliation as involving righting wrongs, closer relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people(s) and acknowledgement, respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture. I also find that a strong majority of RAP-involved employees identify as actors or participants in Australian reconciliation. I find that reconciliation tended to have low personal resonance with RAP-involved employees, with extremely heterogenous reports of whether reconciliation is a concept that is relevant to, useful for or otherwise salient in the workplace.

As mentioned, there is very little scholarship on national reconciliation in the discipline of sociology. Furthermore, very few international scholars take on national reconciliation as their primary topic—scholars tend to study particular cases in the absence of theorizing reconciliation, or they rely on related concepts including transitional justice and human rights. Therefore, a major contribution of this chapter to sociological literature is both a theoretical and empirical approach to studying *individual participation in an ongoing national reconciliation project*.

In particular, I align my contribution with those of other sociologists who have studied how, outside of the context of migration and naturalization, citizenship is actively formed and re-formed through contact with institutions of the state or state-funded programs (Auyero 2012; Ebert and Okamoto 2013; Hromadžić 2015; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2003; Korteweg 2006). The findings of this chapter also shed light on individual-level dynamics of two areas of concern to sociologists and social scientists in general: increasingly global norms of corporate social responsibility (Albareda, Lozano, and Ysa 2007; Briscoe and Gupta 2016; Garriga and Melé 2004; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Lim and Tsutsui 2012; Matten and Moon 2008, 2008; Tsutsui and Lim 2015; Urban 2014) and issues of racialized inequality and organizations (Acker 2006; Berrey 2013, 2015; Dobbin, Schrage, and Kalev 2015; Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Edelman, Fuller, and Mara-Drita 2001; Kalev, Kelly, and Dobbin 2006; Light, Roscigno, and Kalev 2011; Linnehan and Konrad 1999; Nkomo 1992; Saperstein, Penner, and Light 2013; Stainback, Robinson, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2005; Stainback, Tomaskovic-Devey, and Skaggs 2010; Turco 2010; Wingfield and Alston 2014; Wooten 2019).

Conceptualizing Lived Experiences of Reconciliation

What, exactly, can 40 interviews with "RAP-involved" individuals tell us about reconciliation in Australia? My non-representative sample of RAP-involved staff included individual with many different ethno-racial backgrounds, socio-economic positions and organizational locations who came to participate

in the RAP program in their workplace. As this chapter will unfold, RAP-involved employees have made sense of and experienced reconciliation in a number of different ways—responses that are mediated, no doubt, by complex combinations of personal, social and environmental factors that this thesis project does not attempt to untangle.

There is, however, one ascriptive cleavage that is extremely important to keep at the forefront the interpretive context for this chapter, namely, the "difference" that is key to reconciliation itself: the distinction between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians. The preservation of Indigenous / non-Indigenous difference is a well-theorized part of the multicultural politics of recognition widely practiced in Australia (Coulthard 2014; Davis and Langton 2016a; Povinelli 2002) and it certainly underpins the nation's conciliatory citizenship project as well, defining different roles for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the words of the CAR's "Declaration Toward Reconciliation":

> As we walk the journey of healing, one part of the nation apologises and expresses its sorrow and sincere regret for the injustices of the past, so the other part accepts the apologies and forgives. (2000)

As this quote demonstrates, the RAP program—like the Australian conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation itself—carves out different roles, attitudes and emotions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees.

Therefore, in this chapter about the lived experiences of reconciliation by RAP-involved individuals, I wish to highlight the salience of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous identity in relation to the circumstances of participation in their workplace RAP program. I argue that we should understand non-Indigenous RAP-involved employees as similar to social movement participants regardless of whether their RAP participation is purely on a voluntary basis, explicitly paid as part of their job's KPIs, or somewhere in between. This is because non-Indigenous individuals have a wide freedom of choice about whether or not to get involved with the RAP program in their workplace. Although it was not a primary

focus of my interviews, several non-Indigenous RAP-involved employees volunteered information about their leeway in determining the timing, nature and extent of RAP participation during their interviews. For instance, one participant at Taylor & Smith who had gone on the volunteer trip to Red Hill explained their decision not to join the RAP Working Group given their workload and other work-related volunteer commitments.

On the other hand, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who participated in my study through their involvement with their workplace RAP did so under different circumstances than non-Indigenous staff. While I did not ask any interviewees if they felt obligated or pressured to participate in the RAP program at their workplace[123],my own interview and observational data suggest that Indigenous staff at the hundreds of RAP organizations in Australia do face additional pressure, on average, to become involved with the RAP program in their workplace compared to non-Indigenous participants. For instance, multiple non-Indigenous respondents at the Sydney Opera House brought up the importance of Rhoda Roberts' role as the Head of Indigenous Programming while lamenting her busy schedule, incredible workload and limited availability. Hiring and retaining full-time Indigenous staff were routinely cited as one of the biggest challenges for RAP organizations I interviewed, making it difficult at times to carry out the RAP principles of consultation and collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the organization. In short, the RAP program drives demand for Indigenous participation in the workplace that is often greater than the availability of Indigenous staff.[124]

[123] I chose not to ask participants if they felt pressured or obligated to join the RAP program because of ethical concerns: since my interviewees were in a dependent employer-employee relationship and were recruited to the study through their workplace, putting interview participants in a position to speak negatively about their employer would have represented an unacceptable risk of negative consequences in the case of a privacy breach. I also felt it was unacceptable to risk psychological harm to participants who might feel vulnerable or uncomfortable if faced with a choice between being honest with a researcher and criticizing their current employer with whom the researcher has a formal working relationship.

[124] The RAP program has also created demand for Indigenous people to work as cultural consultants during RAP development, as members of Indigenous advisory boards and as educators offering training in cultural competency. Another example of demand for Indigenous participation in the RAP program is the proliferation of Welcome to Country ceremonies conducted by local Traditional Owners at RAP launches and important organizational events. This dissertation, however, focuses on the demand for participation by Indigenous staff at RAP organizations.

My interviews with RA staff and examination of official program materials makes it clear that Indigenous staff should not be obligated to participate in the RAP program. However, given the structural demand for Indigenous participation in the RAP as well as the readily apparent difficulty of many RAP organizations in hiring and retaining Indigenous people, I argue that it is highly likely that Indigenous staff face pressure—whether actual or perceived—to participate in their workplace RAPs. It is also possible that Indigenous staff feel a greater degree of personal commitment and/or community obligation to participate in the RAP compared to non-Indigenous participants.

Even in the absence of demand, obligation or pressure, "participation" is not the panacea it may seem for Indigenous people as Jaskiran Dhillon finds the in Canadian context:

> [P]articipation, as an instantiation of contemporary inclusionary governance, is fundamentally a reassertion of asymmetrical power relations, albeit in a new guise, because the terms and forms of political engagement are mediated by a settler nation state that has been created through colonial dominance. (2017:14)

Dhillon's assessment of participation as an extension of asymmetrical settler-colonial power relations bears relevance for the RAP program as well: reconciliation is ultimately a state-sponsored project with a specific set of values and practices. Indigenous staff in RAP workplaces may not agree with reconciliation as a citizenship project or model for intergroup relations in Australia. For instance, one of my Indigenous respondents defined and criticized reconciliation as an assimilatory project in conflict with the goals of sovereignty and self-determination. Another Indigenous interviewee commented that they have never liked the term reconciliation. In this sense, the RAP program imposes what Dhillon calls the "terms and forms of political engagement" with the issues of racialized inequalities and injustices in the workplace. Participation in the RAP program, therefore, is tightly bounded within the framework of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation.

In addition to these structural constrains of reconciliation, Australian historian Penny Edmonds argues that "public 'reconciliatory' settler cultures" impose serious performative, emotional and dialogic

constraints on Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup relations—especially when reconciliation is specifically invoked. From her analysis of public performances of reconciliation in Australia, New Zealand and the United States, Edmonds characterizes reconciliation as a potent and alluring form of utopian politics", arguing that reconciliation is "greatly bound up in a culture and economy of affect, expressing the desire for virtuous compact, unity and redemption under the sign of nation" (2016:1):

> In contemporary postcolonial and culturally diverse settler nations, where formal decolonization remains unforeseeable, state-sponsored formal conciliation activities and public performances also work incessantly to 'fill in the gaps between things', to build a 'peace paradigm' […] Here, the politics of recognition threaten to become the politics of consensus […] and may shut down the dialogic and necessary space of the political. (2016:17).

Edmonds cautions against the "seduction" and "coercive repertoire" of reconciliation, which demands the performance of togetherness and stigmatizes conflict.

As RAPs and RAP-like plans emerge in an increasing number of workplaces, the scholarship of Dhillon and Edmonds reminds us that participation in reconciliation both enables and constrains the development of better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the settler-colonial context of contemporary Australia.

Data & Methods

In this chapter, I answer the following research questions with data from 40 interviews conducted between 2016-18:

1. *How do RAP-involved individuals define reconciliation?*
2. *Do RAP-involved individuals consider themselves actors or participants in Australia's national reconciliation process?*
3. *How do RAP-involved individuals imagine the future of reconciliation in Australia?*

Interview Sample

I conducted 40 interviews with 39 different individuals concerning their involvement in the RAP program in their workplace as well as their personal understandings and experiences with reconciliation in Australia more generally (Table 5.1). Individuals were further sub-divided as "key RAP contacts" (n=6) and "RAP-involved employees" (n=33). All RAP-involved employees, whose interview transcripts comprise the data for this chapter, were recruited on the basis of their involvement with the RAP program at four case study organizations. Out of the 33 RAP-involved individuals on whose interviews this chapter dwells, 21 were women and only 4 were Indigenous.[125] Perhaps the only two things that can be said universally about these 33 individuals is they were referred or introduced to me by their colleagues as someone meeting the qualification of "involved with the RAP program" and that they were willing to dedicate roughly an hour of their time to supporting an academic project.

My method of recruitment for RAP-involved employees was snowball sampling. After agreeing upon a memo of understanding with the case study organization regarding permission to conduct academic research in their workplace, I asked my key RAP contacts and other interviewees to suggest colleagues who were "involved in the RAP program." I then reached out privately to individuals to solicit their participation in an interview at a time and location of their choosing. The majority of individuals proposed to meet during business hours in a private or semi-private space at their workplace. For these 33 interviews I used a semi-structured interview guide containing the following sections after a brief demographic survey: their engagement with the RAP program in the current workplace; their personal understandings of and experiences with reconciliation; and finally, their understandings of reconciliation's role in the future of Australia.

[125] Out of the 39 "RAP-involved" *and* "key RAP contact" individuals who participated in the interviews related to my case studies, 26 were women and 6 self-identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Despite spending an average of only 61 minutes with each of these employees, my long-term engagement with the four case study organizations provides a rich grounding for interpretation of these interview results. The following sections analyze the transcripts from these 40 interviews with respect to the first two research questions defined above. The third and final research question, concerning the future of reconciliation in Australia, is discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

Defining Reconciliation

Since 2008 to the present day, the RAP program has emphasized three essential components of reconciliation as *relationships*, *respect* and *opportunities* (see Chapter 2). Since 2016, Reconciliation Australia has also been promoting the "five interrelated dimensions of reconciliation" as *race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, historical acceptance and unity* (RA 2016b:9). Individuals involved with the RAP program in their workplaces are likely to be exposed to these values as well as myriad of histories, events, people, principles and demands related to reconciliation, some examples of which include the Barunga Statement (1988), the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991-2000), the Bridge Walk and Corroboree 2000, RA and the RAP program (2000, 2006), Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology (2008), the Recognise campaign (2012), the *State of Reconciliation in Australia* report, and the Uluru Declaration from the Heart (epigraph).

Amidst so many hopes, frustrations, compromises, successes and failures of reconciliation in Australia, *how do RAP-involved employees define reconciliation?*[126] Using an inductive qualitative coding method (see "Data & Methods" section in Chapter 4), I find three major themes in the definitions of

[126] Roughly halfway through these hour-long interviews, I transitioned from asking interviewees about their personal background, recent professional activities and participation in the RAP program into asking about reconciliation more generally. The first question I asked interview participants regarding reconciliation was simple: "Please tell me about what reconciliation means to you."

reconciliation articulated by RAP-involved employees: righting wrongs; acknowledgement and understanding; and strong relationships (Figure 5.1; Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Defining Reconciliation: Major Themes (n=32)

Major Themes	Taylor & Smith	ABC Bank	Sydney Opera House	Bright Futures	Total Mentions
Righting Wrongs	4	7	3	3	17
Acknowledgment	4	2	2	3	11
Strong Relationships	5		1	5	11

The first theme—righting wrongs—was mentioned by 17 respondents, a slim majority of interviewees (53%). The second two themes of acknowledgement and understanding as well as strong relationships were each present in roughly 30% of respondents' definitions of reconciliation.

Figure 5.1 Word Cloud of Reconciliation Themes

Righting Wrongs (53%)

The theme of righting wrongs—the most prevalent theme in these RAP-involved employees' definitions of reconciliation—was articulated in plain, powerful language by one of the first staff I interviewed at ABC Bank: "this has been wrong and we've got to *do* something about it."[127] In the same succinct vein, a Sydney Opera House employee stated that "reconciliation is attempting to right the wrongs of the past." A Taylor & Smith employee said, "My understanding of reconciliation Is, I guess, in some ways, apologizing and— I don't know if this is the right term—but I suppose making good on a lot of the things that have happened previously."

In explaining reconciliation as a matter of righting wrongs, some respondents specified *how* the wrongs committed against Indigenous people should be addressed, especially highlighting the importance of following the lead of Indigenous people as the core of the reconciliation ethos. For instance, another Opera House employee explained: "It doesn't really matter what [reconciliation] means to me […] because it's not about me. It's about Aboriginal people and how they want to do it." Another of their colleagues explained: "I have seen quite extraordinary artists rise who are now the leaders like Rhoda Roberts, who have worked tirelessly despite a lot of trauma in their lives. So, reconciliation for me is really about supporting indigenous people to have a voice." A corporate sector employee echoed these sentiments closely, saying that reconciliation is "when communities feel empowered to, and have the rights […] to do what they want to do and apply their laws and bring their history." While few of my non-Indigenous participants used the terms sovereignty and self-determination, these articulations demonstrate that the

[127] The full quote states: "My perspective on reconciliation is we came, we white people, came into this country and—this is a generalization because it doesn't apply in all instances—and we've basically bullied our way in. We've treated the Aboriginal inappropriately in a lot of instances, we treated them as second-class inferior people and that was just wrong. That was from from day one and it was just totally inappropriate. […] And so, I think we've given a name to something that's been around for a long period of time that now has a mandate. It's always been there, it's, there's pockets of people that've, whether it be Paul Kelly singing his song about lofty or whatever it is, there's always been these advocates out there. They didn't call it reconciliation, they didn't call anything. But they were people that were sort of saying this has been wrong and we've got to do something about it. And so now we've got, given it a name, which is great for, and it's getting a bit more substance behind it so that it is meaningful and well thought through and effective. So, that's what I think reconciliation is." [emphasis added]

underlying concepts are indeed part of the process of sense-making of reconciliation for RAP-involved employees.

Acknowledgement (34%)

The theme of "acknowledgement" was mentioned by many RAP-involved individuals in relation to the acknowledgment or recognition of what was generally vaguely referred to as "injustice" or simply "terrible things" that had happened in Australia's past. "It's a recognition of the wrongs of the past," said one Bright Futures staff member about reconciliation. Her words were echoed by a colleague, who said that reconciliation meant "acknowledgment what has happened in the past, because what happened was absolutely hideous to the Indigenous folk." Similarly, a non-Indigenous ABC Bank RAP-involved employee put it, "We've basically bullied our way in. We've treated the Aboriginal inappropriately in a lot of instances and we treated them as second-class inferior people. That was just wrong. That was from day one—it was just totally inappropriate."

Acknowledgement was also understood by several of my RAP-involved interviewees as honoring the unique history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia and the world's oldest living culture. "It's an acknowledgement that they were here before us," explained an Opera House staff member about her view on reconciliation, "It's really to make sure that we understand their culture and just not forget it […] it's really important to do that because they are the first race that was in Australia and we are a multicultural society." One Taylor & Smith employee brought up debates about Australia Day as part of her definition of reconciliation, emphasizing the need for national symbolism sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders history.[128]

[128] Australia Day, the official national holiday of Australia, is celebrated annually on January 26 to commemorate the 1788 arrival of the "First Fleet" and the raising of the British flag in Sydney Cove. The holiday, alternately called Invasion Day or the National Day of Mourning by activists, lies at the center of a divisive public debate about settler colonialism.

At the same time, some RAP-involved employees resisted acknowledgement as a sufficient criterion for reconciliation, such as in this Opera House employee's articulation:

> Reconciliation, especially when it comes to [Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's] apology in 2008, was a great step because it was saying sorry. […] I think that was like very important for a lot of people in the Aboriginal Community […] But it was just saying sorry, wasn't actually doing anything about it. So it's sort of like an empty gesture.

This critique identifies the shortcomings of acknowledgement but falls short of defining reconciliation as involving efforts right wrongs of the past or repair relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples—topics discussed by the majority of RAP-involved individuals.

Strong Relationships (34%)

Many RAP-involved employees emphasized improving Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in their definitions of reconciliation. Some of these visions were collective and grandiose—"bringing European Australia together with Aboriginal Australia"—whereas for others reconciliation was about "connecting on a personal level with different cultures." In other words, this theme captures the way that participants made sense of reconciliation as having a strong intergroup or interpersonal dimension.

Improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people were often spoken about by my interviewees through metaphors, most commonly "building bridges" and "walking together."
"In championing education for Aboriginal children, we're the ones coming away more educated and enlightened," said a Taylor & Smith employee, "It's an amazing two-way street." In very similar terms, a Sydney Opera House staff member related the meaning of reconciliation they had learned from working with Rhoda: "She always talks about it's always an exchange. It's not a one-way. It's not a passing the knowledge one way or an exchange of culture of one way. It has to be a two-way thing." These statements echo the important sentiment of mutual benefit that is key to Reconciliation Australia's articulation of the kind of reconciliation that should take place in interactions between RAP organizations and Indigenous communities.

My participants also recognized strong relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as a particularly challenging area of reconciliation in Australia. For instance, one of my interviewees at Bright Futures, said:

> You have to change the way you work if you want to work with Aboriginal people and that's what most people don't get. Reconciliation Plans […] are closer to that. It actually helps you work out how to do it differently because you have to engage the community as part of its consultation.

Despite the admission of challenges in relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, on the whole the RAP-involved employees I interviewed were upbeat and optimistic that relationships could be improved with a great deal of respect, learning and patience. "Learning about each other's cultures and differences and trying to find a way that they can work together and accommodate for each other," explained a Taylor & Smith staff member, "At the end of the day it's all about engaging with Aboriginal communities in some way."

Participating in Reconciliation

The previous section established a broad consensus amongst RAP-involved employees at four different organizations that reconciliation involves acknowledgement and understanding, strong relationships and, most prominently, righting wrongs. This section answers a different question, namely, *do RAP-involved individuals consider themselves participants or actors in reconciliation?*[129]

My interviews with RAP-involved individuals demonstrate that a firm majority of 23 (72%) do consider themselves to personally be actors or participants in Australian reconciliation. Many participants affirmed their identity as a participant in reconciliation quickly and enthusiastically, such as the five employees who replied "definitely" in response to my question.

[129] I tended to ask this question to interviewees in a very direct way, i.e. "Do you consider yourself to be a participant or an actor in reconciliation?" When participants asked for clarification, I asked if they felt they played a personal role in national reconciliation as in this exchange: "Interviewee: A participant? / Charlotte: Yeah, or an actor. Someone who makes it happen, someone who's part of the reconciliation process nationally."

Table 5.5 Participant/Actor in Reconciliation (n=32)

Response	Taylor & Smith	ABC Bank	Opera House	Bright Futures	Total
Yes, I am a participant.	3	4	8	8	23
emphatic Yes	*1*	*3*	*2*	*4*	*10*
unqualified Yes	*1*		*5*	*2*	*8*
qualified/ambivalent Yes	*1*	*1*	*1*	*2*	*5*
Not Sure.	2	1	3		6
No, I am not a participant.	1	2			3
Total	**6**	**7**	**11**	**8**	**32**

Other individuals reasoned through their identity as a reconciliation participant carefully on the basis of their participant in RAP activities, such as this ABC Bank employee:

> Certainly, the courses or the attendance at the [cultural training] and then being able to go to [a remote Aboriginal community] and working with the RAP team, I have a far greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures than I did before. My knowledge on the whole is still very limited though, but it's far greater than it was before. […] Now I'm far more interested in and far more likely to discuss reconciliation and reconciliation-related issues with family and friends. […] I have far more knowledge of, and by extension, respect for Indigenous cultures than I did before. So yea, in that regard, I guess, I would be [a participant].

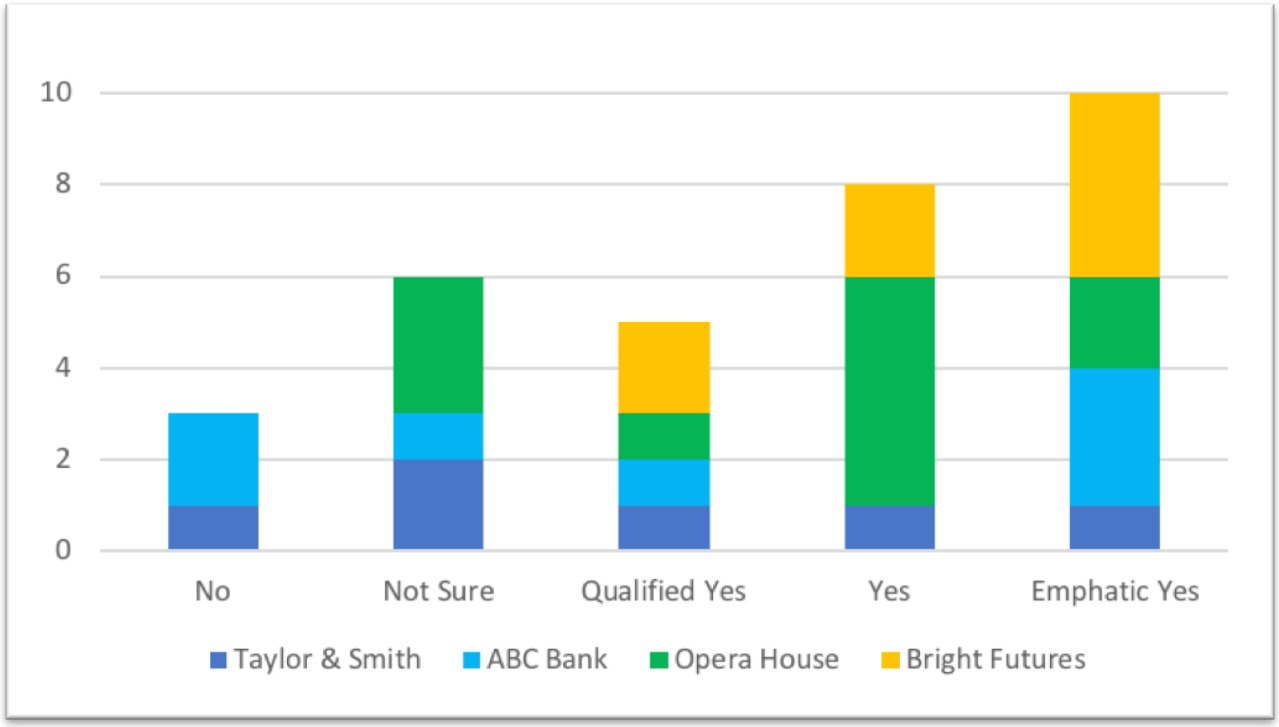
Similarly, a Taylor & Smith employee pointed to their attendance at the previous year's volunteer trip to the remote Red Hill Aboriginal community as the decisive factor in their identity as an actor in Australian reconciliation:

> "I would have said definitely, prior to Red Hill, no. But I would say that post-Red Hill, I would say yes in a very small way. I think just being aware of what is even out there is a huge step in the right direction. I also, I think the trip has really managed to engage me with some of the issues […]. We've started a letter writings or pen-pals thing with the kids at the at the school. I think all of those things are part of reconciliation and now I would consider myself somewhat of a participant in it. But definitely prior to Red Hill I would have just said but no."

Other RAP-involved employees claimed their identity as participants in reconciliation *despite* not being able to make what they felt was a large contribution. "I'd like to think I'm a little part of it, even if I just say a couple of words to someone and then it makes them think about something," said an employee at Bright Futures. Another of her colleagues echoed: "You know, [I don't participate] in a major way. But yeah, I guess I am [a participant]. I guess I think about [reconciliation]."

A total of six RAP-involved employees did not provide a clear answer about if they considered themselves to be actors or participants in reconciliation. This was largely due to ambivalence, such as this Opera House staff member's split opinion: "Not really. Then talking about this, maybe. I don't know. I've never really thought of myself like that. Yeah, sort of." Many interviewees, even those who did eventually come to a decision, emphasized their ambivalence and/or uncertainty about their identity as a reconciliation participant. Only three RAP-involved employees definitely answered that they did not consider themselves to be participants in reconciliation, though they all acknowledged that they had made some kind of contribution even if they were not "active" participants.

Figure 5.2 Do you consider yourself a participant or actor in reconciliation in Australia? (n=32)



Taken together, these interviews reveal that the RAP-involved employees in my sample almost universally acknowledged their contributions to reconciliation and the majority said that they would currently consider themselves actors or participants in Australian reconciliation. Most strikingly, several

participants shared powerful narratives about the emergence of their identity as a reconciliation participant as a direct result of the RAP program.

Conclusion

Overall, my findings show broad consensus amongst RAP-involved employees about the meaning of reconciliation as righting wrongs, building stronger Indigenous / non-Indigenous relationships and acknowledgment of Indigenous people, history and culture as well as acknowledgement of the disadvantages still faced today by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. My findings also reveal that a strong majority of RAP-involved employees identify as a participant or actor in the Australian project of reconciliation, although public and third sector employees were more likely to be emphatic in their responses as opposed to corporate respondents.

On a surface level, my findings that RAP-involved employees tended to think about reconciliation in similar ways is unsurprising. After all, they share experience with the same national RAP program, and are exposed to similar media content. However, I admit to being surprised by the relative consensus of RAP-involved employees given the degree to which my informal conversations about reconciliation with other Australians during my fieldwork tended to vary. This suggests, although far from conclusively, that participation in the RAP program socializes participants into similar ways of thinking about reconciliation. At the very least, my findings demonstrate that RAP-involved employees are socialized into articulating the meaning of and their experiences with reconciliation in similar ways to a foreign researcher study their workplace RAP.

Resonance and Reconciliation

Even though RAP-involved individuals were able to articulate their own experiences with and understandings of reconciliation, the concept tended to have low personal resonance for my participants.

Many of my participants began their answers to my questions about their own understanding of reconciliation with "I don't know" or "I haven't really thought about it" and heavily questioned or qualified their own authority to speak on such as subject. Additionally, participants reported that reconciliation was not a word they commonly used or discussed in the context of the workplace RAP, especially for respondents in the corporate case study organizations. As an ABC Bank employee explained:

> [M]ost of the conversations that we're having are focused on programs and outcomes, and obviously reconciliation is central to that, but whether we sort of verbalize it... As I've said with respect to the Reconciliation Action Plan—I guess reconciliation as a subject, it's obviously covered in the conversation but it's not the focal point.

In very similar terms, a Taylor & Smith employee spoke about reconciliation as being "in the back of everyone's mind, but not in terms of reconciliation"—i.e. rather than being a concept through which they understood their participation in the RAP program, this Taylor & Smith employee described reconciliation as distant and abstract with little relevance to their own experience on the Red Hill volunteer trip:

> Reconciliation…I don't know. Reconciliation feels like it's very high level. Whereas when you're out at [Red Hill], it's much more real. It's more just about communicating with the kids and having fun with them and so forth. You don't feel like you're doing reconciliation if that make sense.

In other words, although my interviewees were all familiar enough with reconciliation to be able to articulate their own definitions as well as to identify as participants in Australia's conciliatory project, reconciliation was *not* a highly resonant concept. Instead, my interview participants often spoke about reconciliation in relation to other well-known concepts in Australian Indigenous politics, recognition and "Close the Gap", a topic we will return to in the concluding chapter to this thesis.

The Future of Reconciliation

In this chapter, we have seen that RAP-involved individuals tended to reach a broad consensus about the meaning of reconciliation as involving righting wrongs, building closer relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people(s) and demonstrating acknowledgement, respect and

understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture. RAP-involved individuals also overwhelmingly identified as participants in Australian reconciliation while at the same time reporting that the concept was not particularly personally resonant. And despite the RAP program's status as one of the most important instantiations of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project, RAP-involved employees report that the term and concept of reconciliation often remains in the background while other values of acknowledgement, collaboration and respect take center-stage during RAP-related activities.

There was, however, one question I posed to RAP-involved employees that yielded a high variation in responses, namely, *how do you imagine the future of reconciliation in Australia?* On one extreme, some participants argued that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people should be able to build stronger relationships beyond "us and them" divisions in the words of one Taylor & Smith employee:

> What I struggle to get my head around is why as Australians we don't accept the Aboriginal history as part of our history. I mean, this is the land of that we're on. Why don't we think about Aboriginal history in the context of an extension of us? We're people that came from a different culture and we came to this land, yet we very much see ourselves as an us and them. We don't think of our culture or our history stretching back forty-thousand years. But this is the land we're on. So, what I guess I would like to see is future generations of Australians actually thinking well, this is Australian history. It might be Aboriginal history, but from 200 years forward that we became part of that history as well.

Other RAP employees spoke optimistically about the future of reconciliation in Australia as something that would continue to improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, even if "complete" or "ideal" reconciliation would never be reached. As one ABC Bank employee explained:

> I don't think you're ever going to reconcile both sides 100%. It's just, there's gonna be people out there that have very staunch views […] I think there's a very good middle ground, but at the same time you're not going to be able to change everyone's minds on both sides of the aisle.

On the other hand, the many RAP-involved employees I interviewed found expressed profound pessimism at the prospects for reconciliation, especially since over a decade of "Closing the Gap" campaigns, funding and annual progress reports produced by the office of the Prime Minster have failed to meaningfully reduce the disparities in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, (Australian

Government 2016, 2019a; Holland 2018). For instance, a Taylor & Smith employee questioned if reconciliation could actually transform the social and political structures that (re)produce socio-economic inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people:

> If I liken this [reconciliation] struggle—which you can't really liken so forgive me for doing this—to, say, women in senior leadership positions in business, nothing much is happening for very long time. Obviously, something much bigger needs to happen than what were all doing to make a difference. Yeah, it's a huge complex wicked problem.

Likewise, this ABC Bank employee was unable to imagine a reconciled future:

> I don't know. I don't know how [reconciliation] can be achieved to be honest. I really can't see solution. There will be milestones that will be important and successful, but I find it really hard to see that […] the problem, well not the problem solved, but that we've worked it out.

This sentiment—that racialized injustice and inequality is too deeply entrenched in Australia to be fully addressed by the ongoing reconciliation process—was common amongst my interview participants

In some cases, I also asked respondents if they thought that the process reconciliation would one day come to an end in Australia. The majority of my respondents answered similarly to another ABC Bank employee who did not believe that reconciliation could come to an end:

> "It's one of those things, I've never really thought about it and never really seen what the end goal is because, in a sense, there probably is no end goal, unfortunately. It's probably one of those things that we're always going to have to keep building towards."

In the words of a Brighter Futures employee, "You can't just say, 'done!'" It is ongoing, like acknowledgements whenever we have football games or whatever. We acknowledge the Aboriginal Elders of this land and if that was stopped it would be really odd." This practice of reconciliation as a permanently institutionalized process and broad framework for Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations is an extremely unique feature of Australian reconciliation [130], one that puts into sharp relief the fact that

[130] This unique characteristic of reconciliation as a permanently institutionalized process in Australia is the subject of my paper in progress entitled, "Governing the Past through National Reconciliation: Integrative vs. Containment Approaches in Australia and South Africa" (paper accepted for presentation at: ASA 2018 and SSHA 2019).

after more than 25 years, reconciliation is still a—if not *the*—"dominant way of talking about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia."[131]

[131] This quotation comes from Dr. Angela Pratt's excellent assessment of the legacy of the CAR (1991-2000): "At just after 6.30pm on 5 June 1991, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Bill, setting in train the process of reconciliation which became a major theme of Australian political life in the ensuing decade. […] Since that June evening in 1991, the term reconciliation has become part of the Australian political lexicon. Never before had there been this kind of bipartisan agreement on the broad policy framework in which Indigenous policy-making takes place. *Reconciliation has become the dominant way of talking about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia*. It has been a concept commonly employed in the big debates which have taken place in Indigenous affairs over the last decade—such as those over native title, the stolen generations, and more recently, how best to approach the problems of violence, substance abuse and welfare dependency in Indigenous communities. It has become a new way of judging policy, which is now often assessed in terms of whether or not it will advance reconciliation" [emphasis added] (Pratt 2005:1).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

At its core, this dissertation is concerned with the entrenched inequalities, injustices and marginalization experienced by ethno-racial minority groups and especially Indigenous peoples within liberal democratic states. I argue that we should understand racialized injustice as a fundamental failure to uphold citizenship rights and facilitate full social membership for minority groups and Indigenous peoples. To this end, the sociology of citizenship provides a well-theorized standpoint from which to understand how the stark socio-economic disadvantage of Indigenous Australians is intricately connected to issues of political rights and cultural belonging.

My concept of *citizenship project*—sustained and organized collaboration between state and non-state collective social actors and individuals to institutionalize changes to an existing citizenship regime—extends and puts in conversation the sociological literatures on social movements and citizenship. Many individual and collective actors seek to uphold or extend citizenship rights and full membership to marginalized groups through participation in social movements. However, there are few, if any, state-sponsored projects that can match the continuity, duration and sheer scale of Australian reconciliation over the last 25 years. This makes it all the more important to study how reconciliation shapes the cultural values, beliefs and practices of citizenship in Australia, especially with regard to intergroup and interpersonal relations.

The endurance of reconciliation in Australia, however, belies the controversy that has most often surrounded the project's attempts to transform the existing citizenship regime in accordance with its conciliatory ideals. These tensions between Australians who view reconciliation as an abject failure versus an ongoing process an interesting sociological puzzle— *how do some social actors come to partner with the state on conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation whereas others reject reconciliation as a framework for intergroup relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?*

RAPs and Reconciliation in Australia

Taking stock of Australian reconciliation after a quarter of a century of state-driven reconciliation, this dissertation also posed two research questions about this conciliatory citizenship project's flagship Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program: *How does Australian reconciliation ask citizens to conceptualize and practice citizenship and Australian identity? And how does reconciliation imagine, enable and constrain relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?* Each substantive chapter of this dissertation also asked and answered its own specific research questions at different levels of analysis ranging from the national (macro) to the industry and organizational level (meso) to the individual (micro) level. The task of this section is to synthesize these multi-level perspectives of the RAP program into conclusions regarding each of these research questions.

As the title of this dissertation suggests, I discuss two different implications of Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation: the management of Indigeneity in Australian workplaces vis-à-vis the RAP program and the cultivation of conciliatory citizens through the framework of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a prominent, though by no means undisputed, part of the narrative of Indigenous non-Indigenous intergroup relations at the national level (Ch. 2) and a mainstay of new ideals and practices of conciliatory citizenship. On the other hand, I found that the term reconciliation was a distant concept for RAP-involved individuals, many of whom often reported never having thought about how to define the term in their own words. Some participants, especially the few Indigenous RAP-involved employees I interviewed in my case study organizations, also reported that reconciliation was a distasteful concept. Instead, RAP-involved individuals placed emphasis on what they perceived to be the benefits to themselves, their colleagues, their organization and its stakeholders as a result of participating in the RAP program. These anecdotes about successful interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, organizations and communities were almost ubiquitously accompanied by forecasts of "step by step" or "drop in the bucket" improvement in Indigenous non-Indigenous relations.

RAPs: Managing Indigeneity

Through multi-level analysis, this dissertation parsed some of the many ways that reconciliation is understood and practiced in contemporary Australia vis-à-vis the RAP program, which has been adopted in over 1,000 organizations across the public, private and third sectors. One of the most important findings is that the RAP program's conciliatory values, beliefs and practices of respect, relationships with and opportunities for Indigenous people have become widely accepted in RAP workplaces as best practices for managing Indigenous employees, interacting with Indigenous customers or clients and interacting with local Indigenous communities. For instance, my research shows that understandings of reconciliation at both the organizational (Chs. 3-4) and individual (Ch. 5) level are highly consistent with the RAP program's thematic emphases and minimum requirements.

Based on extensive fieldwork, I find that conciliatory values, beliefs and practices of the RAP program are highly standard and widely approved of in Australian workplaces as a way to manage Indigeneity. Many of my interviewees explained, often apologetically, that Indigeneity is such a highly politicized and controversial issue that their organizations were hesitant to begin any conversations, much less make statements or policy changes. More importantly, however, my interlocutors in RAP organizations described feeling pressure or obligation to "do something" with regards to their organizations' policies for Indigenous people, clients and communities, which I suggest reflects a change in global norms away from "colorblind" styles of workplace management towards "color-conscious" and "value in diversity" forms of engagement with employees and stakeholders (Herring 2009; Page 2008; Plaut et al. 2014; Rattan and Ambady 2013; Robinson and Dechant 1997; Swann et al. 2004). In the context of this push factor, the reputation and the legitimacy of the RAP program, deriving from RA's federal funding and joint Indigenous and non-Indigenous management, was a "pull factor" to join the program.

In the terminology of neo-institutionalism, my findings uncover significant *isomorphism* in Australian organizations' articulations of and policies regarding Indigeneity (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), especially

in the workplaces of Australia's tightly networked "large corporates", moderately in government institutions and to a lesser extent in the third-sector. Although I did not systematically collect data on non-RAP organizations, I had frequent contact with non-RAP organizations and employees of non-RAP organizations throughout my 15-month period of fieldwork and I have continued to review the websites, annual reports and other public documentation of non-RAP organizations. Much to my initial surprise, I have not encountered much variation in the management of Indigenous difference in organizations with explicitly policies regarding Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples in RAP versus non-RAP organizations. Even more surprising was the nearly universal agreement of interlocutors, both interviewees and acquaintances, on the importance of policies consistent with the RAP program minimum requirements (e.g. Acknowledgement of Country, increased hiring of Indigenous people, cultural sensitivity training).

In even more specific neo-institutional terms, I observed the relevance of *mimetic isomorphism*, defined as organizations' standardized responses to minimize the uncertainty of managing Indigeneity in a settler colonial society, and *normative isomorphism*, which comes from social norms instilled during schooling and especially professionalization. With regards to mimetic isomorphism, I find that the RAP program sustains the circulation of conciliatory values and practices within the organizational sectors and industries as well as geographies. Many individuals I spoke with at RAP organizations made reference to feeling part of and benefitting from a "RAP community"[132] in their industry or, less commonly, in their local area. Moreover, individuals who work in a RAP organization may carry forward conciliatory ideals and practices into other organizations within their industries. From the perspective of normative isomorphism, the participation of professional associations in the RAP program is a particularly important factor in the rapid diffusion of the programs' ideals and policies.[133] RA's Narragunnawali program for

[132] In fact, RA provides resources and limited support for Reconciliation Industry Networking Groups (RINGs) to facilitate industry-level RAP targets and coordination. Two of the most active groups in the Sydney area during the time of my fieldwork were the RINGs for financial services and media.

[133] Termed the "PEAK" sector in RA's organizational categorization system, there are currently22 professional associations listed as having current RAPs including the Green Building Council of Australia and the Victorian Bar Association.

primary and secondary school curriculums may also play an increasingly important role in the (re)production of conciliatory workplace policies.

Alongside the rapid diffusion of conciliatory values, beliefs and practices in Australian organizations, I argue that conciliatory styles of managing Indigeneity are "sticky". My encounters with inactive RAP organizations consistently revealed that conciliatory values of reconciliation frequently persist, either structurally, as in human resource practices regarding cultural accommodations, or culturally, as in Acknowledgement of Country protocols. Organizations that have launched even one RAP would have been required to discuss conciliatory values and RAP targets with the highest levels of executive approval within a carefully balanced RAP Working Group under the supervision of a RAP officer working for RA for months or, not uncommonly, for more than a year. Thus, some elements of RAP-based frameworks for intergroup relations and the management of Indigeneity are likely to persist even so-called "one and done" organizations (Ch. 2).

Finally, an important aspect of the management of Indigeneity vis-à-vis conciliatory RAP-based and RAP-like ideals and practices is the performance of authenticity.[134] RAP-involved individuals frequently criticized the "box-ticking" attitude of unspecified other organizations while carefully articulating their own personal and organizational commitments to the values of the RAP program. From my investigations as an independent researcher, however, I did not encounter any RAP organizations meeting this denigrating description. In fact, quite the opposite was true—my RAP-involved interlocutors frequently brought up narratives of enjoyment, satisfaction and even personal transformation while openly discussing some of the difficulties and challenges of participating in the RAP program. Regardless of the "true" feelings of my interviewees, it is clear that the management of Indigeneity demands the ability to

[134] The sociological concept of performance recognizes that internal states of actors cannot be verified—thus, researchers only have access to observable "performances" of underlying emotional, psychological and cognitive processes. Performativity in sociological thinking does not imply that the social actor is duplicitous or dissembling, although these are, of course, possible.

successfully perform authentic belief in conciliatory values and practices especially, or perhaps only, from those most closely involved in the implementation of RAP targets.

Reconciliation: Cultivating Citizens

Reconciliation in Australia is a citizenship project, i.e. collaboration between state and non-state actors to effect change to an existing citizenship regime, that is *conciliatory* in nature: whereas the premise of reconciliation is the *re*-establishment of positive, collaborative relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the term conciliation more accurately reflects one-sidedness of settler-colonial power dynamics that violently disregarded the need for intergroup relations in the first place. However subtle, this difference in terminology reflects a foundational premise of Australian reconciliation, namely that there is some kind of historical or moral basis for the conduct of intergroup relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. I argue that this populates the social imagination with problematic expectations for how socio-economic inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians may be reduced and how intergroup and interpersonal relations might be improved.

Specifically, I argue that reconciliation populates the political landscape and social imagination with concepts and practices that promote peaceful, non-conflictual relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Fundamentally, this conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation imagines ideal citizens as those who celebrate Indigenous people, history and culture while simultaneously showing concern for Indigenous disadvantage. Furthermore, reconciliation imagines Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together peacefully, volunteering in their capacity as private citizens to eliminate social, economic and heath inequalities. Finally, reconciliation imagines that all actions contributing to respect, relationships and opportunities for Indigenous people are part of a cumulative

national project that will eventually dismantle racialized inequalities and extend full citizenship rights and social membership to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To be sure, this reimagination of Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations through reconciliation has *enabled* many social actors, whether individual or organizational, to participate in a citizenship project that celebrates Indigenous culture, acknowledges the need to right wrongs and promotes respectful, collaborative relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. At the same time, reconciliation *constrains* meanings and practices of citizenship in Australia while also *obscuring* the way that many individual citizens as well as collective actors attempt to challenge or resist reconciliation.

For starters, reconciliation relies on limited ways of identifying and describing Indigenous peoples and cultures. It also stigmatizes any public display—and discourages personal feelings—of resentment, anger and conflict as obstructive, hateful or racist. Regardless of intention, reconciliation does absorb time, energy and attention that could be dedicated to more adversarial forms of political claims-making, therefore *constraining* the space of political opportunity for other social movements to fight for human, collective and citizenship rights.

Furthermore,I characterize reconciliation as a "greedy" project in that it interprets all Indigenous / non-Indigenous relationships as part of the national reconciliation project: any social actor, whether individual, organizational or collective, is interpellated as a party responsible for contributing to reconciliation within their sphere of influence. Especially through its quantification via the RAP program, the national project of reconciliation is continually progressing through the expansion of workplace policies, initiatives and activities related to Indigenous people. This *obscures* the way that many individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, may be personally indifferent, distant from or even opposed to reconciliation. In other words, reconciliation makes it difficult for social actors to dissociate from or openly challenge conciliatory values and practices. In summary, I argue that the conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation in Australia *enables* recognition of (certain kinds of) cultural

difference, *bounds* intergroup relations inside a non-conflictual space, and *constrains* possibilities for political and structural reform-- at least in the settler colonial context of contemporary Australia.

Sociological Contributions

My dissertation puts in conversation multiple sociological and interdisciplinary literatures on citizenship, racialized inequality, Australian politics, social memory, comparative Indigenous studies, restorative justice, and nation-building. I locate my project primarily within the sociological literature on political sociology with important ties to cultural sociology, social movements, the sociology of organizations and the sociology of race & ethnicity.

Whereas in other historical, comparative or even contemporary and overlapping citizenship projects might be characterized imperial, revanchist, cosmopolitan, colonial, multicultural, or nationalist, I argue that "conciliatory" citizenship projects have become an important marker of our era. Implemented in around 25 countries since 1990, national reconciliation processes have sought to cultivate citizens with fundamentally new ways of thinking and being. According to these citizenship projects, ideal citizens should readily acknowledge the truth of historical injustices and embrace cultural difference, coexisting peacefully with one another and showing goodwill in working together towards a shared and surely bright future. At the same time, properly "conciliatory citizens" should avoid being overly preoccupied, embittered or traumatized by the past and should strive to overcome feelings of resentment or anger-- even in the absence of meaningful structural socio-economic change and political reforms. As this dissertation has demonstrated, Australia's conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation encourages the acknowledgement of historical injustice and recognition for minority and Indigenous cultures but constrains attitudes and actions that would fundamentally reshape the distribution of power and wealth.

Understanding reconciliation as an *ongoing, state-supported conciliatory citizenship project* in contemporary Australia illuminates the ways that reconciliation is but one of the several vast, cyclonic

projects—including national and grassroots organizations; state, collective and individual actors; political, social and economic goals—that challenge, complement and compete with one another as frameworks for (re)imagining relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian citizens. Within the cacophony of partially overlapping, often opposed citizenship projects including recognition, treaty, sovereignty and self-determination, reconciliation has so far captured the most resource-intensive and consistent support from the Australian state. In my professional opinion, it shows little sign of being dislodged as the state's preferred framework for Indigenous affairs.

At the same time, this thesis develops the idea of the workplace as an important site of citizenship formation. Most often, we think of citizenship in relation to spaces of civic participation, such as the voting booth, town hall debates, and volunteer community clean-ups. Public spaces and events, border crossings, and regulatory agencies from the DMV to the IRS also strongly connote the duties and privileges of citizenship. However, the ways that modern democratic states define and encourage acts of "good citizenship" in the workplace bear further investigation. My dissertation develops the idea of the workplace as a site where individuals may be called upon to enact civic projects and to practice good citizenship in their capacity as employees. I argue that the rise of "corporate citizenship", according to which organizations are asked to take on social consciousness and responsibilities, has in turn engendered additional spheres of action where employees are asked to contribute to larger social and political citizenship projects in addition to organizational tasks. The case of the RAP program in Australia vividly demonstrates how state and non-state actors can implement a conceptual and structural framework, namely reconciliation, through which employees are interpellated to embody and enact particular practices of citizenship in their workplaces.

Future Directions

This dissertation has touched on only a mere fraction of the possible questions, tensions and trends in Australia's reconciliation process. Based on my rich interview, observational and archival data, I have begun the following projects in parallel to the ideas developed in this dissertation:

Technologies of Difference: What we term workplace "diversity" programs in the United States target only recent "multicultural" immigrants in Australia, whereas Australia's use of "reconciliation" in relation to programs for Indigenous people has no parallel in American organizations. Similar workplace efforts may also be called bilingualism (Canada, South Africa), decolonization (Bolivia) or peacebuilding (Ireland, Israel). *How can we begin to organize this vast, unruly field of efforts regarding underrepresented groups in the workplace?* As a solution, I propose the Foucauldian concept of "technologies of difference" as a useful analytical construct for examining, comparing and reimagining these diverse means by which organizations invoke and address social differences. As I see it, technologies of difference include formal policies, initiatives and programs as well as informal practices that facilitate workplace access for a category of individuals designated as different – this can mean ethno-racial, gender, sexual, religious and other kinds of identity-based difference.

The purpose of this concept is to create a space for the evaluation, comparison and re-imagination of the means by which organizations actively invoke difference in order to manage it in some ways. Along these lines, technologies of difference are those strategies by which organizations depart from logics of the "universal" worker (Acker 1990) and instead attempt to address one or more of the vast social differences embodied by their workers. Identifying technologies of difference in the workplace can help uncover implicit hegemonic assumptions of "normal" or "universal" workers by revealing groups socially or culturally labelled as "different" in some way and the accommodations attempt to address this difference. Not only does the term technologies of difference provide a neutral category for the comparison of approaches from distinct traditions, geographies and time periods, but it also emphasizes

the importance of investigating how *specific* technologies, i.e. material and conceptual systems, conceptualize difference and affect the social organization of the workplace. To demonstrate the utility of this concept, I am working on an article using examples of Reconciliation Action Plans in Australian organizations, segregated religious rituals in Ottoman-era silk-spinning guilds and the University of Michigan Law School's Affirmative Action policy (draft in progress).

Comparing Conciliatory Citizenship: My most immediate goal is to expand my dissertation work on Australia into a book comparing the distinctive reconciliation processes undertaken in three settler-colonial societies: Australia, Canada and the United States. This responds to exciting new scholarship that sees reconciliation not merely as a philosophy for political transitions, but also as relevant—and even necessary—mechanism for achieving justice in stable liberal democracies (Bashir 2011; Fourlas 2015). My book will offer this emerging field of "transformative" justice projects in liberal democracies a comprehensive comparison of the mandates, conceptual frames, institutions and policies of Australian, Canadian and US reconciliation with important reflections on the specificities of reconciliation in settler-colonial societies. Additionally, this book project will contribute to our understanding of contemporary "citizenship projects" such as reconciliation through which states cultivate new meanings and practices of citizenship and through which individuals renegotiate fraught relationships with their national community. For this book project, I have already begun researching and writing about the experiences of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2013-2015)—the first reconciliation effort to proceed with state-level approval and participation in the United States, particularly in terms of its conceptual and institutional links to the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Civil Rights-era violence in my home state of North Carolina.

National Reconciliation Database: Additionally, I have begun to lay the groundwork for a longer-term project: a database of all post-WWII national reconciliation processes with quantitative indicators and qualitative data, including founding documents and final reports. With the number of cases expected

between 30-40, this project is conceived as a supplement to the Transitional Justice Database, which collects data on many political and judicial mechanisms, but fails to account for the cultural, social and commemorative aspects of reconciliation projects and campaigns that are often undertaken simultaneously. Such a gap leaves scholars in the social sciences and humanities ill-equipped to understand the incredible variation in how states narrate past trauma, promote social healing and recreate collective identity. Already, I have written an argument for a four-part definition of national reconciliation, a contested and elusive concept, as a "formally institutionalized process undertaken by a state in order to resolve national conflict through the concept of (re)conciliation." I plan to apply for grants to support the development of the National Reconciliation Database and place special emphasis on making original documents available in OCR (searchable) format to facilitate text analysis using traditional qualitative as well as computational methods. This publicly available database will enable important interdisciplinary research by academic scholars, practitioners and policy-makers on the many possibilities and pitfalls of national reconciliation.

Reconciliation in the Post-Uluru Era

With respect to the sociological puzzle of how some individual and collective Australian social actors come to partner with the state whereas others reject reconciliation as a framework for intergroup relations, I hypothesize that social actors' support for the reconciliation as a model of Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup relations splits according to their theories of social change with respect to racialized inequality and injustice. Specifically, I found that individuals who articulate gradualist, cumulative, and "drop in the bucket" models of social change are more likely to identify as participants in reconciliation and to practice Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations according to conciliatory values and beliefs. Conversely, I hypothesize that individuals who articulate adversarial and zero-sum models of social change

will oppose reconciliation on the basis that the scarce time, energy and resources of Indigenous peoples and their allies are better pitched in other battles against the settler-colonial state.

In addition to this insight about Australians' divergent theories of social change, I argue that conciliatory norms and priorities of the Australian citizenship project of reconciliation are so thoroughly institutionalized that they will continue to influence Australian conceptualizations of Indigenous / non-Indigenous difference and aspirations for intergroup relations for many years, easily decades, to come. Thus, I hope this dissertation might be a guide to those who wish to understand how reconciliation values, beliefs and imaginaries will continue to shape Australian identity and Indigenous / non-Indigenous relations into the post-Uluru era. My research provides powerful descriptive evidence showing how conciliatory values and practices have been institutionalized across an incredible number of organizations via the RAP program, sites where the conciliatory citizenship project of reconciliation will continue shape the norms and practices of intergroup relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Even as Indigenous peoples and their allies rally around new and renewed social movements (e.g. 1 Voice Uluru) and political concepts (e.g. makarrata), the Australian citizenship project of reconciliation will continue to institutionalize conciliatory value, beliefs and models for Indigenous / non-Indigenous intergroup relations through the RAP program as well as other state-funded programs of RA, such as National Reconciliation Week and Narragunnawali.

For scholars, policy makers, activists and citizens who would like to understand an actionable takeaway of this research, I highlight the following conclusions: my research demonstrates that, although it is entirely fair to characterize reconciliation as a failed political project emblematic of the many empty promises made to Australia's First Peoples, this *state-supported conciliatory citizenship project* has become deeply institutionalized in the public, private and not-for-profit sector and will therefore remain part of the political landscape and social imaginary for years to come. This is all the more likely given ongoing government (financial) support for reconciliation and RA's role for the RAP program as the

lynchpin of its strategy to institutional integrity, "the active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures" by the 50th anniversary of Australian reconciliation in 2041.

Within the highly politicized and racialized topography of Indigenous non-Indigenous intergroup and interpersonal relations in Australia, I argue that reconciliation should be understood as an incredibly well-resourced and widely diffused citizenship project that has successfully institutionalized conciliatory ideals and practices in workplaces across the country, especially in the public and private sector. Divergent understandings of social transformation as a "zero-sum game" versus a "drop in the bucket" clarifies why many Australians, particularly those who identify as Indigenous, are happy to support RAP-based and RAP-like workplace practices even as they disagree with or reject reconciliation as a viable framework for Indigenous non-Indigenous relations. Whatever hope (re)emerging social movements centered around concepts such as treaty, sovereignty, self-determination, recognition, rights, representation and makarrata hold for extending full citizenship rights to Indigenous Australians will be based, in no small part, on their ability to dislodge reconciliation as the deeply entrenched and *still* "dominant way of talking about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia" (Pratt 2005:1).

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