

It's a RAP

Edition 3

SLSQ Art Unveiled

Sharing stories and culture



A Guide for Engagement

A practical guide for First Nations Engagement for your club

RAP Update

What's been happening and what's to come

RAP Working Group

Introducing more of our members

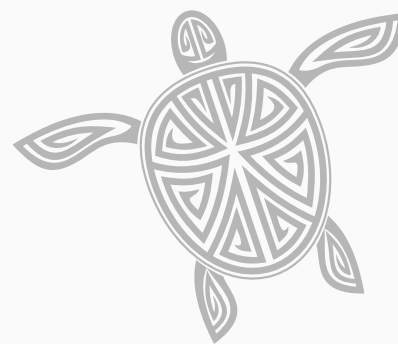


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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this update may contain names and/or images of deceased persons



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, beaches, skies, and waterways where we deliver our lifesaving services. We honour their enduring connection to Country, which has sustained and inspired their culture, stories, and practices for millennia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, recognising their strength, resilience, and contributions to our shared future.



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Welcome

to our 3rd edition of 'It's a RAP', Surf Life Saving Queensland's (SLSQ) quarterly update dedicated to keeping our members, stakeholders, and interested parties informed on our journey towards reconciliation.



Designed to provide information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement across the organisation, It's a RAP celebrates our progress, recognises history, while highlighting upcoming opportunities for involvement and growth within ourselves, our clubs and our organisation.

We are excited to announce that SLSQ's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has received conditional endorsement from Reconciliation Australia and will now undergo formatting and design for presentation of the plan document.

In the last edition you met members from our RAP Working Group (RWG). In this edition we introduce the rest of the team. Speaking of the RWG, after the most recent meeting they identified the opportunity for adoption of Traditional Place names and Custodial Groups for areas throughout Queensland in our communications. In this edition we provide an outline of how you can adopt this practice of respect and acknowledgement. You can also obtain more information on whose Country you are on from SLSQ – please just ask.

Since our last edition, the SLSQ Cultural Artwork has been unveiled and our wonderful member artists, Chris and Darius of Forrest Beach SLSC, share their story, culture and creativity with us. You will be seeing the artwork featured in our RAP document and other SLSQ assets. Also the North Queensland Branch has unveiled its artwork and incorporated into their team uniforms – too deadly!

We have produced a practical guide for Clubs on how to realise growth from engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and highlight some of the recommendations in this edition. We also head to Yeppoon in the Wide Bay Cap Branch as well as North Queensland for their Come and Try Days.



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A Word from the RWG



At the recent meeting of the SLSQ RAP Working Group (RWG), the use of Traditional names and Custodian groups was discussed. We encourage members, club and branches to incorporate this language into communications. It not only provides education and promotes cultural competency, it demonstrates respect for the ongoing connections to Country of our First Nations peoples.

Many institutions, including airports and government agencies, have adopted this practice, which reinforces the importance of embedding First Nations identity into everyday conversations and public spaces. An example of a great opportunity to implement this initiative is the upcoming 2025 Advanced Lifesaving Development Program, scheduled to be delivered on Stradbroke Island from Friday, 2nd May – Monday, 5th May 2025. For example, this could be described as “The 2025 SLSQ Advanced Lifesaving Development Program is being held on Stradbroke Island / Minjerribah, the traditional lands of the Quandamooka People.”

Following on from last month, we are pleased to introduce the remaining members of our inaugural RAP Working Group. Our 13 members from across the state, all share a passion for lifesaving and are committed to changing lives, saving lives and contributing to club and organisational growth through our reconciliation actions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. These four working group members share their motivations and insights, and we encourage you to connect with them as members of your respective clubs and branches on our journey.



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RAP Working Group Members

SHANE WHITE

Shane is a member of Cairns SLSC and has held various roles in the club during his time as a patrol captain, assistant age manager, peer support officer, lifeguard and club captain. He is deeply interested in participating in SLSQ's RAPWG because he believes that reconciliation is essential for building a stronger, more inclusive community. His work (Queensland Ambulance Service) has a strong cultural safety unit, and he has valuable insights that will contribute meaningfully to SLSQ's RAP.



He has also worked in remote communities across Cape York and the Far North region, which has given him the opportunity to better understand the challenges faced by these communities and the importance of tailoring support to meet their unique needs.

LEAH JONES

Leah is a member of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta SLSC. She is interested in participating in the RAPWG as an Indigenous Woman and long standing SLS member. Leah believes her extensive lived experience as an Indigenous person, and particularly that within the Lifesaving movement, would help shape ideas and contribute to the development of a progressive and successful SLSQ Reconciliation Action Plan.



She would love to see a strong commitment to engaging with Indigenous communities and create opportunities and pathways for Indigenous peoples into Lifesaving. She is committed to seeing more clubs and branches across the state adopt measures of inclusion and participation. Leah has been involved in many areas across Lifesaving, and also works within her community as a social worker supporting vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



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SHAUN BAKER

Shaun Baker joined the Noosa Heads SLSC in 2014 to immerse his family in the community, enhance surf awareness and continue his affinity with the ocean. He has actively been involved in junior activities, holding various roles including age and team manager, officiating, age manager coordinator to DOJA for the last four years, even during COVID with over 850 Nippers at two beaches.



As a patrolling member and a father on the beach, Shaun's contributions have been invaluable. Shaun has had the privilege of working with many remarkable individuals, notably Rosie Cooper, who played a key role in promoting Indigenous culture and storytelling at Noosa. Through her efforts, Lyndon Davis and the Kabi Kabi Dance Troupe have been engaged to open the Nipper season with a Welcome to Country and perform at the U8 - U10 Branch Carnival. A highlight was the 2022-23 when Lyndon's Welcome to Country marked the raising the Aboriginal flag at the club for the first time. Shaun is now in a Branch role on the Sunshine Coast and looks forward to a successful 2025

JEMIMA EVEANS

Jemima has been an active member of Ellis Beach SLSC for over 10 years. During this time, she has served on the Ellis Beach and North Queensland Branch Board. She is currently the President of the North Queensland Branch. Jemima is interested in participating in SLSQ's RAPWG because she is passionate about promoting reconciliation and fostering inclusive practices within the community and SLSQ.



She believes that meaningful engagement with First Nation perspectives is essential for driving positive change. Jemima has extensive experience in community engagement and project management and is eager to contribute ideas and actions that reflect the value of respect and partnerships, ensuring that the RAP is not only a framework but also a living commitment to reconciliation.



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Weaving Connection through Art

In our last edition of It's A RAP, we introduced the talented First Nations artists selected to produce commissioned artwork for Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ). We also gave you a sneak peek into their creative journey. On January 15th, during a staff meeting, we had the privilege of officially receiving this incredible piece from Christopher Ketchup and Darius Lewin-Pearson, two remarkable artists formally students of St Teresa's College, Abergowrie.

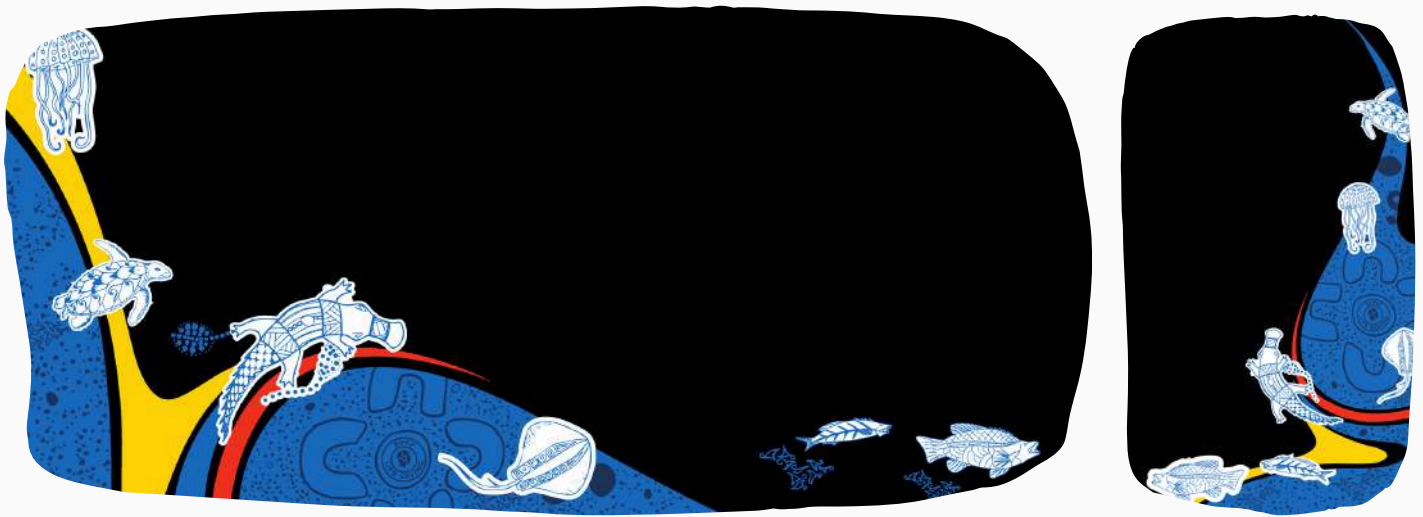
Both Christopher and Darius are proud members of Forrest Beach Surf Life Saving Club, and their passion for both their culture and the surf lifesaving movement is evident in every brushstroke which they shared with the group. Their artwork is a powerful tribute to the rich traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, bringing Queensland's First Nations artistry to life and visually representing SLSQ's commitment to protecting our coasts while honouring the custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples over these lands and waters.



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Every symbol woven into this piece tells a story—of connection, resilience, and the deep spiritual bond between people, land, and sea. Christopher and Darius have captured the essence of surf lifesaving as not just a service but a shared responsibility that First Nations people have upheld for thousands of years.

This special occasion was made even more memorable by the presence of invited guests who travelled to be part of this celebration. Among them were Christopher's grandfather, Noel Cannon, and Darius' mother, Raphala Pearson, both proud family members who have supported their artistic journey. St Teresa's College Principal, Angus (Gus) Galletly, and Deputy Principal, Paula Henderson, also attended, demonstrating their support for their students and the impact of their artistic contribution.

Chris and Darius not only shared some of their own lifesaving journey but also their literal journey of coming together to create the artwork. Chris, who lives on Palm Island described how he and Uncle Noel travelled by tinnie to meet Chris at Forrest Beach, some 60km away. "It was like an IRB but faster and deadlier," Chris said of the trip. Unfortunately due to the lack of a GPS Darius was left waiting a little longer than expected as Chris and his Grandfather, landed at Taylor's Beach by mistake, and then had to relaunch to get to the right meeting point. What a great story to support the awesome artwork!

This powerful imagery will now be digitalised and featured across various Surf Life Saving Queensland platforms and assets, including SLSQ's first ever Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), ensuring that its message of inclusion, connection, and cultural pride resonates across our organisation and the communities we serve. Thank you to Christopher and Darius for sharing your vision, humour, creative talent, and cultural heritage with us. Your work will foster belonging and strengthen the bonds between First Nations peoples and Surf Life Saving as we journey together - As One.



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Art in Action



In our last update we showcased how Surf Life Saving North Queensland recently commissioned new cultural artwork and in this edition we see how it's been realised in their new team uniforms!



With support from Sport and Rec Queensland's Indigenous Engagement grant, the North Queensland Branch launched an 'Active Art' project to commission unique artwork for North Queensland Branch assets. The Branch recognised that fostering a sense of belonging is key to encouraging participation and engagement in the movement and our sport. Cultural art plays a vital role in this, so they engaged a young First Nations artist to create a design that honours the enduring custodianship of our beaches and oceans by those who have walked these sands for generations.

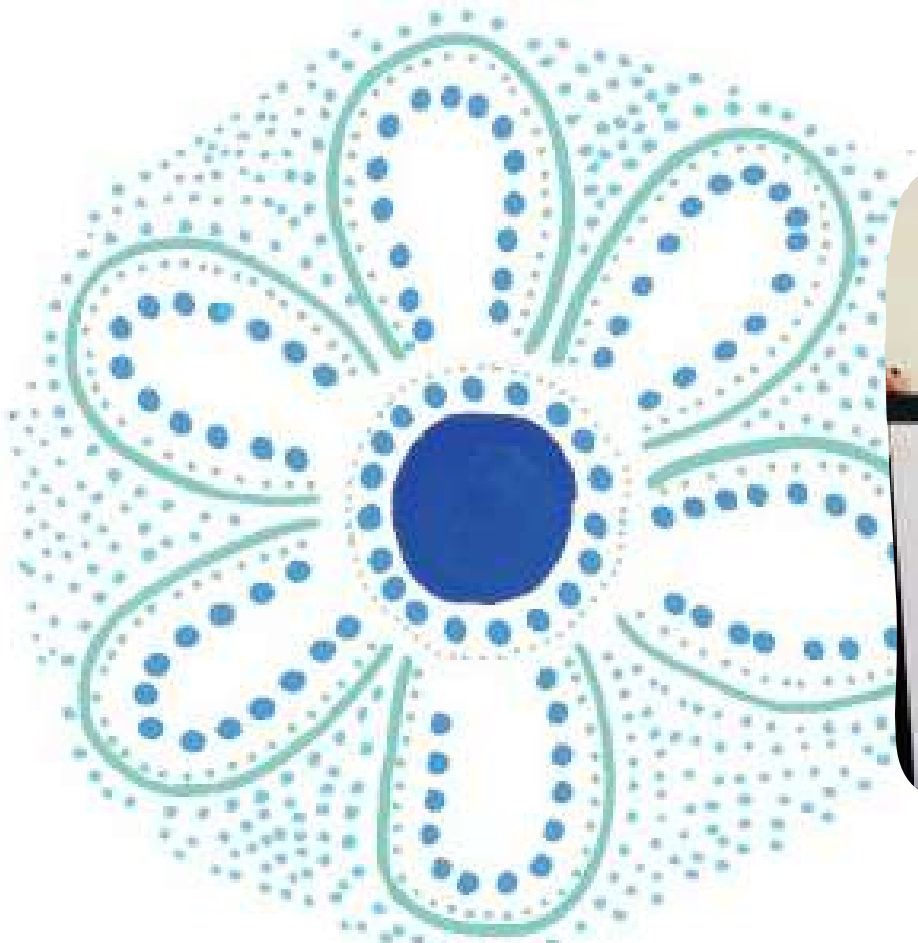
The artist, Maurahbai Mundraby, attended the handover event, where her artwork and statement were not only beautifully framed but also brought to life in the 2025 North Queensland Youth team's swimmers and competition uniforms.



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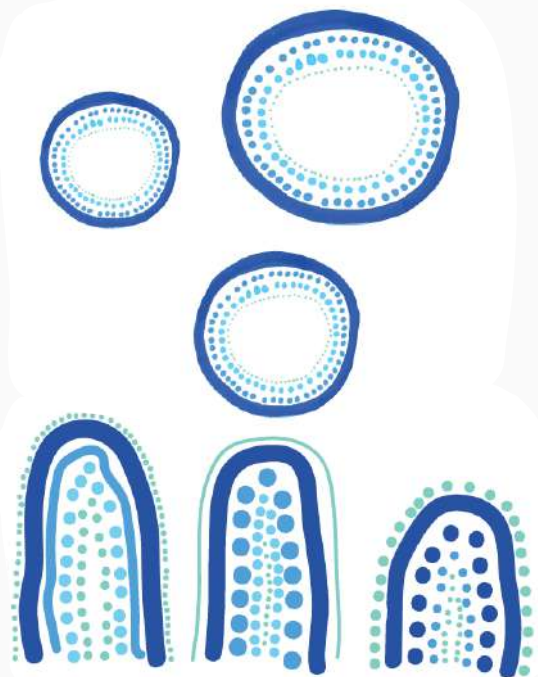
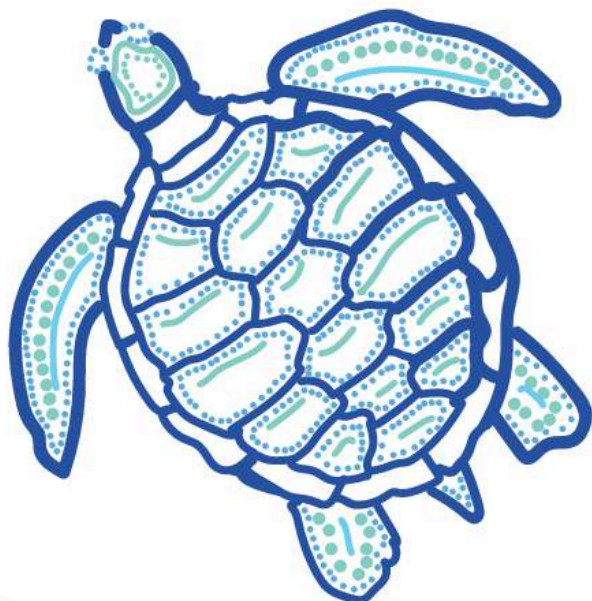


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As she addressed the group, Maurahbai shared how the Turtle represents a water leader, guiding us through ocean waters. She also described how the ever-changing waves, rising and falling, influence how we move through the sea.

The team and their passionate supporters love the new look and take great pride in both the uniforms and the powerful cultural significance behind the design. And while they may be a little biased, they're pretty sure they'll be the deadliest-looking team on the beach!



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Come and Try Days:

Wide Bay Cap and North Qld



With the support of the Queensland Department of Sport and Rec grant for the ISSDP (Indigenous Surf Sport Development Program), Wide Bay Cap and North Queensland kicked off their Come and Try events for 2025. With a broad promotion across media and community platforms, community members and partners were invited to discover what Surf Life Saving has to offer and find out about the fun opportunities to be involved.

On Friday the 21st March, the Wide Bay Cap Regional team with Yeppoon Surf Life Saving Club welcomed 40 Clontarf Academy members onto the beach for a fantastic morning of fun on the sand. There were smiles, competitive banter and enthusiasm on show. The Club, Regional Team and Clontarf are working together to look at pathway options and award acquisition for these participants – well done and we look forward to hearing more.



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Come and Try Days:



Then, coinciding with the combined North Queensland Branch sign-on day on March 23rd, community members, returning clubbies and potential new members turned out for Come and Try Days across the 5 Clubs of the North Queensland Branch – Port Douglas, Ellis Beach, Cairns, Etty Bay and Mission Beach.

Selected participants from the Fire Project enjoyed a feed as well as a host of Life Saving activities with the support of Community Awareness Presenters, Regional Staff and volunteers. They connected with clubs and found out more about the range of activities on offer, including the Indigenous Round of the Fastest on Sand to be held in North Queensland May 10 (Yorkey's Knob), North Barrier Branch 10 August (Townsville) and 17 August (Mackay) as well as Wide Bay Cap (Yeppoon) 16 August.



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Come and Try Days:



Promotion of the event was supported by our First Nations led partner organisation, Harbrow Mentoring and saw individuals, community groups and our Clontarf Academy students, participating in the events. Fun was had by all and their taste for all things lifesaving has certainly sparked interest in being a part of our incredible organisation. Well done North Queensland Branch and Clubs for opening your doors and hearts to our community.



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Stronger Clubs, Stronger Communities



Surf Life Saving Queensland is dedicated to helping clubs grow by connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. A practical guide has been produced to support clubs in strengthening relationships, increasing participation, and welcoming new members. In each edition of 'It's a RAP', we will focus on one or 2 practical suggestions from the guide that you may wish to consider for your club.

Because an inclusive club is one where everyone—new and existing members—feels genuinely valued, supported, and encouraged to contribute. By taking real steps to foster understanding, respect, and collaboration, clubs can build stronger teams, enhance community connections, and ensure Surf Life Saving reflects the diversity and strength of Queensland's coastline. Together, we create a thriving and united future for our movement—As One.



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Did you Know?



- There are more than 250 distinct language groups among Aboriginal Australians, showcasing the diversity and cultural richness of First Nations people across Australia. 123 of these languages are in use today. 12 are spoken fluently within a community with the number of people who reported speaking an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language on the rise with 76,978 indigenous people reported speaking an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language in 2021, up from 63,754 in 2016
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain strong connections to culture, language, and traditional lands, and contribute significantly to the environmental management, economic development, and cultural identity of Australia.
- 74% recognise an area as a homeland or traditional country
- Some of the earliest recorded aquatic rescues in Australia were performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including that in 1847 when 7 Nunukul men from Mingerribah and Moogumpin risked their lives to save ten survivors of the Sovereign wreck.
- According to most recent ABS data Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, represent 3.8% of the total Australian population. The 2021 census estimates 237,303 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples live in Queensland, representing approximately 4.6% of the population.



Practical Steps to guide Cultural Inclusion



Know Your Country

We acknowledge the complexity and fluidity of custodianship, language groups and traditional boundaries among Aboriginal Peoples. It must be noted that there is no single source of truth regarding Custodianship and Traditional boundaries of Australian Aboriginal Peoples – it is an ever-evolving landscape. The dynamic nature of cultural and territorial understandings emphasises the importance of continuous learning and consultation with Aboriginal communities as part of our Reconciliation Journey and improved cultural capabilities. A good place to start is look locally- search online, contact your local council or seek local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians to contact:

[Map of Indigenous Australia](#) | [AIATSIS corporate website](#)

SLSQ have developed a document that offers suggestions of local community contacts in each of our Surf Club Locations to commence your dialogue.



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Build Respectful Relationships



- Recognise that Elders, community leaders, and First Nations-led partners hold key cultural knowledge and influence. These individuals are deeply connected to their communities and act as custodians of history, culture, and traditions.

By acknowledging and involving them in your club's activities, you:

- Strengthen trust and relationships – Genuine engagement with First Nations communities starts with respect. Elders and community leaders can guide your club on culturally appropriate ways to connect.
- Enhance participation – Their support can encourage more First Nations members to get involved in your club, whether through lifesaving, surf sports, or community programs.
- Ensure cultural understanding – Learning from those with lived experience helps your club foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all members.
- Improve club engagement strategies – First Nations-led partners can provide valuable insights into how to communicate effectively and create programs that resonate with the community.

SLSQ in partnership with Centre for Indigenous learning is developing Cultural Awareness Training for club members which will be released in 2025. You can also access Cultural Awareness training and resources at:

[First Nations Australians](#) | [Australian Sports Commission](#)

<https://www.evoves.com.au/free-resources/>

<https://volunteeringqld.org.au/training-events/indigenous-cultural-awareness/>



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Join the Journey



As we continue our journey to inclusion, recognition and engagement, we invite you to become involved:

April

- 5 Apr: NQB RAP the Coast
- 6 Apr: Raising of the Flags in NQB

May

- 10 May: NQB Indigenous Round Beach Event @ Yorkeys
- 27 May - 3 Jun: National Reconciliation Week "Bridging Now to Next"
- May/June: Proposed launch of SLSQ RAP - Details to Come

July

- 7-14 Jul: NAIDOC Week - SLSQ Statewide activations - Details to Come
- Come and Try Days (Townsville 13 July, and Mackay 20 July)



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