



Reconciliation Action Plan

 **YARNTÉEN**



The world in which Indigenous people and Australians conduct themselves is changing rapidly. The face of Indigenous Australia is not only found in remote and rural communities. The reality is that the greatest numbers of Indigenous Australians are in urban communities. We are in every city, every town and Indigenous people will play an increasingly important role in the future well-being and prosperity of Australia.

The challenge facing the broader society is to listen to what our people are saying, be inclusive and work constructively with us. Relationships with Indigenous peoples in the past have leaned towards being paternalistic. The view that things needed to be done for Indigenous people rather than with Indigenous people has proven to be ill conceived.

We must now pursue a new approach based on engagement with building respectful and right relationships. This engagement provides the opportunity to work together and must be built on respect and dignity. This paves the way for improved partnerships, increased trust and mutual respect between Indigenous Australians and all Australians.

To enable greater understanding of the issues and both the successes and the challenges, communication with wider society is essential. All groups in society must engage to address the issues.

Yarnteen's Reconciliation Action Plan reflects our leadership and commitment to working with our communities to create a better life for all our children and their children.

Leah Armstrong
Executive Director



Yarnteen became an incorporated not-for-profit organisation in 1991. The name "Yarnteen" comes from the Awabakal (tribe of the Newcastle region) word meaning "all/everybody". Yarnteen's vision and objectives focus solely on the enhancement of employment, training and enterprise development opportunities for Aboriginal people and to assist them to prosper within the whole community system.

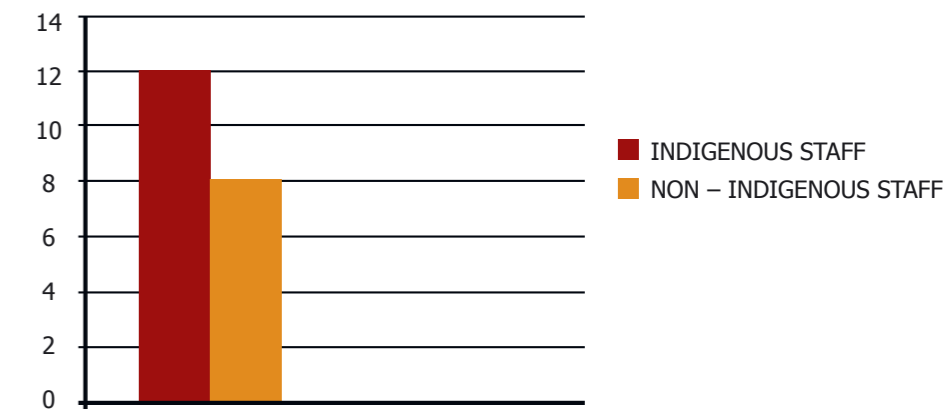
From our beginning we saw the need to become a player in the mainstream economy of our region. This was an important strategy to ensure the sustainability of the organisation and to create long-term employment for our people.

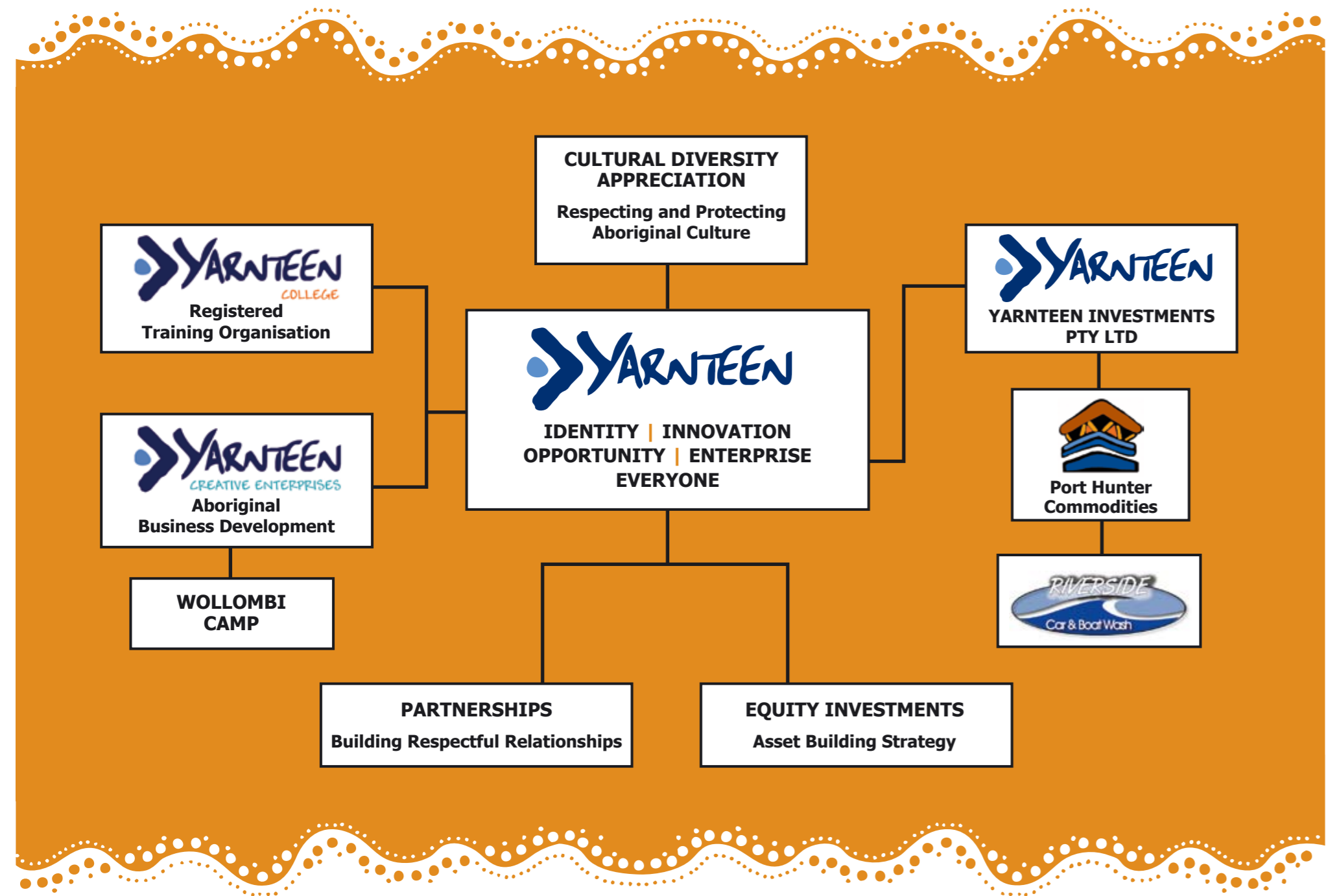
Yarnteen objectives are to:

- Build wealth through sustainable enterprise and investments to increase opportunities for greater Indigenous participation in the business sector.
- Create pathways and opportunities for skills development and contribute to closing the gap in employment.
- Enhance cultural leadership through Indigenous youth and increase appreciation in Indigenous culture for all Australians.
- Develop respectful relationships between non Indigenous Australians and Indigenous people for shared outcomes and benefits.

Yarnteen operates both commercial and social enterprises employing 20 full time staff.

These enterprises we call collectively the Yarnteen Group.





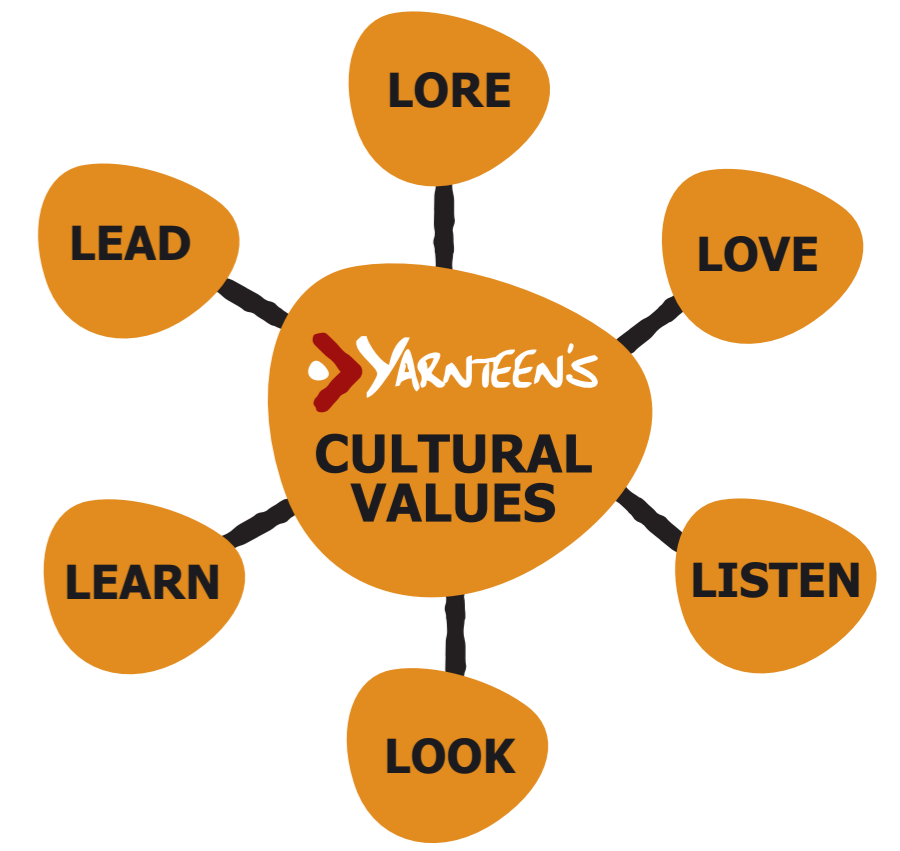
Our Business:

Our business objectives are to encourage greater Aboriginal participation in the broader economy through Aboriginal owned enterprises and to promote capacity within Aboriginal communities, to share information and encourage strong, ethical leadership.

Throughout our history, Yarnteen has strongly advocated the importance of partnerships with the private sector. Without a real commitment backed by long-term actions from the private sector, genuine Aboriginal participation in the main economy will remain a failure for a truly reconciled Australia.

Our values and principals underpin the way we do business and include:

- LORE** spiritual lore, good governance, cultural identity and respect for nature and each other.
- LOVE** is a doing word! Love for the spirit, each other, community, our work and our land.
- LOOK** to the spirit, for opportunities and positive outcomes.
- LISTEN** to the spirit, elders, experts in their field, our community and each other.
- LEARN** from the spirit, elders, experts, community and each other. Remain open to learn.
- LEAD** by example with integrity and honesty.



Our Business

Our Principles

- **Identity** is everything. We are proud to identify and include our Aboriginal spirit, connection to land and cultural identity in a modern society.
- **Innovation** is necessary. Our strategies will be innovative as we seek out every possible advancement opportunity for Aboriginal people to participate in and be respected for their contribution to Australia's modern society.
- **Opportunity** is what we seek. We are committed to creating opportunities for the immediate and future benefit of Aboriginal people. We are entrusted with ensuring the legacy we leave behind for our future generations is rich in opportunity.
- **Enterprise** creates wealth and prosperity. Our enterprises create wealth and aim to assist Aboriginal people to prosper within the whole community system.
- **Everyone** to live the life they choose. We believe in working toward a society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can live the life they choose.

Our RAP

Our RAP journey began in 2006 with the formulation of Yarnteen's Commitment to Reconciliation and by engaging with many of our Aboriginal and non Aboriginal community partners through workshops and conversations in the development of this RAP and we thank them for their valuable contributions.

As an Indigenous organisation, undertaking the development of this RAP meant asking the hard questions including what 'reconciliation' means to Indigenous people. Our discussions were open and honest and included comments from people reflecting their idea that reconciliation needed to be initiated by non-Indigenous people and asking why Yarnteen needed to develop a RAP. What we discovered during this process was that reconciliation meant different things to different people and highlighted that Yarnteen had been actively engaged in reconciliation since the beginning.

To Yarnteen, reconciliation is about our commitment to:

Reaffirm our task of building a future rich in opportunity. Know that the actions and decisions we enable now are the legacy for generations to come;

Resilience to triumph over the destructive influences we may face. Be proud about identifying and including the Aboriginal spirit, connection to land and cultural identity in a modern society;

Respectful relationships between non Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginal people to share in the economic wealth of the country and achieve true freedom of choice.

It is our intention with this commitment to challenge ourselves to remain determined and focused on our aims and objectives.

- Our values will reflect the spirit and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Our actions will promote effective governance and economic independence.
- Our partnerships will support shared outcomes and benefits.

The RAP process has also been invaluable in the development of Yarnteen's strategic approach to advancing our economic self sufficiency. It gave us the opportunity to reflect on who we are, what we have achieved, what we do well and how we can share that with others.



Our Principles



Our RAP

1. Relationships are critical to Yarnteen because they are the foundations of our culture. Throughout our history, Yarnteen has sought to build meaningful relationships with partners who share our vision to deliver cultural and economic benefits to everyone.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
<p>Yarnteen has included the Reconciliation Action Plan in our five year business plan.</p> <p>We believe that we need to 'develop respectful relationships between non Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginal people for shared outcomes and benefits.'</p>	Executive Director & The Board	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2009</p>	Review Strategic Business Plan annually to ensure the RAP is in line with Yarnteen's goals.
Build relationships with non Aboriginal organisations that are committed to reconciliation. Example: Microsoft and Yarnteen Partnership.	Strategic Partnerships Manager	December 2009	<p>Yarnteen will offer support to three non-Indigenous organisations to prepare or implement reconciliation action plans by December 2009.</p> <p>Engagement strategy developed.</p> <p>Promote the shared benefit of valuable strategic partnerships between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal organisations.</p>
Partner with three organisations in our region who have developed RAP's to assist them to implement their cultural awareness training to staff in the Hunter Region.	Strategic Partnerships Manager	December 2009	Three RAP agencies to complete Yarnteen's cultural diversity appreciation course to ensure that their staff have an understanding of Aboriginal history and culture.
Promote capacity building within Aboriginal Organisations.	Yarnteen College	30 December 2009	4 x Governance Training courses delivered during 2009.

Promote Economic Independence for Aboriginal Organisations.	Enterprise Manager	June 2009	Enterprise Manager to support four organisations using the Social Ventures Australia model to develop and build their enterprises towards economic independence.
Promote partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to build unity and community connectedness.	Executive Director, CEO & Strategic Partnerships Manager	Ongoing	Hold once per year community gatherings to unite the community.

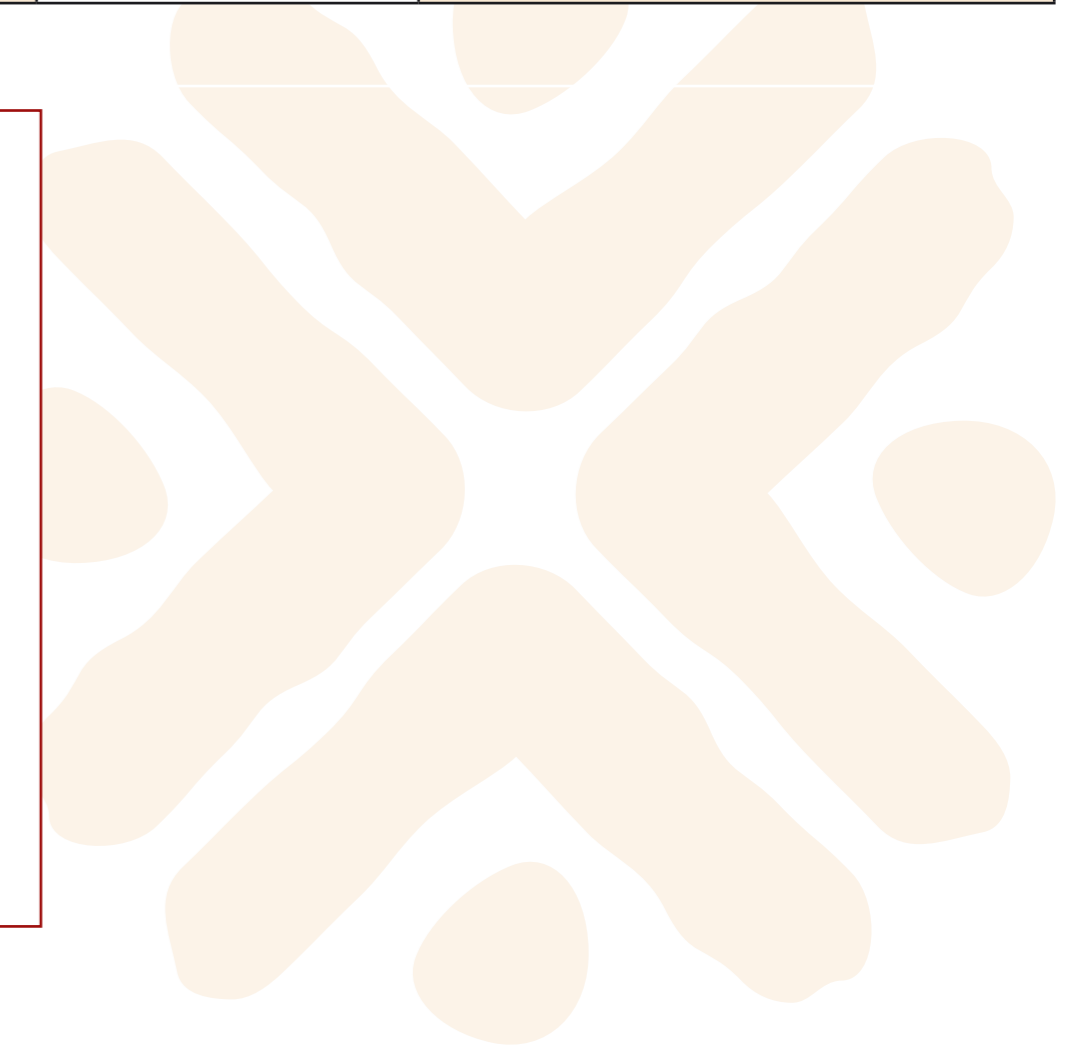
Example: Microsoft and Yarnteen Partnership

For over 6 years Yarnteen and Microsoft have built a solid partnership based around their shared visions for bridging the digital divide for Indigenous people and communities.

In 2004, Microsoft Australia launched the "Unlimited Potential" Program and Yarnteen was chosen to be one of 5 Foundation Partners - Yarnteen is the only Indigenous partner.

To date Yarnteen has provided ICT training to over 2000 Indigenous people with emphasis on relevant project based learning such as digital story telling from elders, Aboriginal language preservation and small business development.

In 2006 Yarnteen was chosen to present our work at the Global Microsoft "UP" Conference in Seattle, USA.



2. Respect: Yarnteen believes that respect is an action. It grows and is enacted as people develop mutual understanding and it allows you to listen, learn and love – three of Yarnteen’s core values.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
Yarnteen will develop, in consultation with the wider Aboriginal community, a cultural protocols tool to assist non Aboriginal youth organisations to understand and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in which they operate and develop respectful relationships with the Elders of our community.	Youth Programs Officer	July 2009	Cultural protocols tool developed and distributed to organisations and accessible through Yarnteen’s website. 20 youth Organisations using the tool.
Yarnteen will deliver Cultural Diversity Appreciation courses to teach the wider community about Australia’s Aboriginal history and the issues being faced by Aboriginal Australians today.	CEO	December 2009	20 Cultural Diversity Appreciation courses delivered in 2009.
Support all staff to learn about and maintain their own cultural connections.	CEO	Ongoing Beginning February 2009	Staff attend and participate in cultural activities including NAIDOC week, Corroborees and family.
Support the Aboriginal community to learn more about their cultural identity.	Yarnteen College Manager	Ongoing Beginning February 2009	Family history days held to help people access their family history through births, deaths & marriages as well as new dawn records.
[Hold or participate in] Reconciliation Events.	Strategic Partnerships Manager	July 2009	Follow the National Naidoc awards system and give ‘champions’ of reconciliation some recognition. Acknowledge non-Indigenous people or organisations who are participating in RAPS or reconciliation activities.

3. Opportunities are important to Yarnteen because they are the key to helping us achieve our goal of greater economic self-sufficiency without the loss of our culture and personal spirit.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
Engage large numbers of people to visit the Wollombi Culture & Environmental Education Centre to commence or continue their cultural development journeys.	CEO and Enterprise Manager	September 2009	500 visitors annually. Corroboree held December annually.
Develop young leaders.	Youth Programs Officer	December 2009	12 new members actively involved in a mentoring relationship with Yarnteen.

4. Tracking progress and reporting.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
RAP Case Studies – engage staff in annual reviews.	Strategic Partnerships Manager	September 2009	RAP Annual report.
Yarnteen RAP working group will meet regularly to monitor the implementation and evaluation of the RAP.	RAP Steering Committee	Three times per year	Meetings held every 3 months.
Report to Board on progress against RAP commitments.	Executive Director	3rd February 2010	Annual report prepared and submitted to the board.
RAP and annual reports on Yarnteen and Reconciliation Australia websites.	Strategic Partnerships Manager	3rd February 2010	Refreshed RAP placed on Yarnteen and Reconciliation Australia websites.



 **YARNTÉEN** Ltd

840 Hunter Street Newcastle West 2302

PO Box 2128 Dangar NSW 2309

P 02 49625 366

F 02 4940 8455

www.yarnteen.com.au