

Membership Toolkit

Building an Advisory Committee

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee

For organisations with a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a key expectation from Reconciliation Australia is to demonstrate genuine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is also good practice for organisations without a RAP. Since First Nations people only make up a small proportion of the population, Indigenous employees are often asked to provide this input on top of their regular roles, creating additional “cultural load.”

An external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee can:

- Reduce cultural load and identity strain on First Nations employees.
- Provide a direct link to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders.
- Support meaningful participation in developing and implementing your RAP or reconciliation initiatives.



All Advisory Committee members should always be financially remunerated for their time, knowledge, and expertise.

When establishing an Advisory Committee, organisations should:

- Use an Expression of Interest that acknowledges Traditional Custodians and recognises the importance of self-determination and First Nations leadership.
- Seek voices from local community members such as Custodians, Elders, young people, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, advocates, educators, and First Nations people in your sector.
- Define the committee’s role (e.g. guiding RAP objectives, advising on strategy, ensuring cultural knowledge informs your work, and strengthening local relationships.)



Good practice includes a clear term of reference, alignment with decision-making processes, and involvement of your RAP Champion and senior leaders. Meetings should be regular yet flexible enough to respect Sorry Business and cultural responsibilities, with agendas circulated in advance and a shared code of practice. Above all, decision-making must be collaborative and transparent to build trust and sustain strong relationships with community.

