



Indigenous engagement strategy

2024 - 2025

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1300 233 305
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Acknowledgement of Country

The ARA Group acknowledges the connection of people, land and communities within the areas that we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We seek to maintain meaningful partnerships by undertaking the appropriate engagement practices within our business and for our communities. We know the importance of respecting, understanding and sharing the oldest living cultures in the world.

Cover photograph:
Todd Anning
Sprinkler Service Manager, ARA Fire

'Ngadjung'
Digital Media
Jordan Ardler 2022



ARA Group Limited
ABN 47 074 886 561



Our vision

Our vision for Indigenous engagement is to be a leader in our industry in the employment and professional development of Indigenous Australians.

At ARA, Indigenous engagement is a company culture. Through a passion and commitment for reconciliation, our Reconciliation Action Plan details our objectives and has taken Indigenous engagement from an action to a culture.

In this review of our Indigenous Engagement Strategy, we have learnt from our experiences and our successes during the past 10 years. We will implement an enhanced strategy that focuses on the following areas:

- Tertiary education
- Apprenticeships
- Mentoring
- Professional development & career mapping
- Economic development
- Strengthening existing community partnerships
- Fostering new community partnerships

As part of our updated strategy, ARA Group CEO, Edward Federman has set targets for our key focus areas. With the guidance of the Indigenous engagement team and expertise of the RAP working group, we will work collaboratively to achieve our targets.

Who we are

With over 80 locations across Australia and New Zealand, the ARA Group delivers fully integrated essential services for infrastructure and facilities.

The ARA Group is committed to creating a culturally safe work environment for Indigenous employees and building a partnership with Indigenous communities and businesses.

ARA has more than 3,000 employees working across our four operating Divisions, Fire & Security, Electrical, Property Services and Products.

Given the uniqueness of the ARA Group businesses we are in a position to offer various employment, training and career opportunities for First Nation's Peoples. To ensure the success of employment and training ARA has committed to have senior Indigenous engagement managers take responsibility for the internal Wiimali initiative.



Low voltage, high voltage, data cabling, engineering and manufacture of switchboards and switchrooms



Manufacture of physical security products and distribution of security and fire products



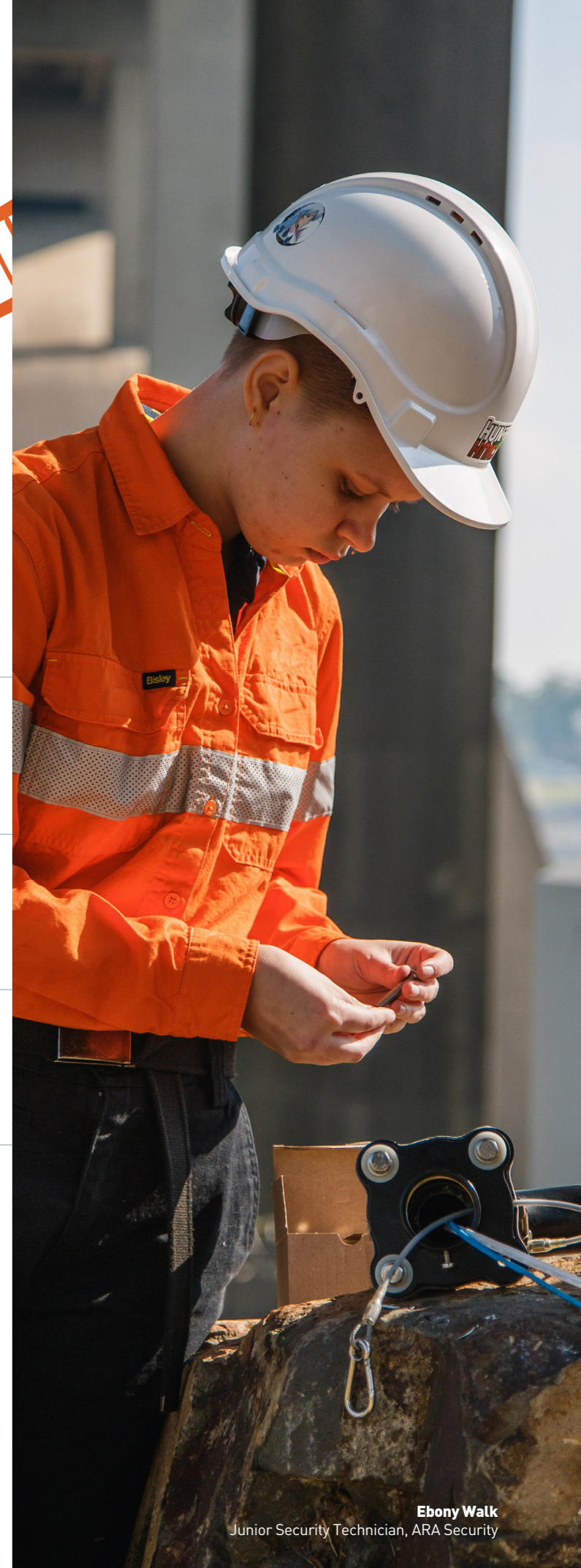
Integration of and solutions for electronic security and fire protection



Commercial cleaning, mechanical services and building maintenance and insurance repair services



Operates as a commercial cleaning business and a conduit for all ARA capabilities



Ebony Walk
Junior Security Technician, ARA Security

Employment strategy

The overriding goal of the ARA Group is to ensure Indigenous employment reflects the percentage of Indigenous people in the Australian community.

ARA Indigenous Services

Creating real opportunities for the Indigenous Australian community.



Providing opportunities through pathway programs, employment, and meaningful community engagement.

ARA Indigenous Services provides meaningful engagement in Australia through Indigenous employment and pathway programs, as well as community support for First Nations people.

ARA Indigenous Services is an Indigenous owned and operated cleaning and property maintenance service business, working in partnership with the ARA Group. This partnership also allows us to integrate the various ARA service and installation capabilities with ARA Indigenous Services.

Our mission is to strengthen partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through understanding, encouragement, and active involvement.

In conjunction with ARA

Many of ARA's customers are looking for meaningful Indigenous engagement in Australia. The ARA Indigenous Services business provides that vehicle. During the past four years we have worked to integrate the various ARA service and installation capabilities with ARA Indigenous Services. To date ARA Indigenous Services has delivered many major contracts in conjunction with ARA Divisions. These contracts include:

Major fire protection maintenance contracts	in conjunction with ARA Fire
Delivery of major fire sprinkler installation	in conjunction with ARA Fire
Installation of electronic security system in government building	in conjunction with ARA Security
Collaboration on major infrastructure projects	in conjunction with ARA Security
Collaboration on major infrastructure projects	in conjunction with ARA Mechanical
Upgrade of New South Wales School	in conjunction with ARA Mechanical
Multi-services installation projects	in conjunction with ARA Electrical

The ARA Group and ARA Indigenous Services takes very seriously our role in providing meaningful opportunities for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Australians. We are serious in meeting our goals for reconciliation in Australia.



David Ross
Cleaner, ARA Indigenous Services

The Wiimali Program

The Wiimali program is designed to light the fire for ARA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and provide them with the support they need in both their work and home lives.



The program is a key initiative of the ARA Group's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which was first launched in 2018. It is an employee recruitment, mentoring and community engagement program for all internal staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Pronounced wee-ma-lee, Wiimali means 'to light a fire'.

From the native Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay language.

Pronounced new-ra, Ngurra means 'home' or more specifically 'place of belonging'.

From the native Dharawal language.

Recruitment

The Wiimali program is designed to recruit Indigenous employees and create a smooth and supported onboarding process – from screening potential applicants to placing employees into the ARA workforce.

The level of work required to recruit Indigenous staff is significant compared to non-Indigenous candidates. Historically, there have been barriers for Indigenous candidates. Opportunity for employment can be challenging due to a lack of access to basic resources. Our Indigenous engagement team liaise with local community groups and employment/training providers to help overcome some of these barriers. On average, the Wiimali program will pre-screen seven individuals to find one suitable candidate with the requirements for the role.

The Wiimali recruitment process

- Committing to employ Indigenous people relative to or greater than the current population. (approx 3.8% of the Australian workforce as of 30 June 2024)
- Connecting with local networks and community groups to access potential Indigenous candidates for vacant roles.
- Running information sessions in conjunction with the community and the various Divisions across ARA Group to educate potential candidates on career opportunities.
- Notifying the ARA Indigenous engagement team of all roles advertised on Seek as they become available.
- Pre-screening Indigenous candidates is carried out in a culturally appropriate way, ensuring that the candidates are the 'right fit' by ensuring they have the necessary skill sets or qualifications for the role.
- Supporting interview preparation and coordination from both a business perspective as well as getting the candidate prepared for the interview. This will often include interview preparation as well as researching public transport timetables or other options or means of physically getting to the interview.
- Supporting successful applicants to be job ready for first day of employment. This may include ensuring the necessary Safety/PPE/uniform, transportation/travel means and even meals/healthy diet etc.

Engaging with the community

Fundamental to the Wiimali program is engaging with Indigenous communities to build relationships and trust. This supports our future recruitment as well as our ongoing mentoring program.

We also build a strong rapport with external partners, sharing our reconciliation journey and achievements.

Some of the ways we engage the community is:

- Aiming to become an employer of choice for Indigenous candidates within community
- Engagement of community for Indigenous cultural events
- Use of Indigenous suppliers
- Use of community venues for info sessions and supporting local cultural events

Mentoring

Mentoring is a key element of our Wiimali program, as we provide direct and focussed support to our Indigenous staff.

In line with Ngurra, the objective of mentoring our members is to assist and support each individual in ways that personally help them to not only succeed at work, but to live a happy, fulfilled, and balanced home life.

Taking into consideration that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols differ between communities and regions, we endeavour to pair each Wiimali member with an appropriate Indigenous mentor. The mentor will work closely with their Wiimali members to gain understanding of the individual's needs, so the support and assistance can be tailored to meet their requirements.

Subject to the needs of the Wiimali member, the connection with their mentor can include a simple yarn on a weekly phone call, or a regular one on one catch up to work with them to on work related or personal issues.

Our Engagement team and mentors are sensitive to Cultural Protocols when it comes to pairing females with females.

Our mentors, taking into account cultural protocols, will harness support from any number of ARA colleagues, staff and management to ensure that any issues can be addressed effectively, discretely and respectfully, ensuring they have a place of belonging. Support can range from coaching them through the commencement of a new role, to helping relocate or financially supporting them as a result of flood, fire, or personal situation.

Our mentoring fluctuates to suit their distinct needs as we work closely with the members to determine, what is specifically necessary for them through the various stages of their career and home life, meeting each individual's needs and providing a variety of differing outcomes.

The Wiimali, Ngurra strategy includes:

- Weekly check-ins by phone
- Formal monthly reviews
- Fortnightly zoom session with the Wiimali program team and members
- Ongoing support through phone calls, texts, emails, etc as per individual needs basis
- Quarterly support sessions which include various life skills training
- Other support as needed, e.g. hardship fund, support for travel, PPE, food, connection to other Indigenous support

Professional development

As a part of each Wiimali members professional development, their Indigenous mentor will meet with senior management to regularly report on the positive progress that their Wiimali member is making. These meetings are also an opportunity to discuss any challenges or opportunities for both existing Wiimali members and for future members.

- Monthly reporting meeting between mentor and Wiimali member's senior manager
- Monthly reporting meeting between senior manager and managing director
- Immediate contact with senior manager and/or managing director in case of emergency or time sensitive matter

Case studies



Renee Webb
Apprentice, ARA Locksmiths

Renee Webb is a proud Narrunga and Nukunu woman from Adelaide, South Australia.

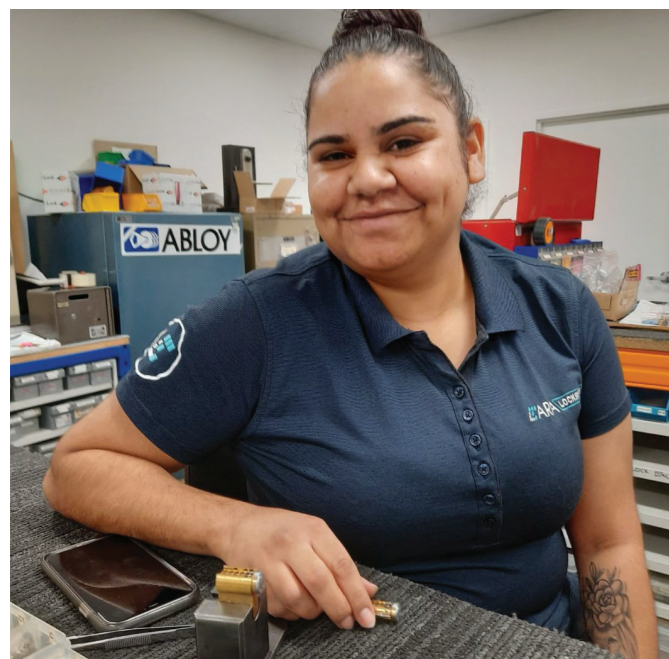
Renee attended an information session at a job expo. After hearing about what the ARA Group delivers, Renee decided to apply for a cleaning role within the ARA Property Services division.

Renee spent four years successfully working with ARA Property Services in South Australia, servicing high profile buildings and customers throughout Adelaide.

Renee was looking to grow personally and professionally. The ARA Indigenous Services support team sought to identify other opportunities within the Group. This led Renee to an apprenticeship with ARA Locksmiths. Since joining as an apprentice, Renee has shown great initiative and drive and is now thriving in her new role. She will soon be trade certified once she completes her apprenticeship.

Renee's hard work will create stability through a lifelong career path. She will be able to continue to look after her father as she plays a pivotal support role within her family.

Renee has become a role model to younger generations.



Ebony Walk
Junior Security Technician,
ARA Security

Ebony was born and raised in Sydney, NSW, with cultural ties to the top end of the Northern Territory.

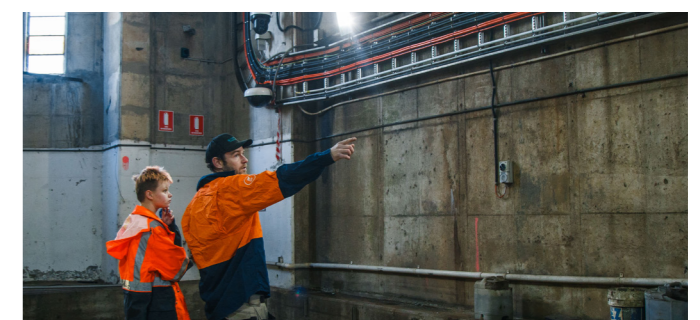
Ebony initially faced challenges in finding a trade apprenticeship in the electrical industry. Ebony's father, Uncle Tim Walk, the Safety Manager at ARA Tunnels and Infrastructure at that time, referred Ebony to ARA Security. Ebony started a Security Apprenticeship with ARA Security in March 2021.

Ebony found the traditional TAFE apprenticeship course challenging and once her Line Manager had identified this, she was placed in an alternate course. This allowed Ebony to fast track her apprenticeship.

Ebony has completed her cable registration course and is looking forward to the next phase of her training. This includes cable endorsement, design and construct I.T networks, as well as elevated work platform, and test and tag courses.

Ebony was recently made a Junior Security Technician, as well as being issued a work fleet vehicle, which has made life a lot easier for her.

Today, Ebony works on significant ARA Security service contracts. She has said that she is excited to see where her security career takes her in the future and is very grateful for the opportunity.



Indigenous events

We believe celebrating First Nations events is a great opportunity to come together as we continue to build relationships and a brighter future for the ARA Group.

Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

Action: ARA is running morning tea events across the country over the next two years and into the future with major events being setup in two states which will alternate each year.

NAIDOC Week

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

Action: ARA will hold its first Wiimali's Award ceremony in 2024 with the aim to host the awards annually into the future. See below for more information.

The Wiimali's Awards Ceremony

In an effort to continue to strengthen our commitment to Indigenous excellence, ARA will proudly host the inaugural ARA Wiimali Awards in 2024.

Our vision for the Wiimali awards is to establish an annual event which acknowledges and pays tribute to the outstanding achievements for the Wiimali program participants, and the individuals and partner organisations who demonstrate exceptional support to our Indigenous Wiimali participants.

A range of award categories have been selected, and a nomination process developed, to enable all staff across the ARA Group to participate and contribute.

The Wiimali Awards provide a platform for the ARA Group to showcase achievements in the support and development of Indigenous careers throughout the company to our clients and our partner organisations.

It will provide us with the opportunity to 'down tools' for a moment to reflect and celebrate the success of our Wiimali Program members with their peers, trades people, supervisors, managers, and mentors.

The Wiimali Awards are certain to become a key date within the ARA Group events calendar, of which our ARA customers, partners, supporters, friends, and families will look forward to each year.



ARA Group Reconciliation Week 2024
Morning tea and smoking ceremony



Community engagement

We believe that we have a responsibility to assist the First Nation's communities across Australia. As an inherent part of the ARA culture, we believe our support for our communities makes us a better company.



Indigenous Literacy Foundation



The GO Foundation

The GO Foundation offers scholarships to young Indigenous people and provides support throughout their education, from school to university and then into the work force.

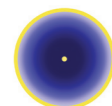
Action: The ARA Endowment Fund continues to support the GO Foundation each year assisting with the GO Foundation's programs which help ensure the young GO Students have all the resources and tools they need for their studies which supports the GO Foundation's vision of a brighter future for young Indigenous Australians.



Indigenous Literacy Foundation

Empowering communities for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation is about publishing books in first languages and providing books and access to books that are culturally relevant and which reflect the lives and culture of the kids' reading, plus working with schools, businesses and the broader Australian community to build a better understanding of our First Nations' history and culture.

Action: The ARA Endowment Fund helps the Indigenous Literacy Foundation each year to achieve their milestones and achieve the shared goal and vision for our First Nations' children, which is equity and the resultant benefits in education, wellbeing, and employment.



DAVID LYNCH FOUNDATION

David Lynch Foundation

The David Lynch Foundation helps to prevent and eradicate the all-pervasive epidemic of trauma and toxic stress among at-risk populations through promoting widespread implementation of the evidence-based Transcendental Meditation program to improve their health, cognitive capabilities and performance in life.

Action: The ARA Endowment Fund continues to support the David Lynch Foundation each year assisting with their many projects such as Heal the Healers, 1000 Women Domestic Violence Recovery Project, Defence and Veterans PTSD Resilience and Recovery, First Responder Toolkit, Natural Disaster Mental Health Project, School Teachers Mental Health Project along with many other projects that are continuing in the background.



ARA First Nations Foundations

ARA First Nations Foundations is a 10-week sporting program which aims to increase participation and involvement of First Nations People right across AFL, from playing to coaching and administration, as well as identify those with the physical capabilities and character to become high-performing athletes.

Following last year's program, 21 First Nation's athletes were selected to advance to the QBE Sydney Swans Academy.

The program incorporates mental health and cultural education sessions with strategically planned technical and tactical training led by experienced staff. It's delivered in a culturally safe and inclusive environment, fostering a greater sense of belonging and connection to AFL and the broader Sydney Swans family.

Action: ARA is committed to supporting ARA First Nations Foundations for the next two years.

National Institute of Dramatic Art



NIDA Scholarships

NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Arts) offers a range of scholarships to support students to attend NIDA, helping to cover student living expenses. NIDA is committed to building a diverse community of students and strongly encourages applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and people with a disability.

Action: The ARA Group supports NIDA each year by assisting their Indigenous students with three scholarships. These new scholarships build on the existing support ARA provides as NIDA's Principal Partner. This support contributes to enriching students' education and training. The ARA scholarships will benefit Indigenous students already studying at NIDA in the Bachelor of Fine Arts courses.



The Gadigal Centre: Sydney University

The Gadigal Centre is the University of Sydney's dedicated student centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Community plays an important role in culture, and this bespoke space is a home away from home. It is a place to connect with culture, interact with Elders, fellow students, and feel supported by staff. This dedicated centre allows for a sense of belonging and enables our students to feel empowered to share our culture throughout the wider university community.

Action: The ARA Group is supporting Sydney University by committing to funding for the next 6 years to establish scholarships to be awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking undergraduate studies at the University within the areas of science, engineering and the School of Architecture and Design and Planning. This will offer support to students to provide financial flexibility and to assist in meeting study and living costs and expenses. ARA is committed to providing work internship opportunities to Sydney University students.

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For all enquiries please contact

ara.rap@aragroup.com.au

1300 233 305
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