



ETHICAL[™]
BRAND^{co}

**CULTURAL
ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

2024/25



Contents

1. Acknowledgement of Country
2. A Message from the Directors
3. About our Artist and Artworks
4. Our First Nations Community
5. Our Business and Our Mission
6. Our Journey – A Timeline
8. CEP Working Group
10. Our Partnerships and Initiatives
12. Our Commitments



Acknowledgement of Country

The team at Ethical Brand Co acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the beautiful land we have the honour of working, living, and playing on – the Kabi Kabi Nation.

We acknowledge their loss of life, land & livelihood; the displacement of children, family & community; the fragmentation of identity & history. We are proud supporters of our First Nations Community and working together to educate and strengthen the relationships between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Non-Indigenous Australians.



A Message From The Owners

For the past three years our Cultural Engagement team have been dedicated to our reconciliation journey. Through our commitment, we have also continued to build upon our personal connections with our First Nations Communities and widened our knowledge of how best to support them.

We are extremely proud to have grown and operated our business on the remarkable Sunshine Coast for the past 18 years and are eternally grateful to the Traditional Owners of the land on which our business is placed, the Kabi Kabi Peoples.

We firmly believe that to move forward as a Nation, we all need to continue to work on reconciliation together. We feel that as an Australian company, we can support the reconciliation movement by using our reach to help share awareness and encourage others to become engaged and embrace reconciliation.

We are very lucky to have five incredible team members at Ethical Brand Co that are passionate about reconciliation and have been integral in creating and managing our first CEP. During the past four years, our team members have organised many inspiring events, team activities and guest speakers from First Nations Communities to teach our team about why reconciliation is so important. Our Cultural Engagement Team continue to encourage our team members each and every day. We have all learnt so much and been moved and inspired by local Elders and we'd like to make special thanks to dedicated people guiding our team.

As the owners of Ethical Brand Co, we will continue to empower our team and our customers to work towards achieving reconciliation and know that each positive action we make in our business, has a ripple effect that will be felt within our community.

Together as one,
Julia & Luke Charters





Our Artwork By Dr. Hope O'Chin

Since our reconciliation journey began in late 2021, the Ethical Brand Co CEP Working Group have been committed to creating and nurturing relationships within our local First Nations community. Through attending many events, we have established one particularly special relationship with our dear friend, mentor, and inspiration **Dr Hope O'Chin – Kabi Kabi Elder.**

We first met Aunty Hope at a National Reconciliation Week launch event hosted at Tribal Link located on Jinibara Country, where her amazing artwork is proudly on exhibition. We met Aunty Hope and listened in awe as she shared her personal stories of her life and the meaning behind each of the artworks. Since this first connection, our friendship has continued to strengthen with many meaningful conversations shared about important issues for First Nations People, and how we can work together to achieve our mission of moving forward together as one.



Aunty Hope is an educator and artist, who has worked in education since the 1980's and as a professional artist since 1993. She has created and presented artworks for forty-two exhibitions across local, national, and international venues and forums. Born into the dormitory systems on the Aboriginal Settlement of Cherbourg, Hope has dedicated her life to education and art. During her career as a Senior Executive in Queensland Education, Hope was responsible for curriculum, staffing and resourcing to 250 state schools in the Peninsular region, and was a consultant to the Director-General, Education Queensland, and Minister for Education. Dr Hope O'Chin is a kind, compassionate and inspirational leader and shares her philosophy for life with everyone she meets ***"always live your life with love, all aspects of love"***.

We are truly honored to have our friendship with Aunty Hope and thank her for the unwavering support and guidance along our Reconciliation journey. We look forward to many more cups of tea and laughs shared.



Moving Forward Together

Acrylic painting on canvas



Driven from her passion for supporting businesses and individuals working towards Reconciliation, Aunty Hope kindly created a Commissioned Artwork that is proudly displayed in the Ethical Brand Co head office. This special artwork "**Moving Forward Together**" uniquely portrays a First Nations perspective of the ethical practices undertaken by Ethical Brand Co, situated in a sea landscape within Coolum/Kabi-Kabi Country. This artwork is painted in traditional and contemporary styles and art methodology and features a beautiful Kabi-Kabi woman wearing her traditional ochre.

All funds generated from commissioned artworks created by Hope O'Chin are donated to the Hope Dreaming Indigenous Corporation for the Revival, and Future Prosperity of First Nations peoples in the preservation and sustainability of their culture, heritage, language, lore, law, governance, economic, social, spiritual, intellectual and physical self.



Our Business & Our Mission

Ethical Brand Co is the home of EverEscents Organic Hair Care, Clever Curl, and Eco Style Project. Our vision is to produce organic, Australian, ethical, trustworthy products using only eco-conscious manufacturing processes.

For more than 18 years we have provided market leading, professional quality hair care products which aim to enhance the lives of everyday people whilst respecting our environment in all that we do.

Ethical Brand Co's Flagship Brand EverEscents Organic Hair Care has been Australia's leading Organic Hair Care brand for over 18 years, supplying our professional quality products to wholesale and retail customers throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Within that time, Ethical Brand Co's suite of Brands has expanded to include Clever Curl, and Eco Style Project. Australian Made, Vegan Friendly and Cruelty Free hair products, to suit the needs of all people, cultures, and communities.

Based on beautiful Kabi Kabi Country on the Sunshine Coast, QLD, our business currently employs thirty eight staff who work from our three office/warehouse locations.

Ethical Brand Co proudly operates in alignment with our core beliefs:

- Providing the ultimate customer service experience
- Respecting the environment in all that we do
- Creating an inclusive, accepting, and diverse company culture
- Encouraging everyday people to embrace their natural beauty, without fear of judgement
- Provide education and transparency regarding our ingredients and manufacturing processes
- Promoting the importance of choosing locally and ethically produced products with natural, organic, and low tox ingredients.

Ethical Brand Co are committed to recognising, respecting and celebrating the rich cultural history of our First Nations people and traditional land on which we operate, the Kabi Kabi peoples. This includes equal employment opportunities, inclusive product offerings and diverse cultural representation across all our branding and marketing.

Through meaningful relationships and community partnerships, we as a collective team pledge to work towards reconciliation through well considered, tactile steps as outlined in our Cultural Engagement Plan (CEP).



Our Journey – A Timeline

June 2021

Started our reconciliation journey

August 2021

EBC team building Cultural Cruise with Saltwater Eco Tours hosted by Elder Aunty Bridgette Chili

October 2021

Visit to HQ from Elder Aunty Bridgette Chili & yarn about reconciliation

November 2021

Team discussion about reconciliation

May 2022

- National Sorry Day CEP shared information about NSD & National Reconciliation Week
- CEP attended NRW launch event at Tribal Link
- Launch ILF to EBC team as new NN charity

March 2022

- Close The Gap Day viewing and discussion of 4Corners episode Heart Failure
- Harmony Day celebrations

June 2022

- Team member and family attend walk on country with Uncle Tais
- Our Management Team attended a dinner celebrating Native Australian ingredients hosted by Kabi Kabi Elder Tais Les who passed on stories and knowledge about the local area, bush tucker traditions and indigenous culture

July 2022

- CEP team attend NAIDOC week Flag raising event
- Mack Muckan come to HQ for yarn and chat about CEP

August 2022

- CEP team attend First Nations Forum

September 2022

- EBC team celebrate Indigenous Literacy Day and host Uncle Tais & Mack Muckan for a chat about connection to country and language. Present Uncle Tais and Mack with Wunya plaque

Our Journey – A Timeline

November 2022

CEP team obtain commissioned artwork from Aunty Hope for use on CEP & to display in office

October 2022

- CEP team attend First Nations Supplier Day
- Partnered with KYKOE Headbands as a new stockist

March 2023

- Close the gap information shared

May 2023

- National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week shared information
- CEP team attended NRW launch
- EBC book swap event for Indigenous Literacy Foundation

June 2023

- Voice to parliament

July 2023

- EBC NAIDOC team lunch Native BBQ Macka attend

May 2024

- EBC Team attended a cultural awareness workshop & walk on country with Udjeee Tais – Biral Tours
- CEP team Attended NRW Launch Event at Tribal Link
- EBC National Sorry Day & NRW Morning Tea at HQ with Mack and Lee Samuel Muckan

March 2024

- Team members attended the book launch for Aunty Hope at Bankfoot House

Sept 2023

- Indigenous literacy day gathering Macka attend

July 2024

- CEP team attend Sunshine Coast Council NAIDOC Flag raising event
- EBC Team NAIDOC Week celebration with Undumbi Culture

Sept 2024

- EBC Indigenous Literacy Day event with Mack Muckan

Oct 2024

- EBC Team members attend Sunshine Coast Wan'diny Day

Our Cultural Engagement Team



Annie Stephens
Operations Manager

As Operations Manager here at Ethical Brand Co, it is an integral part of my role to ensure that our workplace upholds our core values of equality, respect and inclusiveness. It has been an honour to be involved in all aspects of our reconciliation journey so far and feeling the incredible impact that our commitment to creating a Cultural

Engagement Plan has had on both our team and our community.

I share the passion of my fellow CEP members towards the importance of learning about, acknowledging and honouring the rich cultural histories of First Nations peoples and making real changes towards our mission of moving forward together as one. Our approach to implementing the deliverables set out in our CEP, has been and will continue to be, to do it with love, understanding, genuine interest and care which has been overwhelmingly returned to us by all we have shared this journey with so far in our First Nations community.

As a Family owned business, I am proud of what we have already achieved and look forward to continuing this great work alongside our Local First Nations community.



Hayley Austin
Marketing Coordinator

Culture and language have always been a huge interest and passion of mine. For as long as I can remember I have always had a curiosity for anything that seemed unique or deemed 'taboo' to talk about. It is only in the recent years as I began my career with Ethical Brand Co where these sparks of passion have really thrived. The gap in school

education where histories are only taught of commandeering, invasion and slavery have driven me to want to learn the truth and not only educate myself, but those around me. First Nations communities have been victims of inequality and it is time to bridge this gap.

When we started our reconciliation journey for Ethical Brand Co, the urge to bring light to common issues in the community only got brighter. Our team are incredibly eager to learn which encouraged us to push further. Through community and council connections, we have formed relationships to cherish for life. We must work towards reconciliation by acknowledging and understanding so that First Nations peoples and communities can heal.

I am so proud to be part of a team that encourages change and is actively working to bridge the gap. We are so lucky to live amongst the oldest generation known to man and should do more to invest our time in learning from them. As Gandhi once said, "You must be the change you wish to see in this world".

Our Cultural Engagement Team



Alexis Johns
Marketing Manager

A descendant of the Palawa peoples of Northwest Tasmania, I have always been passionate about the importance of truthful education and sharing of knowledge, so that we may teach our children and the generations to follow of the rich, true history of our ancient nation.

To me, reconciliation is the first and most important step towards healing. By acknowledging and recognising the pain of the past, we may take meaningful steps toward true reconciliation and move forward together as one.

I am proud to join the Ethical Brand Co CEP team and look forward to working together within our community and beyond to take real steps towards closing the gap.



Wade Kelly
Warehouse Manager

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples experience vast differences in health, education, employment, and standards of living compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Understanding these inequalities is the first step to reconciling the differences between us.

As a Non-Indigenous person, I recognise I have had better opportunities than most at good education, support, and acceptance within the community. These are all attributes we all take for granted and recognising these differences is the first step to reconciliation. This is something I am enthusiastic about imparting within the younger generation in the community, particularly my two girls.

I am proud to be part of a business that is bridging this gap by creating a better understanding and respect for those before us that walked upon the land where we are lucky to stand today.

Our Partnerships and Initiatives

Ethical Brand Co is committed to continuing to build connections and partnerships with First Nations businesses as part of our reconciliation journey.

Since starting our reconciliation journey in 2021, we have incorporated an Acknowledgement of Country that is shared each time we gather as a team.

In 2022 we have proudly displayed in our head office, a plaque of acknowledgment kindly gifted to us by the Muckan Family of the Undumbi Tribe. This plaque symbolizes our respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land and reinforces our commitment to honoring the importance of First Nations Peoples and their connection to country.



Ethical Brand Co provides funding support to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. The Indigenous Literacy Foundation is a not-for-profit charity which respects the unique place of Australia's First People and draws on the expertise of the Australian book industry.

Literacy provides a fundamental step of building context, comprehension and understanding, whether it is written, visual or auditory. For kids who miss that foundational step in their literacy journey, it has a lifelong impact. We support ILF's purpose to invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remote communities to provide the tools and resources they request to shape the direction of their children's literacy future.

On Indigenous Literacy Day (the first week of September), our team gather to learn about and celebrate the rich culture and language of Australia's First Nations people. As a team, we watch and discuss the ILF produced short film. In 2022 this featured children in remote communities of Milikapiti and Jikminggan in the Northern Territory sharing their language and culture.

In 2023 this featured the Communities of Barunga Remote Community School, Rubibi (Broome), Napranum on the Cape York Peninsula of Queensland sharing stories in language. This snapshot of life in remote Australia and the richness and diversity of First Nations Peoples' stories, cultures and languages ignited passionate discussion amongst our team, many of whom had not previously had the opportunity to be exposed to Indigenous languages.

On this day, we have been lucky to be joined by Kabi Kabi Elder Tias Les and his son Mack Muckan who watched the film with us and continued the yarn with our team, sharing more about Traditional Kabi Kabi Language and their personal stories with us. Several members of our team were emotionally moved as Uncle Tais and Mack shared with us the story of tracing their ancestral history and connection to country.

KYKOE Designs



From 2022 Ethical Brand Co is proud to have partnered with First Nations business KYKOE, to bring beautifully handmade Indigenous accessories to our customers.

Sharing culture through accessories, KYKOE offers an alternative and fashionable avenue for displaying cultural pride with everyday pieces, showcasing the beautiful artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives.

KYKOE is a small business run solely by proud Saisarem, Butchulla, Barada Barna and Cingalese woman, Tishara Garrett. Each design is cut, sewn and packaged by Tishara from her home located within the Bundjalung Nation on the Country of the Yugambah speaking people, Gold Coast, QLD.

Ethical Brand Co is proud to support Tishara and her business by offering KYKOE headbands for sale to our retail customers through our online store and in the shopfront of our Coolum Beach Headquarters.





Our Commitments

- 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations**
 - Continue to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.
 - Continue researching and implementing best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.
- 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)**
 - Circulate NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.
 - CEP team members to participate in an external NRW event.
 - Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.
- 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence**
 - Continue communicating our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.
 - Identify and continue working with external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.
 - Identify and continue working with organisations in the CEP network and/or other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.
- 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies**
 - Continue researching and implementing best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.
 - Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.
- 5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning**
 - Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.
 - Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.
- 6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols**
 - Continue to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.
 - Continue working to increase our team's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.

7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week

- Continue raising awareness and sharing information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.
- Encourage our staff to be involved with NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.
- CEP team to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.

8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development

- Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.
- Continue building our understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.

9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes

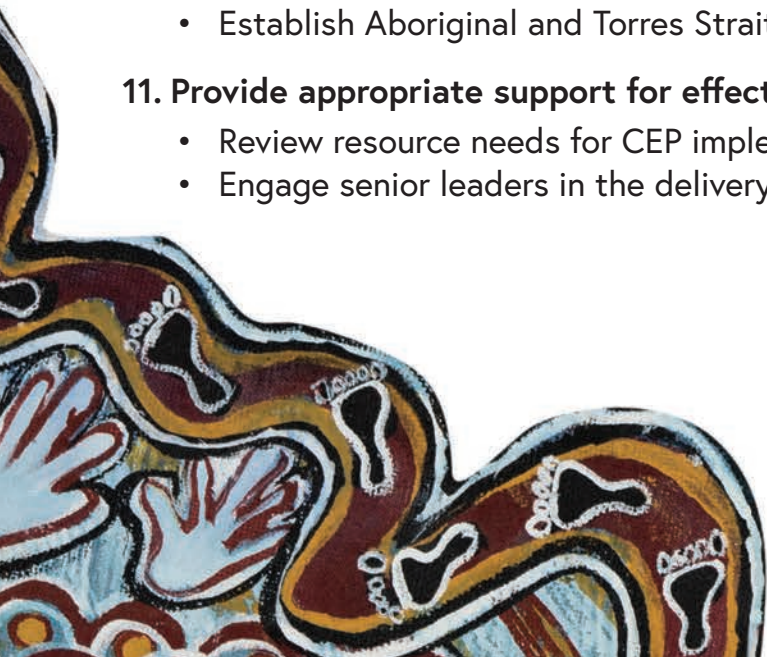
- Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.
- Investigate new ways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners.
- Identify room for growth with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.

10. Establish and maintain an effective Cultural Engagement team members to drive governance of the CEP

- Maintain a Cultural Engagement team.
- Draft a Terms reference for the CEP.
- Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the CEP team.

11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of CEP commitments

- Review resource needs for CEP implementation.
- Engage senior leaders in the delivery of CEP commitments.





ETHICAL[™] BRAND^{CO}

For further information about
our CEP please contact:
Phone: 1300 856 744

Email: contact@ethicalbrandco.com.au