

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

November 2021 – November 2023



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE

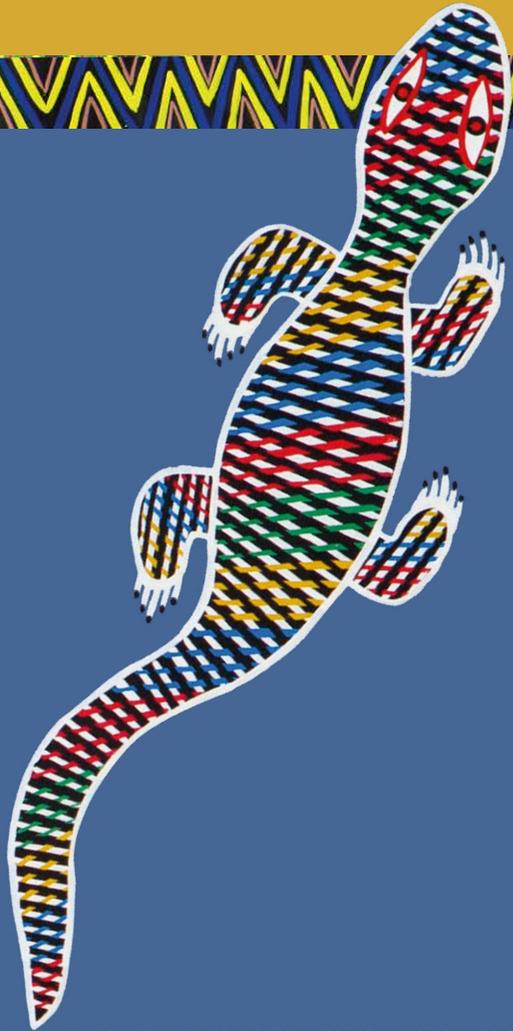


AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRY
CLINICAL SERVICES • RESEARCH • EDUCATION



NATIONAL VISION
RESEARCH INSTITUTE





The Australian College of Optometry respectfully acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders – past, present and emerging.

The Australian College of Optometry is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.





Contents

- 4 Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO
- 5 Message from our President
- 5 Message from our CEO
- 6 RAP advisors
- 7 Artist profile
- 9 Our vision for reconciliation
- 10 Who we are
- 11 Our RAP
- 13 Innovate 2019 - 2021
- 16 Commitments for the next 2 years
 - 16 Relationships
 - 19 Respect
 - 22 Opportunities
 - 24 Governance, tracking progress and reporting

Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia commends the Australian College of Optometry on the formal endorsement of its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. The Australian College of Optometry continues to be part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

An Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build the strong foundations and relationships that ensure sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that the Australian College of Optometry will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to the Australian College of Optometry using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for the Australian College of Optometry to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, the Australian College of Optometry will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of the Australian College of Optometry's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Australian College of Optometry on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine,
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from our President

I am pleased to present the second Reconciliation Action Plan of the Australian College of Optometry. The RAP delineates and reinforces the ACO's commitment to reconciliation. The Council is committed to creating and facilitating more opportunities for the diverse communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with whom the ACO interact. Our CEO, leadership team and staff fully support and endorse this process.

The ACO has long and established relationships with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The ACO has and will continue to strive for equitable eye health outcomes working with as many First Nations communities as is possible. Through the ACO's RAP we are committed to implementing practical actions to foster current collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, build new partnerships, strengthen the cultural competency of our workforce and build the cultural safety of our organisation. In addition we are committed to creating training, employment and educational opportunities; assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become more involved in the delivery of eye care for their communities.

Reconciliation is part of the journey to the destination of Equality. We will continue to work alongside our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and friends to achieve equitable eye health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Rodney Hodge,
President

Message from our CEO

The Australian College of Optometry is committed to walking alongside First Nations Peoples to reduce the disparity in eye health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We value the partnerships that we have with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, friends, stakeholders and community members. We acknowledge that wherever we provide care we are doing so on Aboriginal land, and that sovereignty over that land has never been ceded. We stand with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the work to achieve true reconciliation continues.

We are pleased to launch our second Innovate RAP. This presents us with a great chance to reflect on, evolve and embed our key commitments and actions since we began this important journey only two years ago. Our first Innovate RAP 2019–2021 provided an opportunity to reflect on our models of care, to better understand the importance of partnerships, and to investigate enhancements and support for community-driven eye care.

In this next stage of our we will continue to seek counsel from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, our RAP advisors and the community. We will listen deeply and respectfully. We will be curious. We will seek to learn, grow and explore how we can contribute to reconciliation as an organisation, as individuals, and as a country.



Pete Haydon,
CEO

RAP advisors



Colin Mitchell
*Aboriginal Liaison Officer
Diabetes Victoria*

Colin has been working in Aboriginal health for over 35 years now and discovered a passion for diabetes, while working as an Aboriginal Health Worker with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. Colin has connected Diabetes Victoria into all Aboriginal communities across the state and is actively involved in delivering diabetes programs to his people.



Robyn Bradley
Aboriginal consultant

Robyn hails from Gunditjmarra country in Victoria's West, and has a long history of working in Aboriginal health, languages and culture in Melbourne and across Victoria. She has over 35 years' experience working in the Aboriginal community, including the Cancer Council of Victoria, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages. Her most recent roles include Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer with the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and Senior Aboriginal Special Project Officer at the Australian College of Optometry.



Anne-Marie Banfield
*Founder of Kadadjiny, National
Manager of Engagement & Awareness
HAPEE program - Hearing Australia*

Anne-Marie is a Erawirung women from the riverland in South Australia, living on Gundtjimara land for past 27 years. Anne-Marie is an incredible education and health advocate with many years' experience in eye and ear health.



Levi Lovett
*Community Representative who is a
Gunditjmarra Traditional Owner*

Levi Lovett is a proud Gunditj-mara man from South-West Victoria. Levi's family has had a history with cataracts (father, Aunty, sister and niece), diagnosed all at a young age, including himself in his mid-twenties. He has previously worked in the Aboriginal eye health area for four years at a regional and State level and continues to share his knowledge and advice to the ACO on the RAP Committee.

Artist profile

Journey Down the Murray 2017

This artwork represents the long journey of the local wildlife swimming down the Murray River. The cross-hatching and the line-work in the border patterns represent what we go through in life: our experiences, struggles and achievements. The Murray River stays the same and is always going to be there, as our home.

Kelvin Rogers is a proud Yorta Yorta man who grew up on the Murray River. As a young man, Kelvin learned traditional skills such as didgeridoo-making and how to gather and use bush tucker. Whilst incarcerated, Kelvin joined The Torch

program and developed his distinctive style of painting, using colour palettes designed to “stop people in their tracks”.

In prison, painting helped Kelvin to forget where he was and offered hours of escape, helping him to move through some difficult times. The Murray River is his favourite subject. Kelvin’s artwork is held in public collections including the City of Melbourne, and has been licensed by numerous organisations such as the Victorian Ombudsman and Victorian Legal Aid.

The Torch supports Indigenous men and women both in prisons and post release in Victoria to explore their culture and identity through practicing art.



Kelvin Rogers
Journey Down the Murray
2017





Our vision for reconciliation

The Australian College of Optometry recognises the past treatments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's and how colonisation has impacted on their health. Our vision for reconciliation is to work collaboratively and walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, to heal our national soul, address inequity and achieve justice by contributing to closing the gap in eye health outcomes. We believe that reconciliation is an ongoing journey, which we aim to enhance by building meaningful and mutually respectful relationships.



Who we are

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) is committed to improving the eye health and quality of life of community through clinical optometry practice, research and education. We are involved in public health eye care service delivery, vision research and optometry education. We employ 186 staff working across these divisions, currently we have no employees that have self-identified as Aboriginal people. We serve a diverse community and wide range of stakeholders. Our focus is to meet the equally diverse expectations and needs of these communities and to show leadership through innovation and best practice in each area. The ACO is proud to be a key organisation in Australia specialising in each of the areas of public health optometry, vision research and optometry student and professional education, which together are enhancing improvements in eye health and the wellbeing of the community.

Our reach – Victoria and beyond

The ACO strongly embraces its public service mission of clinical care by providing routine and specialised eye care services for tens of thousands of people each year. The Australian College of Optometry's geographic reach is national with an extensive clinical services network throughout Victoria in addition to growing/expanding service provision nationally. The Australian College of Optometry's main clinic is based in Carlton, with a network of clinics in metropolitan Melbourne and a mobile eye care service. Outreach services began in 1998 for patients with disabilities that could not access mainstream services, and expanded in 2003 with services to homeless persons and other vulnerable Victorians. The ACO provides a coordinated program of clinics and outreach services across Victoria, including services for the aged and frail, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugees and asylum seekers, children from disadvantaged schools, homeless and other high-risk groups. Going forward the ACO seeks to adapt and expand this important public health eye care model to benefit more Australian's experiencing disadvantage.



Our RAP

A Reconciliation Action Plan provides the Australian College of Optometry with a roadmap for reconciliation through the setting of strategic goals that are realistic, achievable, appropriate and measurable. The RAP strengthens our strategic plan by reflecting the key values of the ACO; care, purpose, respect, collaboration, innovation and delivery. The RAP promotes staff development and growth, through strengthening cultural competency and cultural safety in the organisation. The RAP guides the organisation and keeps the ACO accountable in the process. The RAP further enhances and strengthens the patient experience and relationships with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The RAP demonstrates a commitment to employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the ACO. Fundamentally it demonstrates our respect to the First Nations Peoples of this country, and our commitment to Closing the Gap on eye health.

Our reconciliation journey

The Australian College of Optometry has been working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHO's) for over 20 years. We currently work with over 29 ACCHO's in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Our Innovate RAP has been a good opportunity to reflect on our models of care, the importance of partnerships, flexibility, two way learning and community driven eye care.

We are committed to further strengthening relationships and promoting partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The ACO is involved in a number of partnerships, projects and service delivery models that demonstrates our reconciliation journey to date.

Service Delivery

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)

The ACO has had a regular clinic at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service in Fitzroy since 1998. The ACO continues to work in partnership with VAHS to provide a comprehensive eye health service for its patients.

Visiting Optometry Scheme (VOS)

Since 2010, the ACO have been working in partnership with more than 20 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and a number of community health services in urban and regional Victoria, as well as in borders regions in NSW and SA. This scheme, which is funded by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV), and Rural Doctors Workforce Agency (RWDA) improves access to eye health for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities living in regional and remote areas.

The Victorian Eyecare Service (VES)

The ACO is responsible for the administration and management of the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) Victorian Eyecare Service (VES). Through the VES, the ACO's Clinical Services is able to offer eye care services targeted to Victorians who are financially, socially or geographically most in need, with the aim of correcting refractive error and preventing eye disease. The VES is largely delivered by ACO staff in the metropolitan area and by more than 80 dedicated partners private practices in regional and rural areas across the entire state. Annually, more than 79,000 consultations and 46,380 visual aids were provided through the VES to 65,765 patients across the state. Two-thirds of services are provided in our Melbourne clinics.

The Victorian Aboriginal Spectacles Subsidy Scheme (VASSS)

The Victorian Aboriginal Spectacles Subsidy Scheme (VASSS) program, which has been developed and managed by the ACO since 2010, is a Victorian State Government Initiative that aims to improve access to high quality visual aids for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians. Through the VASS program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria are eligible to obtain spectacles for a co-payment of \$10. Since its introduction in 2010 until September 2021, over 23,520 pairs of spectacles have been supplied through the Victorian Aboriginal Subsidised Spectacle Scheme, with important improvement in eye health as a consequence.

Provision of Eye Health Equipment and Training Project

The ACO are involved in the Provision of Eye Health Equipment and Training Project, an Australian Government Department of Health funded initiative. A consortium of five organisations from across Australia work in partnership to deliver this project based on their existing links and experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye care in discussion with local and regional stakeholders, and service providers. These organisations are: Brien Holden Foundation (contractor, co-lead), Australian College of Optometry (co-lead), Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia, Centre for Eye Health and Optometry Australia.

The project is responsible for the procurement and distribution of up to 165 retinal cameras to primary health care clinics, who provide care to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. The project incorporates training on the use of the camera to primary health care workers and general practitioners, with the aim to support increased primary-level access to retinal photography for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes. The project expansion to December 2021, involves the procurement and distribution of over 100 slit lamps to health services.

Partnerships

The ACO have key partnerships with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria, Indigenous Eye Health (Melbourne University), Rural Doctors Workforce Agency, South Australia, Watto Purrinna Aboriginal Primary Health Care Service and Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia.

The ACO are actively involved in a number of national and state committees including: Vision 2020 Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee; Victorian Aboriginal Eye Health Strategy Committee; convener Koolin Balit North Metro and West Metro Aboriginal Eye Health Advisory Group; member of regional Aboriginal eye health advisory groups: Grampians, Great South Coast, Loddon Mallee; Ophthalmology Service Steering Committee (The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service) the Provision of Eye Health Equipment and Training Consortium member.



Innovate 2019 - 2021

The RAP Launch was held in National Reconciliation Week 2019, with over 80 guests in attendance including Council members, staff, partners and community members.

The event was opened with a Welcome to Country ceremony by Wurundjeri Elder Colin Hunter, followed by the Wurundjeri Djirri Djirri dancers, who also welcomed guests through traditional dance and song. Konrad Pesudovs (Former ACO President) and Maureen O'Keefe (Former ACO CEO) provided a warm welcome to guests, and spoke about our long and established relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and the ACO's commitment to implementing practical actions which will foster current collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, build new partnerships, strengthen the cultural competency of our workforce, build the cultural safety of our organisation and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP Working Party members Anne-Marie Banfield and Levi Lovett introduced artist Kelvin Rogers, who created the RAP artwork 'Journey down the Murray'. Kelvin, a proud Yorta Yorta man, spoke about his artwork and provided us with a very honest and inspiring account of his life story, also profiling The Torch project which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women both in prisons and post release in Victoria to explore their culture and identity through practicing art.

Our progress

The ACO are committed to a whole organisational approach to reconciliation; reconciliation is everybody's business.

Since the launch of our Innovate RAP, we have established systems to ensure we progress with our plan over the two years. A number of ACO staff working groups have been established to work up the actions for the key domains - Education and Training, Communications, People and Culture and Procurement. We work in consultation with our RAP Working Party to inform and guide this process.

In 2020, The RAP Working Party have kept adapting plans to respond to the challenges of implementation of our actions in the time of COVID -19. Despite the challenges of the last year, we have worked in partnership to keep progressing our plan and commitment to reconciliation.

The progress to date is:

- Quarterly meetings with the RAP Working Party - consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health practitioners, stakeholders and community members;
- Development of actions plans for the areas of Education and Training, Communications, People and Culture and Procurement – to ensure a whole organisational approach to the RAP;
- Provision of Aboriginal cultural safety training workshops for all our staff (140+), facilitated by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation;
- Development of online resources embedded into onboarding process to strengthen the cultural competency and safety of our organisation. Resources such as:
 - ▶ Cultural protocol document- inclusive of cultural safety training
 - ▶ Ask the Question Modules
 - ▶ Cultural resources repository

- Rollout of 'Asking the Question' modules for existing and new staff; rollout of 'Asking the Question' resources to be displayed at all our clinics;
- Development of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy:
 - ▶ Work Experience Pilot Program for Aboriginal students – Dec 20
 - ▶ Continue to work with external stakeholders on pathways for employment, and undergraduate opportunities
- Strengthening relationship with the Wurundjeri Council; with a Wurundjeri Elder providing a Welcome to Country at all ACO significant events;
- The ACO Annual General Meeting is held in National Reconciliation Week, with the opening address provided by Wurundjeri Elder;
- Procurement of services for ACO events from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, in addition to the development of procurement guide for all staff;
- Acknowledgement of significant dates:

National Reconciliation Week

- ▶ 2019 Launch of Innovate RAP – The event was held in National Reconciliation Week, with over 80 guests in attendance including Council members, staff, partners and community members. The event was opened by a Welcome to Country ceremony by Wurundjeri Elder Colin Hunter, followed by the Wurundjeri Djirri Djirri dancers who also welcomed guests through traditional dance and song.
- ▶ 2020 National Reconciliation Week – Developed a calendar of events for all staff- inclusive of virtual cinema event 'In My Blood It Runs' promoted to all staff.

NAIDOC Week:

- ▶ 2019 – *Voice. Treaty. Truth* NAIDOC week was celebrated at the ACO. We recognised the Victorian week in addition to the national week. The CEO sent out a statement to all staff to encourage them to get involved in internal and external activities. All staff were given the opportunity to attend a NAIDOC morning tea which was held across all sites. Information on the history of NAIDOC week and the 2019 theme was available to all staff through social media platforms, internal newsletter

and printed form place around the building. All sites displayed posters for NAIDOC week.

- ▶ 2020 – Always Was. Always Will Be. In partnership with The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, The Dental Hospital and Thorne Harbour Health – a calendar of virtual events was developed. The ACO directly supported The Torch Project, Murnong Mama's and NAIDOC events.
- Launch of online RAP videos during NAIDOC Week – hosted on International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness platform:
 - ▶ RAP video – RAP advisors developed a resource speaking to the themes of culture, family, identity, community and connection. This resource will be incorporated into our onboarding process, to promote staff getting to know our RAP advisors.
 - ▶ Partnership's video – in collaboration with the RAP committee and local stakeholders, a video was developed to highlight the importance of relationships in achieving equitable eye health. This resource will continue to inform our staff in addition to community education.
- Purchase of Aboriginal artwork from The Torch to represent our RAP, which has been embedded in all future communications related to Aboriginal Services and the RAP. Displaying Aboriginal artwork, posters and flags in the main clinic reception area;
- Providing an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of all meetings and events;
- And strengthening of relationships with Aboriginal Services in South Australia, with the opening of ACO clinic in Elizabeth, SA.

Our RAP Champions

Our RAP is championed by our Council, our CEO and our leadership team. The RAP Working Party is represented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health practitioners, stakeholders and community members, in addition to cross division representation from the ACO. The ACO representatives will work closely with clinical services, administration, corporate services, education and research and the leadership team to promote a whole organisational approach.

Our RAP Working Party

Anne-Marie Banfield – Founder of Kadadjiny, National Manager of Engagement & Awareness HAPEE Program, Hearing Australia

Robyn Bradley – Aboriginal consultant

Colin Mitchell – Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Diabetes Victoria

Levi Lovett – Community representative who is a Gunditjmara Traditional Owner

Staff representatives:

Colette Davis – Projects Manager

Melinda Heap – People and Culture Co-ordinator

Nilmini John – Manager – Aboriginal Services

Tess Milhailou – Optical Technician

Rhea Sharma – Membership and Engagement Coordinator

Jane Trevaskis – Director of Education, Membership & Marketing

Joe Waterman – Staff Optometrist





Relationships

The Australian College of Optometry continues to strengthen existing partnerships and build new relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders to Close the Gap in eye health. We remain committed to promoting a respectful and collaborative culture across the whole organisation.

Action

1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Build on the ACO's guiding principles for future engagement, by continuing to meet and consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	Nov 2022 Oct 2023
Continue to strengthen the implementation of the engagement plan which outlines opportunities to strengthen existing relationships, and the development of new relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	Senior Management Team Project Manager	July 2022 Sept 2023
Continue to build on existing relationships with Dharri Baagon network, Indigenous Eye Health Unit University of Melbourne (IEH), Eye and Ear Hospital, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), and explore new collaborations	Project Officer Project Manager	Nov 2022 Oct 2023
Seek opportunities to develop Memorandums of Understanding with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers that work with the ACO	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	July 2022 Sept 2023
Actively promote and support Optometry staff to participate in the Visiting Optometry Service, and working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	July 2022, 2023
Embed evidence based resources such as 'From Symbols to Systems' to promote culturally safe engagement processes throughout the ACO	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	July 2022, 2023

Action

2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Host a National Reconciliation Week event, across all ACO sites each year, with an invitation to all staff and external stakeholders	Project Manager + 3 RAP staff representatives	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
Register the ACO National Reconciliation Events via Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation website	Project Manager Marketing Manager	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and information to all ACO staff	Project Manager Marketing Manager	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event	Project Manager + 3 RAP staff representatives	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	Project Manager + 3 RAP staff representatives	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
Internally promote and acknowledge National Reconciliation Week through the ACO newsletter, intranet, social media platforms and posters in the clinical and staff spaces	Marketing Manager Division Directors	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
Externally promote and acknowledge National Reconciliation Week through social media platforms	Marketing Manager	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023
Support an external National Reconciliation Week event	Project Manager + 3 RAP staff representatives	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023

Action

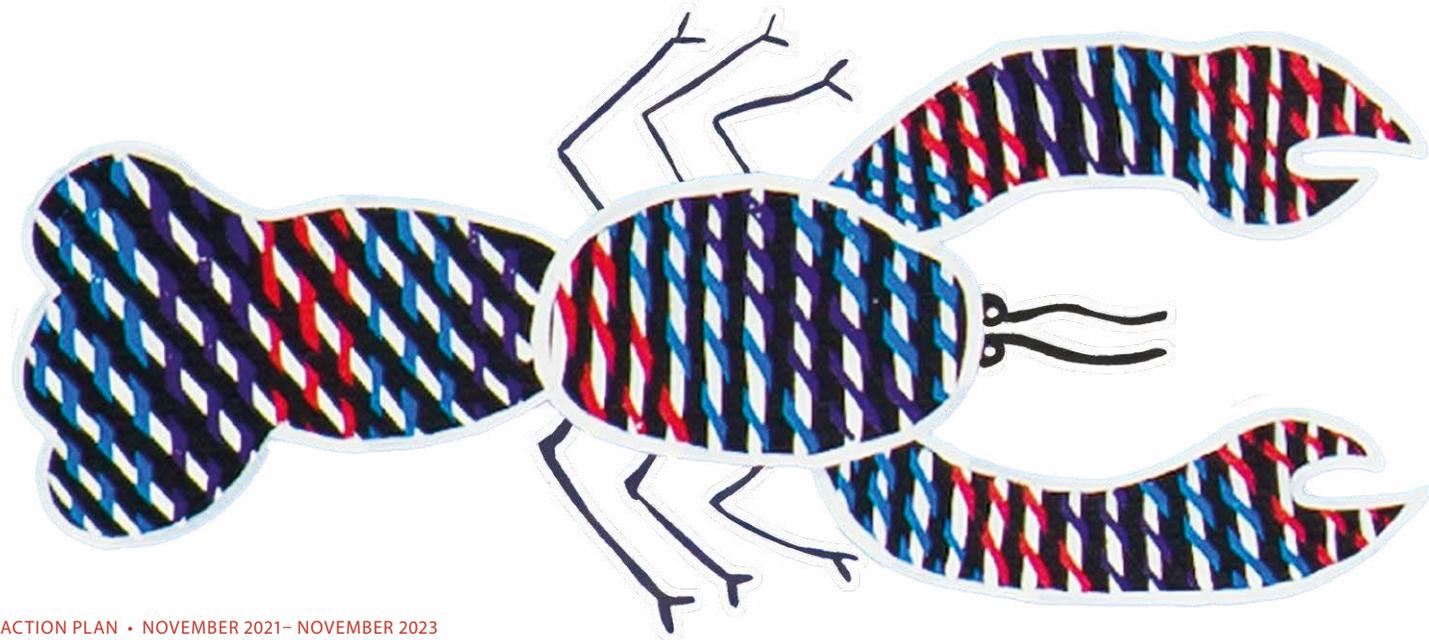
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Implementation of RAP communications that promotes awareness, participation and discussion of our RAP strategy to our staff and external stakeholders	Project Manager Marketing Manager	July 2022, 2023
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly on significant dates such as Closing the Gap, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC	Project Manager Marketing Manager	March 2022 2023 May 2022, 2023 July 2022, 2023
Externally promote the RAP through stakeholder meetings, the ACO Annual General Meeting and website	Senior Management Team Project Manager	Nov 2022 Oct 2023
Continue to work with external stakeholders, and regional groups to explore opportunities to embed reconciliation outcomes in all domains of eye health	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	July 2022, 2023
Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	Nov 2022 Oct 2023

Action

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Ongoing review of People and Culture recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applications, identifying existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs	Head of People and Culture Project Manager	Sept 2022, 2023
Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation	Head of People and Culture	June 2022
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy	Head of People and Culture	April 2022
Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism through cultural safety training and workshops	External provider - VACCHO Project Manager	Aug 2022





Respect

Respect is a core value at the ACO. As an organisation we recognise, respect and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge the importance of creating a deeper understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures, protocols and histories across the organisation. We are committed to being a culturally competent organisation, with employees that are culturally aware, respectful and confident in their practice and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We aim to build cultural awareness and action into the fabric of the ACO, through our RAP.

Action

5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Review and update implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for all our staff which defines the cultural learning needs of staff in all areas of our work and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided for example: online, face to face, workshops or cultural immersion	Project Manager Head of People and Culture	July 2022, 2023,
Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultant to develop cultural awareness training. For example all Visiting Optometry Scheme staff that work with ACCHO's engage in cultural immersion program with local cultural groups to increase their knowledge of the community and country where they are working.	Project Manager Manager – Aboriginal Services	Nov 2022
RAP Working Group members, People and Culture managers and other key leadership staff will participate in formal and structured cultural learning through developed resources, face to face training and engagement with external stakeholders	Project Manager	July 2022, 2023
Continue to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and culture to all our staff through the ACO newsletter, intranet, social media.	Project Manager Marketing Manager	Oct 2022, 2023
Yearly cultural audit to be completed at all of our clinics, to continue to strengthen a culturally safe place for our patients and to build a culturally safe workforce	External consultant	June 2022, 2023
Continue to promote and build on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural resource repository available to all staff through the staff intranet, and professional development platforms	Project Manager Marketing Manager	July 2022, 2023
Promote the Reconciliation Australia's 'Share our Pride' online tool to all our staff through annual competency and onboarding process	Project Manager Head of People and Culture	July 2022, 2023

Action

6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols through circulation of Cultural Protocol document and orientation to cultural resource repository on the staff intranet	Project Manager Head of People and Culture	Oct 2022,2023
Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year, such as the AGM in National Reconciliation Week	Senior Management Team Project Manager	July 2022, 2023
Annual review of cultural protocol document by all staff during National Reconciliation Week.	Project Manager Head of People and Culture	May 2022, 2023
Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all internal and external meetings	Senior Management Team	Oct 2022, 2023
Promote respect and value diversity in the workplace through embedding of culturally safe and competent practice in our workplace.	Head of People and Culture Senior Management Team	July 2022, 2023
Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings	Senior Management Team	Oct 2022, 2023
Email signature used by all ACO employees will include an Acknowledgement of Country.	Marketing Manager	Dec 2021
Ensure all new print/digital ACO resources will have an Acknowledgment of Country and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags	Marketing Manager	Oct 2022, 2023
Encourage staff to use the Acknowledgment of Country prompt cards situated in all meeting rooms	Senior Management Team	July 2022, 2023

Action

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

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Encourage RAP Working Group and ACO staff to attend a NAIDOC Week community event	Project Manager Senior Management Team	July 2022, 2023
Host a NAIDOC Week event for staff and stakeholders to attend, such as the screening of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander film. Work in partnership with Dharri Baagon to increase reach	Project Manager ACO RAP Staff Representatives	July 2022, 2023
Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week	Senior Management Team	July 2022, 2023
Continue to monitor and review HR policies and procedures annually to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week	Head of People and Culture	July 2022, 2023
Engage with our local NAIDOC Week Committee to discover events in our community	Project Manager ACO RAP Staff Representatives	July 2022, 2023





Opportunities

The ACO remains committed to being an employee of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our aim is to increase and enhance opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate in social and economic activities. We acknowledge the opportunity through the RAP to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the way forward; to encourage employment and career pathways; to retain staff through supportive and culturally competent practice and to further strengthen procurement relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

Action

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

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Build understanding from current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and service providers to inform future employment opportunities, recruitment strategies, retention and professional development	Head of People and Culture	Oct 2022
Continue to engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development	Head of People and Culture	August 2022, 2023
Develop a peer support group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with external stakeholders	Head of People and Culture	Oct 2022
Conduct exit interviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform future employment strategies	Head of People and Culture	August 2022
Continue to implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy	Project Manager Head of People and Culture	August 2022, 2023
Explore opportunities to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways across all divisions of the ACO	People and Culture Senior Management Team	Oct 2022
Explore opportunities to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training pathways across all divisions of the ACO. For example – Optical Dispensing	Senior Management Team Manager – Aboriginal Services	Feb 2022, 2023
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	Head of People and Culture	Oct 2022, 2023
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace	Head of People and Culture	December 2021
Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce by strengthening our relationships, internal processes, opportunities and pathways	Head of People and Culture	Sept 2022, 2023

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

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Continue to build on and implement procurement strategy developed	Procurement assistant Project Manager	July 2022, 2023
Consider opportunities for Supply Nation membership	Project Manager	Aug 2022
Continue to refer staff to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Service Guide (procurement guide) housed on the intranet, and to encourage staff to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Project Manager Procurement Assistant	August 2022, 2023
Continue to encourage staff to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Project Manager	August 2022, 2023
Utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander goods and services for catering at the Annual General Meeting, NAIDOC and/or National Reconciliation Week events and other staff events	Procurement Assistant Senior Management Team	Sept 2022, 2023
Annual review and update of procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Procurement Assistant Project Manager	Nov 2021, 2022
Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses	Project Manager Director of Corporate Services	Sept 2022
Continue to build on commercial relationships by adding another 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Project Manager Director of Corporate Services	Feb 2023
Offer to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists/other businesses through ACO networks and/or via social media	Project Manager Marketing Manager	July 2022, 2023



Governance, tracking progress and reporting

Action

10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working group	Chair – RAP Working Group Project Manager	June 2022, 2023
Review and update the RAP Working group terms of reference and guiding principles annually	Chair – RAP Working Group Project Manager	Nov 2021, 2022
Meet every quarter to monitor and report on RAP implementation and progress	Project Manager RAP - staff representatives	Sept, Dec, Mar June - 2021, 2022, 2023

Action

11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure effective implementation of our RAP by identifying resource needs for RAP implementation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time/support for ACO representatives to participate • Effective communication to all senior leaders of key strategies and cross department responsibilities • Development of annual budget 	Project Manager Executive Management Team	May 2022, 2023
Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments through RAP updates at senior management meetings	Project Manager	July 2022, 2023
Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	Project Manager	May 2022, 2023
Maintain the appointment of the ACO RAP Champion from senior management	Project Manager	May 2022

Action

12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually	Project Manager	30 September, 2022, 2023
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	Project Manager	August 2022, 2023
Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly and Council through the CEO Newsletter and RAP reports	Project Manager Marketing Manager	Dec, Mar Jun, Sept - 2021, 2022, 2023
Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learning's through meetings with stakeholders, intranet, website and social media platforms	Marketing Manager Senior Management Team	Dec, Mar Jun, Sept - 2021, 2022, 2023
Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	Project Manager	May 2022

Action

13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	Project Manager	May 2023
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	Project Manager	June 2023



Contact details

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