



RURAL HEALTH TASMANIA INC
Supporting Healthy Communities



NO. 34 ABORIGINAL
HEALTH SERVICE

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2023 - June 2024



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain images or names of people who have passed away.



Artist Statement

“This artwork depicts tommeginne land (North West coast) and all the beautiful things country has for us. It is where the bush meets the sea.”

The waterways play a big part in our lives, with beautiful and rugged coastlines, many rivers and creeks which all provide a source of food and also fun. Fishing is very popular in the north west with an abundance of fish. There are fishing nets shown by the hatching in the meeting place symbol.

There are many plants shown in this artwork, all of which are native to and grow on tommeginne Country – wattle, gum, pigface and kelp. We have mountains and rocky areas along the coastline, with many bushwalking tracks to soak up nature and become grounded. Community is a big part of our land, with many little communities dotted along the coast. Towns come together to assist, collaborate and support one another.

My name is Annie. I was born and raised on tommeginne land, lutruwita (North West Coast of Tasmania). I am a proud Aboriginal woman, which stems from my matriarchal side, my great grandmother, who unfortunately was part of the Stolen Generation. She was born on Woiworrung country (South Yarra, Victoria) and taken to work as a servant in NSW. Despite many years of research we have been unable to find our mob, yet we continue researching to this day. Not knowing where your blood lines come from is upsetting and can get overwhelming.

My art helps me to connect to my ancestors, culture and community, where I am accepted as an artist and an Aboriginal woman. My hope is that my art brings forth deep feelings and emotions you didn't know were there until you really look at the stories contained within. I also hope it encourages others to delve further into their ancestry, and not feel shame for not knowing where they come from.

Art has always been in my blood. I grew up loving art and creating. I studied art, photography and graphic design in college where all of my works took on an abstract form. My mother is an Aboriginal potter, creating beautiful works of art featuring Aboriginal designs which are exhibited at the Canberra Museum. My uncle is an Elder out of country, which is very humbling. He is also an accomplished Aboriginal artist and musician, playing the saxophone and yidaki. It was inevitable that I would follow in their footsteps.

My painting style is contemporary and has been developed through mentoring from both my mother and my uncle. It is my way of connecting to my Aboriginal heritage and to country, where much of my inspiration comes from. It allows me to tell stories my way, in a contemporary way, while also being visually appealing through the use of colour and bold lines.



Statement from the CEO

On behalf of Rural Health Tasmania, I am proud to present our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. It formally demonstrates our commitment to contributing our voice to Reconciliation and is a significant step in encouraging healing through learning and reflection.

Rural Health Tasmania acknowledges the need for truth-telling and accept the wrongs of the past caused by colonisation and the dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise our sphere of influence within the Tasmanian communities that we serve and we can actively build stronger relationships, built on respect and understanding with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support truth-telling.

We also acknowledge the resilience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional custodians of the land, sea and water and we can learn from their practices to enrich our connection with areas that we work within.

I would like to thank local artist, Annie Hay for the artwork that she contributed to our RAP, that depicts the tommeginne land that we work within. Annie is a proud Aboriginal woman and her artwork truly depicts the beauty of the land that we work on.

We look forward to continuing our journey of Reconciliation and thank each individual that has contributed to our RAP in one way or another.

Robert Waterman
CEO Rural Health Tasmania

 

Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Rural Health Tasmania to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Rural Health Tasmania joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Rural Health Tasmania to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Rural Health Tasmania, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our Business

Rural Health Tasmania provides a broad range of services to the North West and West Coast of Tasmania to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for communities. Our primary aim is to improve the quality of life for those living with a chronic health condition and prevent the need for admission into acute healthcare facilities, reducing the burden on our healthcare system. This includes providing a care coordination service, health checks, preventative care, reducing hospital admissions, referrals to internal and external programs, providing information and education, improving health literacy, advocacy, health promotion and therapeutic intervention.

Our services focus on people living with conditions such as circulatory and heart disease, mental illness, musculoskeletal conditions, respiratory disease and cancer.

No 34. Aboriginal Health Service is a service that sits within Rural Health Tasmania, that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within Tasmania. By collaborating with Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, this service supports people by providing a holistic service that improves health outcomes and supports cultural, spiritual needs of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and connection to country.

Rural Health Tasmania employs approximately 60 people across 8 sites, that are spread out across the North-West and West coast of Tasmania. Approximately 20% of our workforce is made up of people that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Rural Health Tasmania offices are located in Smithton, King Island, Queenstown, Wynyard, Burnie, Ulverstone, Devonport and Sheffield. Outreach and Transport is also provided.

Rural Health Tasmania is pleased to announce that we have received funding to open a new Aboriginal Health Service on the West Coast of Tasmania, located at Queenstown. The geography of the West Coast of Tasmania makes it challenging for its community to receive consistent services and support and Rural Health Tasmania is excited to partner with the West Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to improve health outcomes.

Rural Health Tasmania is committed to providing services that are culturally responsive and equitable, champions dignity and respect for First Nation peoples and supports initiatives that promote reconciliation.

Our RAP

Rural Health Tasmania has always been committed to supporting the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including:

- Promoting reconciliation through hosting or participating in events such as NAIDOC week, Close the Gap Day, Harmony Week
- Addressing barriers to adequate health supports through service delivery
- Opposing racist and discriminatory structures, including reflecting on our own policy
- Ensuring that we have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on our Board of Management, and
- Working collaboratively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and Communities

The Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan provides Rural Health Tasmania with the opportunity to formalise our values and beliefs that all First Nations people have the right to have their healthcare needs met, promote reconciliation and formally acknowledge our support for Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities.

We have ensured that our RAP Working Group is reflective of both the organisation as a whole, and representative of some of the Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The RAP Working Group was established on a voluntary basis, with people who identify as First Nations people particularly encouraged to apply. We are fortunate that two

members that identify as a First Nation person volunteered for a position on the RAP Working Group, as their guidance is invaluable in assisting us in establishing a RAP.

The RAP working group outlined below, supported by our Chief Executive Officer, Leadership team and broader staff and volunteers are proud to present the Reflect RAP document that will further guide the organisation in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and achieving meaningful reconciliation.

We have established a RAP Working Group that is meaningful in terms of its deliverability, as it includes the following positions:

- Chief Operating Officer
- Rural Health Tasmania Board Member
- No.34 Aboriginal Health Service Manager
- Psychosocial Programs Team Leader
- Eye and Ear Surgical Support Program Coordinator (No.34 Aboriginal Health Service)
- Aboriginal Wellbeing Worker (West Coast)
- Service Design and Development Officer

We would also like to acknowledge our RAP Champion – a title representative of a senior person within the organisation that is responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the RAP.

To ensure accountability in this process, we have awarded the position of Chief Operating Officer the title of RAP Champion.

Our Partnerships and Current Activities

Rural Health Tasmania proudly supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and has long participated in partnerships and activities that has demonstrated this support.

Below are examples of events that we are or have been involved in:

We hosted a Reconciliation Week event by engaging with Trowunna Aboriginal Cultural Services in partnership with Relationships Australia to run Aboriginal Healing workshops at No.34 Aboriginal Health Service.

Run events for 'Close The Gap' day where we invite Community and Service providers to celebrate. This is usually hosted in the gardens at No.34 Aboriginal Health Service, which includes a yarning circle.

Partnership with 360 Martial Arts and Fitness to run exercise groups and youth programs for Community.

Work collaboratively with the Pathway Shed where we run a Family Fun Day during school holidays open to service providers and all members of the Community to come and experience Cultural activities.

Work collaboratively with the Ulverstone Neighbourhood House and help facilitate Play group every Monday.

Celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (4th August) by running a cultural day open to all Community.

Work with Baptcare to run Horizon Fundamental group at No.34 Aboriginal Health Service

Work with Health Consumers Tasmania to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have their say about their health care needs.

Visit early learning and childcare centres such as Discovery Early Learning Centre to deliver cultural activities.

Run events during NAIDOC open to all Community.

Rural Health Tasmania is looking forward to implementing the RAP, so we can continue to develop and strengthen the existing relationships we have formed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

We also welcome forming new collaborative relationships with communities and being allies in ensuring the health care needs are being met for all communities. We will embrace any opportunities to share in aspects of culture and being a safe space and inclusive organisation for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Relationships			
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	Nov 2023	Lead: Service Design and Development Officer Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	Dec 2023	Service Design and Development Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2024	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	May 2024	Lead: No.34 Aboriginal Health Service Manager Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May 2024	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	July 2023	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	Dec 2023	Lead: Psychosocial Team Leader Support: RAPWG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	Dec 2023	Lead: Psychosocial Team Leader Support: RAP Working Group
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	Jan 2024	Service Design and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	Feb 2024	Service Design and Development Officer/ Human Resources

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Respect			
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>March 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p>	RAP Champion
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	<p>September 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p>	Aboriginal Wellbeing Worker
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	<p>July 2023, 24</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>First week in July 2023/24</p>	<p>Lead: No.34 Aboriginal Health Services Manager Support: RAP Working Group</p> <p>Lead: No.34 Aboriginal Health Services Manager Support: RAP Working Group</p> <p>Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group</p>



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Opportunities			
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	Feb 2024	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	March 2024	Lead: RAP Champion
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	March 2024	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	Sept 2023	RAP Champion

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Governance			
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	June 2024	Service Design and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	June 2024	Service Design and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	June 2024	Service Design and Development Officer
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	August 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAPWG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	Sept 2024	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. 	June 2024	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	July 2023	Service Design and Development Officer



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Governance			
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	July 2023	RAP Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 Sept Annually	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June Annually	Service Design and Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August Annually	Service Design and Development Officer
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	March 2024	Service Design and Development Officer





NO. 34 ABORIGINAL
HEALTH SERVICE

It was recognised that it was imperative for Rural Health Tasmania to involve the local First Nations people, organisations and communities in establishing our RAP and we acknowledge and thank those that have consulted with us, including:

- Reconciliation Tasmania
- Reconciliation Australia
- Dianne Baldock

Dianne Baldock identifies as a First Nations person with Trawoolaway descendants. Dianne has worked with the local Aboriginal communities across the North West Coast of Tasmania over many years and understands the importance of passing on the cultural knowledge to the younger generation to ensure culture is not lost.

- No.34 Aboriginal Health Service, including the Men's and Women's group participants, clients and staff.
- Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation

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