

NCN HEALTH

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

July 2023 - June 2024



NCN
Health | Nathalia
Cobram
Numurkah

Welcome

Our vision is for NCN Health to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage, cultures and spirituality are valued, respected and celebrated.

Acknowledgement of Country

NCN Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Yorta Yorta Nation and Bangarang Tribe and pays its respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

We affirm our commitment to reconciliation and we make it happen by strengthening partnerships and continuing our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NCN Health acknowledges that we need to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, staff and stakeholders to ensure that we meet community needs.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

Artwork Acknowledgement

Artist statement:

We step outside our own norm and things seem strange, uneasy or unfamiliar.

Though it's weird and wonderful, it is important that we do as this is the other part of you that you haven't experienced yet, the undiscovered becomes discovered. We all have something that we haven't found yet, a part of us that we haven't experienced. Think bigger than items like traveling or learning a new skill, think inner, your network of fibres. The deep listening isn't just looking at yourself in the mirror and asking questions, it is putting yourself on country and feeling what is right and what feels wrong. The unbalancing and balancing of your inner self. For this country has lived in this way, allowing things to flow and flourished and the communities that lived on this old country, living alongside the water ways and steams, looking, watching and listening. Listening not to the obvious sound of the flowing water but to themselves and where they belong on this country, as part of country. Always was, within you.



About the Artist:

From Shepparton, Troy Firebrace found himself painting Aboriginal designs on skateboards from a young age.

Since then, Troy has explored with different art mediums but eventually found his own style through his studies completing a Bachelor in Creative Arts, Major in Fine Art, then went on to complete his Master of Teaching Secondary at Bendigo University.

Troy artwork has been showcased through exhibitions held at galleries such as Kaiela Arts Shepparton, Melbourne Museum and Dudley House in Bendigo.

Troy has a wonderful career as an artist, but he is now also an Aboriginal Educator providing and developing Aboriginal based learning and lessons across Victoria.

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

It is a great privilege to present the first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) of NCN Health. NCN Health cares for diverse and rural communities and has campuses at Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process was activated in consultation with the local communities, individuals and organisations such as Many Mobs Indigenous Corporation. We are building relationships to develop our knowledge and experience with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and learn from their rich histories and knowledge. The NCN Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group was formed to ensure our journey towards deeper engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a priority.

It is essential that our staff have awareness of how to interact in a culturally appropriate way, that we all understand what needs to be done to improve health care and that we all focus on developing our relationships to help us have the right strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NCN Health is committed to providing opportunities to work and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, groups and businesses.

This first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is formed around the pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities and will now guide our initiatives and actions, our hearts and minds towards more positive outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the lands on which our health campuses are located and in the communities we provide health care.

I commend this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to all members of the NCN Health community and beyond, as we all move to progress reconciliation.



Jacque Phillips OAM
Chief Executive Officer

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

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

NCN Health 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 NCN Health 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 NCN Health, 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

We are a local, community focused rural health service

NCN Health is an amalgamated health service caring for diverse rural communities across the West Moira region.

We are a rural health service with a catchment area of Nathalia, Cobram, Numurkah and surrounding communities within the Moira Shire.

Our community is made up of many smaller communities and visitors with diverse needs based on location, background, age and other demographic factors. We care for all people of our community, including the most vulnerable and isolated.

Our health service was created on 1 July 2019, combining the services of three former health organisations (Nathalia District Hospital, Cobram District Health and Numurkah District Health Service) under a combined management and governance structure.

We care for our communities in many ways

We provide a range of safe, high-quality services to meet the needs of our communities across all life stages. Services delivered across our three campuses currently include:

- Urgent and hospital care
- Theatre
- Radiology
- Pathology Collection
- Transitional care
- X-ray and Ultrasound
- Dental and medical clinics
- Diabetes Education
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Exercise groups
- Planned Activity Groups
- Healthy Habits Group 3 Campuses
- Health Promotion
- Community Midwife
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Community Rehabilitation
- District Nursing Service
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Podiatry
- Footcare
- Chronic Disease Support and Management
- Geriatrics
- Palliative Care (Moira Palliative Care Service)
- Psychology, Psychiatry and Counselling
- Visiting Services (hearing, alcohol and other drugs, family violence, homelessness support, Centre Against Sexual Assault)
- Home Care Packages
- Residential aged care
- Social work
- NDIS



Our business Cont.

Our workforce

We are caring, capable and compassionate

Our workforce is caring, capable, compassionate and united in their pride for supporting our communities. We employ approximately 550 people across our three campuses in Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah. Our people work together to deliver safe, quality care. We engage with our people and empower them to continuously improve our service.

At the time this report was published, we employed 3 staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We actively encourage those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply for positions, and this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) includes new workforce development strategies to increase opportunities and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the NCN Health catchment and more broadly across the region.

Our Communities

We provide care for 18,000 people across the West Moira region.

NCN Health cares for rural communities across the West Moira region, which includes the major towns of Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah as well as surrounding communities, a catchment of approximately 18,000 people located within the Moira Shire, accounting for 60% of the Shire's population.

It is a region that encompasses the Traditional Lands of the Yorta Yorta Nation and Bangerang Tribe. The Traditional Owner groups have deep and ongoing cultural connection to these lands and heritage.

The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Moira Shire represents 2.1% of the total population. Within the NCN Health catchment area 465 people have identified as Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has increased by 38.8% from 2016. 2021 census data shows us that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is relatively young, the median for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is 24 years, up from 23 years in 2016, although noted a slight increase this is substantially younger than non-indigenous population for Moira Shire median age of 48 years. Of the people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 0.6% are speakers of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and 98.8% speak English at home.

NCN Health uses this demographic data to better understand the diversity of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient population for strategic and service planning purposes.

Our Reconciliation Journey

NCN Health has progressively increased the activities and opportunities within the service to acknowledge reconciliation and learn from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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As we take our next steps, it's an opportunity to reflect on how we have progressed:

- Worked with local Aboriginal Elders to build our knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enable us to be a more inclusive and culturally safe health service.
- Partnered with local Aboriginal Elders and the Cobram's Men's Shed to build wooden bases for display of The Australian National, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at each reception desk.
- Commenced a partnership with Many Mobs Indigenous Corporation in September 2022 to provide a safe space for a monthly support group, to have a yarn and a cuppa. The group is hosted by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for all people.
- The NCN Health Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee was formed in Feb 2021 under the sponsorship of the Director of Quality, Risk & Performance.
- The running of NAIDOC Week events within our Residential Aged Care Facilities in collaboration with Yorta Yorta Elder, Aunty Faye Lynam and her family.
- Developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusive Services Policy and a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy.
- Acknowledgement of Country messaging has been placed on all meeting agendas and email signatures.



- Renowned local Aboriginal Artist Troy Firebrace commissioned artwork for the Numurkah Campus main hospital foyer.
- NCN Health had held a health promotion stall at Dharnya Family Day
- NCN Health attended Many Mobs Indigenous Corporation Connections Walk 2022 aimed to bringing people together to share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples histories and cultures.
- NCN Health Staff also took part in Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training facilitated by Robynne Nelson to increase their skills and knowledge to work with Aboriginal people and communities in a more culturally appropriate and effective way, and gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures, health and the challenges and barriers to health equality.
- NCN Health signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Goulburn Valley Health for the provision of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer Service.



We celebrate the diverse community we serve and commit to working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to promote reconciliation.



Photo: Aunty Iris Troutman, CEO Many Mobs Indigenous Corporation & Gwen taking part in our monthly Yarn-Up.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Our first RAP as a newly formed amalgamated organisation commits us to our reconciliation vision through the achievement of specific deliverables. It builds the foundation for current initiatives and the development of respectful relationships to create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This RAP formalises and strengthens our commitment to reconciliation now and into the future.

NCN Health will ensure that engagement and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations will be undertaken in a respectful, ethical and transparent manner. We will strive to foster a culture of inclusion and cultural awareness. Our RAP will be championed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead.

NCN Health intends to develop a Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) and actively collaborate with the community to drive the implementation of our RAP. NCN Health has developed this RAP to guide our organisation's activities and deepen our engagement with our diverse communities to provide local, personalised and accessible care close to home. NCN Health aims to reach into communities to drive health promotion, education and disease prevention to address leading risk factors for chronic disease such as smoking, obesity and insufficient physical activity which occur at rates significantly higher than state averages. Mental health issues are also on the rise as a result of recent major external events impacting the region such as drought, bushfire and pandemic.

It is important for us to respond to the overall shifts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities health needs while respecting their local needs and cultures. We will learn from, and walk together with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to provide a more inclusive and safe health care service. Through our activities we will build the knowledge and understanding of our Leadership Team and staff to understand the cultures, the histories and to build appreciation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is important to create ownership of this RAP at multiple levels of our organisation. Through regular reporting and consultation, we can celebrate our achievements and identify gaps. This RAP, and its actions, align with our organisational values of Respect, Accountability and Partnership by working together with Aboriginal community-controlled and community-led organisations, Aboriginal Communities and our staff, to promote and provide safe, high-quality care that improves the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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 that we can connect with on our journey.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Reconciliation Working Group
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff and community.	May 2024	Communications Coordinator
	Encourage and support RAP Working Group members, staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June, 2024	CEO
	RWG to design and organise a minimum of one internal NRW event that is open to all staff and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities at NCN Health.	27 May – 3 June, 2024	Communications Coordinator
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Promote NCN Health Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	July 2023	CEO Support: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Reconciliation Working Group
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Reconciliation Working Group
	Provide regular updates to staff and stakeholders on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through communications, such as NACCHO Communique good news health stories.	December 2023	Director of Quality and Risk

Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2023	Director People and Culture
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	October 2023	Director People and Culture
5. Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the organisation's catchment.	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Profile document analysing health service organisation data and publicly available demographic datasets to understand the diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient population and inform the continuous improvement initiatives and activities.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Rural Health Academic Network Coordinator
	Continue to promote and educate staff of the procedures and protocols on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification to ensure that higher identification rates are achieved through training for staff, resources, system review	October 2023	Education Coordinator

Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learnings.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Develop, review and implement an ongoing program of cultural awareness and cultural competency training	August 2023	Director People and Culture
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2024	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Leadership Team
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. Circulate NAIDOC Week resources and materials to staff and community	July 2023	Communication Coordinator
	Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2023	Communication Coordinator
	Ensure Executive and RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2023	CEO & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Encourage staff to celebrate NAIDOC Week across the health service and contribute to the delivery of our RAP.	July 2023	Communication Coordinator
9. Create a welcoming environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe, comfortable, accepted	Seek input and Involve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and communities in the design and creation of a welcoming environment.	November 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead Support: Reconciliation Working Group
	Obtain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input on infrastructure design, landscaping, furnishings and use of spaces	February 2024	Director of Operations

Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Create a welcoming environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe, comfortable, accepted	Create a procedure to provide guidance for RWG and staff to create and sustain comfortable and friendly spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with art, visual aids and resources.	March 2024	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Obtain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input on infrastructure design, landscaping, furnishings and use of spaces	April 2024	Director Corporate Services
	Ensure staff are aware of the Procedure and referral pathway to Aboriginal Liaison Officers. Continue to promote the Aboriginal Liaison Officer Service within our communities.	September 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead

Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Build an understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. Acknowledging that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will wish to identify.	November 2023	Director People and Culture
	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	May 2024	Director People and Culture
	Investigate increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed at NCN Health through advertising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and employment services, as well as funding for trainee programs.	June 2024	Director People and Culture Support: Rural Director of Medical Services
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March 2024	Director of Operations
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2024	Director of Operations

Governance & Reporting



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form an RWG to govern RAP implementation.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Draft Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on RWG.	December 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resources needs for RAP implementation.	July 2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2023	Director of Quality, Risk & Performance
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	October 2023	Director of Quality, Risk & Performance
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Reporting on RAP performance as well as improvement initiatives to the highest level of governance, clinicians and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and community.	Quarterly Sept 2023 Dec 2023 Mar 2024 Jun 2024	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	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	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	1 August, annually	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
15. Continue our Reconciliation Journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	1 April 2024	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead



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