



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



CHALLENGE
Community Services

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Oct 2023 - Oct 2024

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Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of Reconciliation, Challenge Community Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this country, and their connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respects to all First Nations Peoples, their cultures and customs and to Elders past, present and emerging.

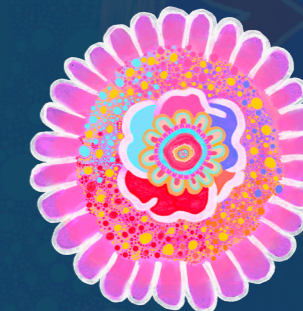


About The Artist

Hi, I am Wayde Clarke, I am a proud Wiradjuri man, identifying as He/Him and Gay. I am mainly a digital artist who has only recently started selling art by accident. I have always drawn and made art for therapy, until someone came across some of my drawings and wanted to buy a few prints, that's where the journey begins.

My artistic style is modern/contemporary and I want my art to celebrate the minority, make people feel good and make it fun. I always strive to create something with a positive message and have a bright colour flair within the art.

I am excited to see where my journey is going to take me. I really enjoyed working on these prints for the team at Challenge Community Services. I wanted it to be fun, inviting and welcoming. After reading about Challenge Community Services and understanding the core values and principles I was honored and had a lot of pleasure creating these pieces.



Values



Integrity



Partnership



People Focused



Photo by Johan Mouchet

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Challenge Community Services to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Challenge Community Services joins a network of more than 2,500 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 Challenge Community Services 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 Challenge Community Services, 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

It is with great pleasure that I present Challenge Community Service's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan, which marks our steadfast commitment to work in a meaningful and respectful way with First Nations peoples and to work in collaboration and partnership with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities.

For 65 years Challenge Community Services have been providing services to local communities, often in regional and remote areas. We have remained true to ensuring we are locally connected and meet the needs of the communities we partner with. Our intent has always been to work with and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In many ways the development of our RAP consolidates on that commitment and gives Challenge Community Services an ability to be ambitious in the ways we partner in the future. I am truly excited by our continued journey, being accountable for our commitments, and what experiences we can jointly create in the future.

Our 12 month Reflect RAP will see us build and strengthen relationships internally and externally with First Nations peoples, grow our



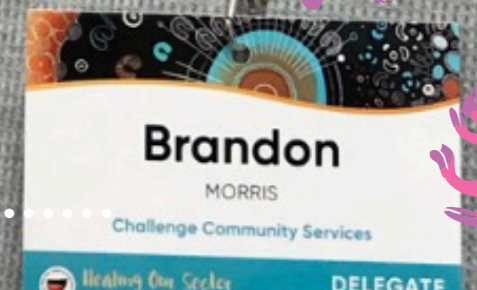
understanding and respect for First Nations culture and history and enable us to reflect on our current policies and practices to create facilitators that enable us to achieve our RAP aims as we move forward on this journey.

We are committed to the formal reconciliation journey through the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan and we look forward to furthering our partnerships and activities.

Stephen Doley
Chief Executive Officer
Challenge Community Services



Brandon "BJ" Morris at the AbSec 2023
NSW Aboriginal Child & Family Conference



Our Business

Challenge Community Services has provided innovative and people-focussed services to the community for 65 years. When a small group of concerned parents meet in Tamworth Town Hall back in 1958 and formed the Tamworth and District Handicapped Children's Association and school, the idea of becoming one of the largest community support services operating in New South Wales (and now expanding into Queensland) was probably beyond their wildest dreams. Challenge Community Services now supports thousands of people in over 100 communities in NSW and QLD.

Challenge Community Services is a not-for-profit organisation with a widespread footprint that offers regional and metropolitan communities services across Disability, Foster Care, Allied Health and supported employment for people with disability. Challenge Community Services supports thousands of people in over 100 regional and metropolitan communities throughout NSW and the Ipswich area in QLD.

We run our respective services from 118 separate sites throughout NSW and Southeast QLD. Our organisation is built on a strong workforce of 1063 people, including over 90 employees with disability, and are aware of 5 First Nations staff in our organisation. We are seeking to understand current staffing better by implementing HR processes that enable staff to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, which will provide us with more accurate information.

Our Disability Services are supported by the Australian Government NDIS scheme and include Supported Independent Living (SIL), Specialist Disability Accommodation, drop-in supports as well as short to medium respite accommodation. Our community Day Programs offer participants social interaction opportunities through activities and events as well as support to build independence with important life skills.

Challenge Foster Care focuses on providing children and young people with a sense of belonging, identity and connection to community. Our carers are integral to a child's care team and Challenge Community Services connects carers to a range of community supports to best support children and young people in care.

Our Allied Health team includes a range of qualified and experienced practitioners that provide therapeutic and behaviour support services for families, children and adults. Therapy supports are crucial for many NDIS participants and our team help people to improve their daily living, relationships and health and wellbeing. Our Allied Health services also include mental health support for families and adults accessible via a Mental Health Care Plan under Medicare.

Challenge Business Services offers supported employment opportunities for people with disability. Our open market business enterprises provide important employment opportunities to people in the North West and upper Hunter regions. By providing opportunities for employment we assist over 100 employees with invaluable independence and immeasurable benefits to mental health and wellbeing.

Our Purpose

We care about enriching every interaction, no matter how big or small, to make a positive difference in the lives of all members of our community. We do this because we are passionate about realising the potential of all people who we support.

Our Values

Challenge Community Services (CCS) is an established not-for-profit. Our values celebrate inclusiveness and opportunity. Our core values are:



To create a world where everyone belongs, everyone grows, and everyone makes a contribution.

Challenge Community Services also implemented a First Nations Practice Framework in 2021, which continues to guide our work. Our First Nations Practice Framework outlines our key principles of Cultural Safety, Accountability and Transparency, Self-Determination, Partnership and Support and Sustainability, and supports our people to work collaboratively with First Nations peoples in our day to day work.

Our RAP

Challenge Community Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We also acknowledge the past and commit to working with First Nations peoples to improve outcomes for First Nations staff, clients, families and communities through a continuously improving approach to providing culturally safe practices and service provision (First Nations Practice Framework, Challenge Community Services).

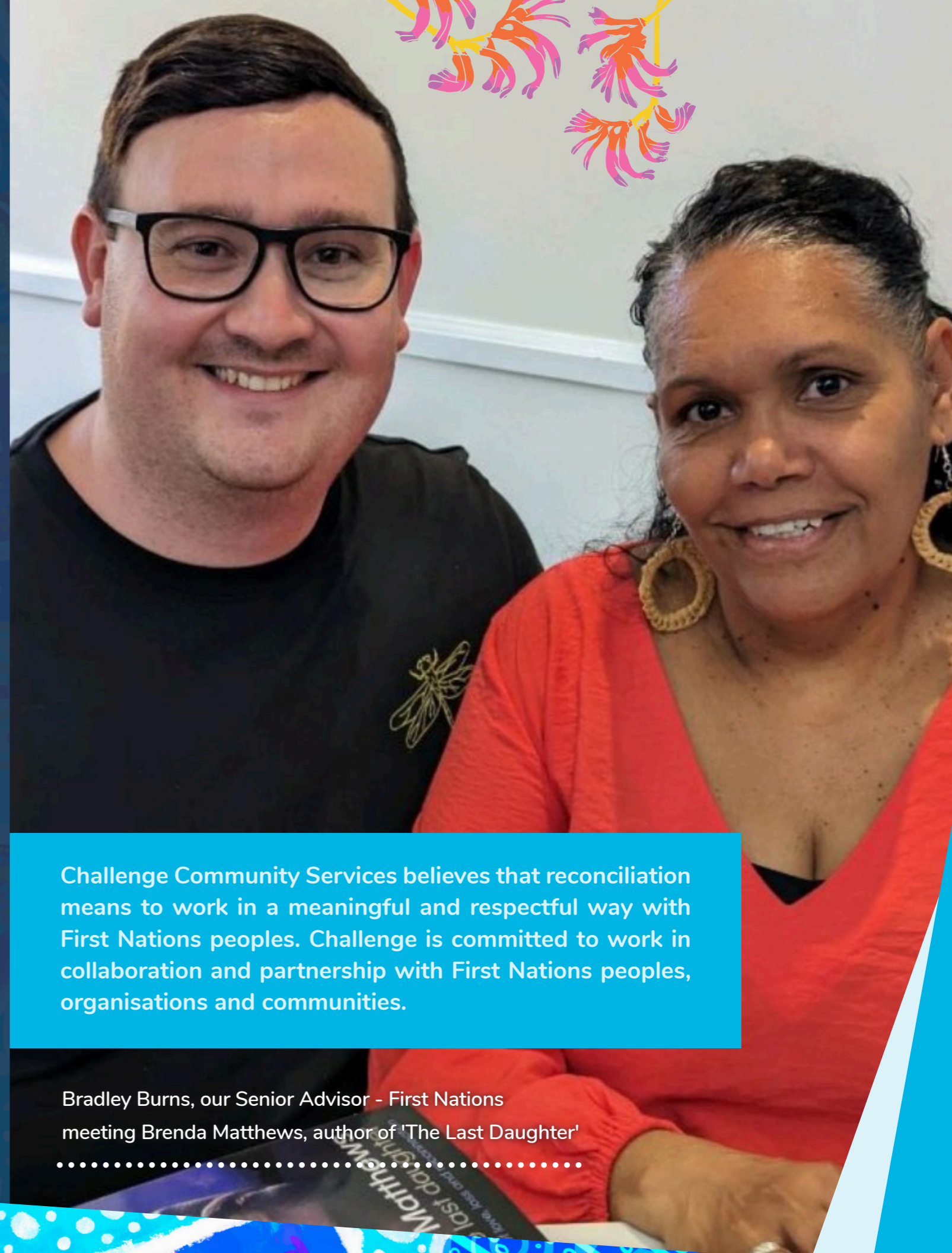
We recognise First Nations peoples as the first Australians, with unique cultures, languages and spiritual relationships to the land and seas. We respect the values, cultures, heritages and histories of First Nations peoples and will endeavour to promote this respect in the work that we do. We are committed to working in ways that are supportive and empowering of First Nations peoples and their families and communities.

We are developing a Reconciliation Action Plan and stepping forward in our journey of reconciliation because we believe that active commitment is crucial in delivering change to the world in which we work and to ensure accountability in delivering tangible and substantive benefits for First Nations peoples. Our vision for reconciliation is for Australians to work together to embrace unity and healing between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, that enables equality and equity for opportunities, historical acceptance of our shared histories and values positive race relations.

In the context of our organisation this represents the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples right to self-determination to make decisions that affect them, their families and communities and provide equal opportunity to create a world where everyone belongs, everyone grows and everyone makes a contribution.

In our vision for reconciliation, Challenge Community Services will:

- Partner with First Nations staff, clients, families and communities to support our journey of reconciliation and to achieve our aim to improve outcomes for all and provide culturally safe practices and service provision.
- Embed culturally safe practice into recruitment and retention processes, as well as into existing policies, programs, procedures, procurement and services.
- As an organisation, as individuals and teams, reflect on our own level of competency in cultural safety and identify required improvements throughout our journey.
- Uphold the right of First Nations peoples to self-determination and autonomy by respectful engagement and shared decision making with First Nations communities and organisations.
- Establish a relationship of trust and respect with First Nations staff, clients and communities.
- Support our people to undertake ongoing cultural safety through professional and personal development.



Challenge Community Services believes that reconciliation means to work in a meaningful and respectful way with First Nations peoples. Challenge is committed to work in collaboration and partnership with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities.

Bradley Burns, our Senior Advisor - First Nations meeting Brenda Matthews, author of 'The Last Daughter'

Our Partnerships & Current Activities

Challenge Community Services has been able to increase partnerships and relationships with First Nations peoples and organisations over the last few years with the implementation of our First Nations Practice Framework in 2021. Some examples of this include:

- Actively working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in supporting the transition of First Nations children in our Foster Care service
- The piloting of a program to increase employment outcomes for First Nations peoples in rural NSW
- The delivery and roll out of the First Nations Practice Framework in 2021, and subsequent changes including cultural visibility, cultural training for all staff and policies and procedures relating to cultural safety
- Delivery and coordination of Start Up Deadly, an entrepreneurship program for First Nations young people which was facilitated internally and through three partnered Aboriginal organisations in Tamworth, Newcastle, Sydney and Dubbo.

Challenge Community Services also engages daily with internal Cultural Support Consultants. Our Cultural Support Consultants are First Nations peoples, and we currently have three consultants spanning our Foster Care service across the state. In addition to this, we also have our Senior Advisor - First Nations who provides high-level consultation to the wider organisation. Our consultants have been working with our teams to support our sites in the delivery of our services, as well as in supporting our community connections locally. This includes connecting us with and supporting us in experiencing First Nations cultures on country and being led by local First Nations peoples. These experiences and relationships build on our knowledge of First Nations cultures which enables us to build our sphere of influence more broadly on our reconciliation journey.

Challenge Community Services is committed to the formal reconciliation journey through the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan and we look forward to furthering our partnerships and activities.

Start Up Deadly is an entrepreneurship program for young First Nations people either in or who have been in Out-of-home care, have a disability or struggle to seek mainstream employment opportunities. The program ran from July 2021 to October 2022 and sought to establish new forms of employment options according to strengths, interests and abilities of the young people involved.

Participants overwhelmingly provided positive feedback during program evaluation with the Department of Social Services, and external evaluation partners from the University of Newcastle and Macquarie University. Positive social interactions were palpable characteristics of Start Up Deadly, including the interactions between participants, facilitators and industry mentors.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	February 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Marketing & Communications Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2024	RAP Working Group Chair
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2024	Marketing & Communications Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	May 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	February 2024	Marketing & Communications Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	June 2024	Manager Quality Safeguarding and Practice
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	July 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	July 2024	General Manager People & Safety

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June 2024	RAP Working Group Chair Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2024	OD Advisor
	Conduct a review of the First Nations Practice Framework to bring in line with RAP goals and simplify the principles we work within and develop our strategy moving forward.	July 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
6. 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.	June 2024	RAP Working Group Chair
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2024	RAP Working Group Chair
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	August 2024	State Manager Foster Care General Manager Disability Services General Manager Allies Health General Manager Business Services
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	July 2024	State Manager Foster Care General Manager Disability Services General Manager Allies Health General Manager Business Services
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations Marketing & Communications Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Marketing & Communications Manager
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	July 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	RAP Working Group Chair

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	August 2024	General Manager People & Safety Recruitment Team Leader
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2024	General Manager People & Safety Recruitment Team Leader OD Advisor
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	August 2024	General Manager People & Safety Recruitment Team Leader
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2023	Recruitment Team Leader
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2024	General Manager People & Safety Manager Quality Safeguarding and Practice
	Investigate possibility of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Member.	January 2024	CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	April 2024	General Manager People & Safety
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2024	General Manager People & Safety Senior Advisor – First Nations

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	February 2024	CEO Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2023	In House Counsel
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	February 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2024	General Manager Finance
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2024	CEO
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	December 2023	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2024	General Manager IT and Digitisation
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	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	Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Senior Advisor – First Nations
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	CEO
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	February 2024 June 2024 October 2024	CEO General Manager People & Safety Marketing & Communications Manager
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2024	Marketing & Communications Manager
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2024	Senior Advisor – First Nations





CHALLENGE

Community Services

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