



**THE WOMEN'S  
INNOVATE  
RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

April 2022 – April 2024



the women's  
the royal women's hospital





**Pictured:** Aunty Gina Bundle, Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam, Aboriginal Health Liaison Unit standing in front of an artwork, located at the Women's Parkville site, titled "Woman Gives Birth to Life" by artist Di Ford.



# OUR VISION

The Women's vision for reconciliation is for culturally safe healthcare that is free from racism and united by deep respect for First Nations peoples and their continuing connection to Country – from Birth to Dreaming.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Royal Women's Hospital acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nations, the Traditional Owners of the Country on which our sites at Parkville and Sandringham stand and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

The Women's is committed to improving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families and we recognise the fundamental significance of cultural traditions, beliefs and connection to Country for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the importance of kinship and family structures as a cohesive force that binds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we recognise their cultures, community connection, and self-determination as critical protective factors for wellbeing.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank members of our Aboriginal Advisory Committee who reviewed and provided cultural advice on our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

## ARTWORK STORY

The Women's Innovate RAP features an original design by Marcus Lee, creative director of Marcus Lee Design – a creative agency certified by Supply Nation.

Developed in close consultation with the Women's Reconciliation Working Group, patients and staff, the artwork represents a female figure whose uplifted arms are a celebration of empowerment and resilience. Manna gum leaves symbolise strength of culture and connection to families and communities. The six circular forms surrounding the figure represent the values of Trust, Safety, Inclusiveness, Empowerment, Commitment and Connection. The central circular form within the figure is a symbol of the Women's as the meeting place for the care and protection of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, their families and staff at the Women's.



# FOREWORD

The Royal Women's Hospital is committed to achieving a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

We stand together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; working in partnership to ensure that all women, babies, their families and communities achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

We work with purpose and strive to be a culturally welcoming place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families, staff and volunteers feel safe, supported, respected and empowered.

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan builds on the foundational work of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, implemented between February 2020 and May 2021. Despite the significant workplace disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our Reconciliation Action Plan remained a priority and we were pleased to deliver on all actions and deliverables.

There is much work still to be done on our reconciliation journey.

Our commitment to reconciliation is essential given the complex history of the Women's. Between 1910 and 1970, under government policies of the day, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies were removed from their mothers in our hospital.

It is with deep and sincere regret that we apologise for the continued trauma, loss and grief we have caused Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, their families, kinship and communities, as we ensure that the wrongs of the past are never repeated.

Through this, the Women's second Reconciliation Action Plan, we look forward to:

- strengthening our relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, consumers, staff, volunteers, organisations and stakeholders to inform the expansion of our existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and explore opportunities and collaborations to develop new programs and services.
- promoting culturally safe practices across our organisation to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive high quality, accessible, and culturally appropriate care.
- increasing and improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities and providing a culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteers.
- increasing our collective understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, customs, and identities.

We walk with First Nations peoples in a movement for a better future.



**Professor Sue Matthews**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Lisa Lynch**  
Chief Operating Officer,  
RAP Executive Sponsor

# RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO STATEMENT

Reconciliation Australia commends the Royal Women's Hospital on the formal endorsement of its 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 close to 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 Women's 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 Women's will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to the Women's 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 Women's 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 Women's will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

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

Congratulations to the Women's on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





the women's  
the royal women's hospital

People caring for people  
RAMSAY HEALTHCARE  
Frances Perry House

**Pictured:** Baggarook Caseload Midwives Storm Henry, Evelyn Burns and Paras Loupis.

# OUR BUSINESS

Founded in 1856, the Women's continues to lead the way in women's and newborn healthcare – delivering specialist maternity, neonatal, gynaecology, oncology, reproductive and sexual health services to women in Melbourne, as well as those with complex needs from across Victoria and Australia.

We are also a leader and advocate in areas of women's health that have long been overlooked or stigmatised – abortion, endometriosis, family violence, female genital mutilation, menopause, incontinence, mental health disorders, sexual assault and substance use in pregnancy.

Our campuses in Parkville and Sandringham are on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nations. Our community clinics operate out of Footscray on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and the Bunurong peoples, and Strathmore and Fawkner on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

As a state-wide tertiary hospital, the Women's is a significant provider of education and helps to train the next generation of highly-skilled midwives, nurses,

obstetricians, neonatologists and other specialists. Expert training also extends into communities with programs delivered to local hospitals and primary health care services across the state.

Internationally, the Women's is recognised for its clinical expertise and excellence in research. Our 10 Research Centres explore the full spectrum of women's and newborn health. From pioneering IVF technology leading to Australia's first IVF baby in 1980 and, advances in newborn medicine to increase survival rates for sick and premature babies – the Women's is committed to improving the lives of this generation and all who follow.

## OUR PEOPLE

The Women's employs 2,588 staff, of which 88 per cent are women. We are proud to employ 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Our Reconciliation Action Plan outlines our commitment and approach to increasing this number and improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.



# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

As a specialist hospital for women and babies, the Women's has a unique and specific role to play in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan helped guide us through the first steps of our reconciliation journey – building our cultural awareness, celebrating and learning more about the world's oldest continuing culture, establishing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and putting processes and structures in place to effectively govern our plan.

From the beginning, our people have been highly engaged with and committed to the Women's reconciliation journey. An expression of interest process in late 2018 for staff to join the Reconciliation Working Group was met with an overwhelming response. A bi-monthly Reconciliation Action Plan Work Session and other sub working groups were established in early 2020 to ensure everyone could contribute.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan was implemented between February 2020 and May 2021. Throughout the significant workplace disruption and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reconciliation Working Group and sub working groups maintained a strong focus on progressing and successfully achieving all deliverables in the plan, on time. Reconciliation Australia advised the Women's we had successfully closed off our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan in July 2021.

Highlights from our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan implementation include:

- launching four online Cultural Awareness Training modules, including a specific module for managers, with 495 staff and managers completing the training
- successfully implementing our Aboriginal Employment Plan (2019-2021)
- establishing the Kareeta Networking and Mentoring Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- embedding and educating staff on an updated Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country Guideline
- celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week virtually with some wonderful online activities

- recruiting 100 staff from across the hospital as Cultural Safety Champions who participated in intensive cultural competency training and will support the cultural safety capability of staff
- publishing a guideline for staff outlining principles and steps to enable effective and culturally respectful engagement, consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal health organisations, services and communities
- developing a business case to inform future initiatives and advocacy required to make the Women's more welcoming and culturally safe in our clinical spaces and public areas.

Beyond the scope of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, in 2020 we identified the need to improve how we ask patients if they identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and how we document this in our electronic medical record. In response, in early 2021 we formed our Reconciliation Action Plan Data Working Group. The group met monthly to develop and implement an action plan to improve how the Women's collects, documents, reports and interprets data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. This work will continue to be a priority in our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, so we can better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies and improve and expand our existing services and programs.

In the Women's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, we seek to continue to listen, learn, strengthen relationships with communities and work together to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies, families, communities and staff.

Development and implementation of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is overseen by our **Aboriginal Advisory Committee**, which consists of a small, key group of Elders, respected community advisors and consumers who meet quarterly.





Our **Innovate RAP Implementation Committee**, which consists of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, is chaired by the Women's Chief Operating Officer (our Reconciliation Action Plan Champion and Executive Sponsor) and meets bi-monthly. The role of the Innovate RAP Implementation Committee is to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RAP. Members are responsible for and/or involved in the implementation of specific actions and deliverables. The Women's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan vision, principles, actions and deliverables were co-created by members of the committee, members of our Reconciliation Working Group and the Women's senior leadership team.

In addition, an **Aboriginal Employment Plan Working Group**, which consists of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, supports the implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan employment actions and deliverables.

A second sub-working group formed in late 2020; the **Wominjeka Working Group** met until mid-2021 to support and advise how to make our physical spaces more culturally welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and visitors.

Our **Reconciliation Action Plan Data Working Group** works to improve how we identify, collect, interpret, report and use patient data.

See [page 24](#) for our Reconciliation Action Plan governance structure and a list of members of our Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Innovate RAP Implementation Committee and the Reconciliation Working Group. Members of our staff Reconciliation Working Group met from April 2019 until December 2021. The group led the successful development and implementation of our Reflect RAP and the development of this Innovate RAP.

# OUR PRINCIPLES

## Self-determination

Advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right of self-determination, to determine their political status, and pursue their economic, social and cultural interests

## Historical acceptance

Integrate understandings of and acknowledge of past laws, practices and policies that have deeply affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and promote a future built on truth, justice and healing

## Relationships and partnerships

Promote strong, reciprocal relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, communities, Elders, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, and with our partners, including those in the Parkville Precinct

## Cultural respect and safety

Create a culturally safe and respectful environment for women, families and staff, through a culturally competent workforce, and by celebrating and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, customs, and identities

## Holistic approach to healthcare

Provide healthcare that recognises the diversity and breadth of concepts of health across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – that includes mental, physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing – and is interconnected with kinship, community, traditional knowledge, traditional healing, and Country

## Health equity

Promote health equity to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities attain optimal health and wellbeing

## Community owned and led

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led and owned initiatives and solutions

## Culturally appropriate healthcare

Provide culturally appropriate, accessible, integrated and sustainable healthcare that is responsive to the cultural norms and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies

## Evidence and strength-based approaches

Develop strength-based, evidence-informed models of care, such as Aboriginal Birthing on Country Maternity Care

## Indigenous knowledge

Promote Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the world that are embedded in community practices, languages, rituals and relationships





# OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

---

## Working in partnership to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes

The Women's has a number of partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, including the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) and Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and continues to build strong relationships with local and regional organisations and communities.

---

## Badjurr-Bulok Wilam

The Women's provides culturally sensitive services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families at Badjurr-Bulok Wilam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Families Place. Badjurr-Bulok Wilam means 'home of many women' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people. The service offers cultural support and advocacy for women and families accessing hospital services, referral to specialist and community services, and practical assistance such as support with accommodation, transport and planning for hospital discharge.

---

## Baggarrook Caseload Midwifery Program

Developed in partnership with VACCHO and the Judith Lumley Centre at LaTrobe University, the Women's provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with greater access to Caseload midwifery care, considered the 'gold standard' of maternity care, during their pregnancy and child birthing experience.

Between March 2017, when the Baggarrook Caseload Program began, and December 2020, more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies received one-to-one midwifery care, compared to six in the preceding three years. Similar models of care have found improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their babies, including fewer pre-term births, fewer small babies and increased breastfeeding.

The program also offers Baggarrook Gathering, a monthly yarnning circle, giving new mums and mums-to-be a chance to meet other Aboriginal families, talk about pregnancy and birthing, and share and explore cultural birthing experiences.

In 2019, the program received the Victorian Public Healthcare Award for improving Aboriginal health. An evaluation of the program will be released in 2022.

---

## Koori Maternity Services: Maternity Update Program

The Women's Koori Maternity Services: Maternity Update Program is a one-day workshop that aims to equip Koori Maternity Services' midwives and Aboriginal Health Workers across Victoria with the knowledge to provide clinically safe and culturally appropriate antenatal care for women in the community. The program, developed in collaboration with Victorian Koori Maternity Services Midwives, supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through pregnancy and childbirth and increases maternity care providers' knowledge about maternity care.

---

## You and Your Boorai: Taking Care During Pregnancy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities value, respect and care for mothers and boorais, the word for 'baby' or 'child' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people. 'You and Your Boorai: Taking Care During Pregnancy' is a resource developed by the Women's in partnership with VAHS, VACCHO, Njernda Aboriginal Corporation and Echuca Regional Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families who are affected by alcohol and other drugs. 'You and Your Boorai' aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with relevant information, advice and references to ensure they receive the support they need to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. The project was funded by the Victorian Government's Koolin Balit Aboriginal health strategy.

---

## Treaty in Victoria

Victoria is the first Australian State or Territory to commit to negotiating a Treaty with its First Peoples. Treaty is a negotiated agreement that will formally recognise and celebrate Aboriginal Victorians' unique status, rights and cultures, promotes reconciliation and foster shared pride, address wrongs and assist in healing past injustices. In recognition of the importance of Treaty, the Women's supported our Badjurr-Bulok Wilam Coordinator and Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer, Aunty Gina Bundle to participate in the Treaty consultation process and present the Treaty Possum Skin Cloak to the first meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria in 2019. In 2020, Aunty Gina was inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in recognition of her dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal women, babies and families.



---

## Culturally significant events

The Women's holds annual cultural events to celebrate the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and acknowledge and commemorate past injustices to promote healing and reconciliation. This includes events to mark NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day.

---

## Improving staff cultural awareness

The Women's is committed to building cultural awareness and cultural safety to ensure positive experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families in our care, and provide a supportive and positive environment for all our employees, students and volunteers. Staff are encouraged to complete online Aboriginal Cultural Awareness eLearning modules, developed by the Wandeat Bangoongagat Project Group with support from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services in 2020. These modules are tailored to include information specific to the Women's. Since the launch of the online modules in July 2020, 17.98 per cent of our staff had completed them by 31 June 2021 (a total of 495 staff).

Koorie Heritage Trust also delivered Cultural Competency Training to 100 Cultural Safety Champions from across the hospital between May and July 2021. Cultural Safety Champions support and raise the profile of reconciliation at the Women's, educate and encourage change at a local level and support the cultural safety capability of staff.

---

## Aboriginal Employment Plan (including our Graduate and Cadetship Program)

Since 2012, the Women's has developed Aboriginal Employment Plans in line with the Victorian Government's commitment in Kareeta Yirramboi to improve the employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The Women's strives to advance employment opportunities through a number of dedicated programs. These include the Graduate Nurse and Midwifery Program, Victorian Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship Program, transition to specialty practice programs, and priority clinical placement for nursing and midwifery students.

These programs collaborate with cadets to identify their professional development goals and offers additional supports, including assistance with application processes, scholarship opportunities, culturally appropriate support, and professional and peer development activities. Following the programs, cadets are encouraged to maintain contact with the Women's, and often mentor new cadets.

---

## Kareeta Networking and Mentoring Group

In 2020, the Women's launched the Kareeta Networking and Mentoring Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Kareeta is the Gundi tjmara word for 'grow'. Facilitated by Badjurr-Bulok Wilam Coordinator and Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer, Aunty Gina Bundle, this informal group allows staff to share their experience, support each other and discuss professional development opportunities.

## OUR HISTORY

The Women's has a complex history. In the context of prevailing government policies, the Women's participated in the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies from their mothers between 1910 and 1970. We recognise these generations of children removed under these policies and institutional practices as the Stolen Generations, and we recognise the significant strength, resilience and resistance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

On National Sorry Day 2008, the Women's former Chief Executive Officer, Dale Fisher made a formal apology on behalf of the Board and staff to the Stolen Generations, and First Nations women and their families for the hospital's past policies and practices. The following apology was in recognition of this history and offered with sincere regret for the past and continued trauma, loss and grief that it has caused Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

*On behalf of staff, past and present, of the Royal Women's Hospital I say sorry for the suffering and hurt of the Stolen Generations, their descendants and the families left behind.*

*I make this apology to Aboriginal women and their children, their husbands, their partners, cousins, aunts and uncles, who suffered as a result of the policies and practices conducted at this hospital.*

*I apologise for the actions, which caused needless anguish, guilt and confusion and has left a legacy of anger and pain, as well as distrust of the hospital. There is no more fitting time, as we leave the site where these practices occurred, to acknowledge that whatever the intention of staff, the severing of that most deepest of bonds, between a mother and her baby, has had cruel and lasting consequences for Aboriginal women and their families.*

*I hope that this apology can be accepted by the Aboriginal community, that an honest reckoning can become the basis of a new relationship between the Women's and our Aboriginal community, which builds trust, confidence, health and wellbeing.*

– Dale Fisher, the Women's former CEO, 26 May 2008





# RELATIONSHIPS

The Women's is committed to strong, reciprocal relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders and organisations. We are acutely aware that to improve health outcomes and achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we must build strong, genuine and meaningful relationships with communities. It is only through these relationships and partnering with and listening to what our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community tell us, that we will be able to provide culturally inclusive, responsive and respectful health care and a culturally safe workplace.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations</b>	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2022	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2022	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and like-minded organisations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform the potential expansion of our existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services.</li> <li>• explore opportunities and collaborations to develop new programs and services.</li> </ul>	December 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	Promote Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Innovate RAP Implementation Committee members to participate in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2022 & 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Encourage and support all staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2022 and 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Organise at least one internal NRW event each year.	27 May - 3 June, 2022 and 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Register the Women's NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2022 & 2023	Chief Communications Officer

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</b>	Develop and implement strategies to engage all staff in reconciliation.	December 2022 and December 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Include an overview of the RAP as part of staff induction processes.	December 2022	Director People and Patient Experience
	Encourage partner organisations to develop a RAP.	December 2022 and December 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	March 2023	Director Social Model of Health
	Share stories of successes and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, staff and programs internally and externally.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies</b>	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	September 2022 and September 2023	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	November 2022	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	November 2022	Director People and Patient Experience
	Educate all staff on the effects of racism on colleagues, patients, families, communities the Women's supports and the wider healthcare system.	May 2023	Director People and Patient Experience



# RESPECT

The Women's recognises and respects the fundamental significance of cultural traditions, beliefs, kinship and connection to Country for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We also recognise that we have varying skills and knowledge about working in a culturally sensitive way across the organisation. We will support our staff to increase their understanding through cultural learning, so we are better able to demonstrate our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, protocols and cultural customs. This is important as it will enable the Women's to be a culturally safe and supportive workplace and provide culturally safe and respectful care.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning</b>	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2022	Director People and Patient Experience
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	November 2022	Director People and Patient Experience
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	June 2023	Director People and Patient Experience
	Provide opportunities for Innovate RAP Implementation Committee members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June 2023	Director People and Patient Experience
	Explore local cultural immersion opportunities for staff.	December 2023	Director People and Patient Experience
<b>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</b>	Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2022 and June 2023	Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners.	December 2022	Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Amend meeting agenda templates to include information on the delivery of an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners at the commencement of important meetings.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Audit digital and print communications to identify opportunities to implement recognition of Country and Traditional Owners.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week and recognising other dates of significance annually</b>	Provide an event or other opportunity for Innovate RAP Implementation Committee members and other leaders and staff to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022 and July 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	April 2022 and April 2023	Director People and Patient Experience
	Promote and encourage all staff to participate in external NAIDOC events.	First week in July, 2022 & 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Internally and externally recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance annually, including National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.	May 2022 and May 2023	Chief Communications Officer
<b>8. Create a culturally welcoming physical environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>	Implement initiatives to create more welcoming and inclusive environments through culturally appropriate imagery, art, and other acknowledgements.	July 2022 and July 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Advocate for philanthropic funding to create culturally welcoming environments across the Women's property portfolio.	November 2022 and November 2023	Executive Director Philanthropy and Community Investment
<b>9. Design and deliver culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies</b>	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led review and design of new services and models of care.	November 2022 and November 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Implement our Strengthening Cultural Safety of Family Violence Action Plan and continue to strengthen, prioritise and evaluate our response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors.	December 2023	Director Social Model of Health
	Develop a business case to expand and enhance our Caseload Midwifery Program, including our Baggarrook Program, to increase our capacity to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies.	June 2022	Director Maternity Services & Manager Caseload Midwifery
	Develop a business case to enhance and potentially expand Badjurr-Bulok Wilam and other existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs to increase our capacity to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies.	June 2023	Director Social Model of Health
	Advocate for government and philanthropic funding to support and expand existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services.	July 2022 and July 2023	Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director Philanthropy and Community Investment

# OPPORTUNITIES

The Women's is committed to increasing opportunities for meaningful employment and equity in health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses. As an employer and health service, we recognise that there are many opportunities and ways for us to partner with our patients, staff, suppliers and partners, to improve access to our services, increase supplier diversity and increase participation in employment – to close the gap in health and employment outcomes and reduce disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development</b>	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2022	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	August 2022	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	August 2022	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	May 2023	Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2023	Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	May 2023	Director People and Patient Experience & Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Recognise and respond to the cultural support and supervision needs of staff working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs through the Kareeta Networking and Mentoring Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	December 2022 and December 2023	Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam
	Create culturally safe interview guides.	July 2022	Director Workforce Planning and Business Partnerships
	Scope and recommend identifiable positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all work specialties and departments.	July 2022	Director People and Patient Experience



<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	February 2024	Manager Procurement and Contracts
	Investigate Kinaway membership.	June 2022	Manager Procurement and Contracts
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to managers and staff.	May 2022 & May 2023	Manager Procurement and Contracts
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2022 & May 2023	Manager Procurement and Contracts
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	February 2024	Manager Procurement and Contracts
<b>12. Improve how we identify and document Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in the Electronic Medical Record</b>	Develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan Data Improvement Plan to improve how we identify, collect, interpret, report and use data of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.	September 2022	Director Informatics
	Develop and implement a regular audit cycle and review process on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient data.	September 2022	Director Informatics
<b>13. Improve how we measure, monitor and respond to the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and staff</b>	Develop baseline measures for the patient and staff experience using data from the Victorian Health Experience Survey and People Matters Survey.	June 2022	Chief eXperience Officer & Director People and Patient Experience
	Monitor and report on the patient and staff experience and make recommendations for action in response.	December 2022, June 2023, December 2023 & April 2024	Chief eXperience Officer & Director People and Patient Experience

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>14. Improve the safety and quality of care that we provide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>	Expand routine Quality and Safety reporting at least annually to include the following performance indicators recommended by National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous status (includes babies who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander but their mothers don't)</li> <li>• Unplanned readmission across all services areas, including Unplanned Readmission of Mother after Birth and Unplanned Readmission of Newborn after Birth</li> <li>• Waiting times for 1st appointment</li> </ul>	September 2022 and September 2023	Director Quality and Safety
	Collect and report annually on at least three or more of the following performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of antenatal appointments attended</li> <li>• Gestational age at birth</li> <li>• Baby's birthweight</li> <li>• Baby admitted to NISC</li> <li>• Perinatal mortality</li> <li>• Apgars at 5 mins</li> <li>• Baby hospital length of stay</li> <li>• Baby discharged home with mother</li> </ul>	September 2022 and September 2023	Director Quality and Safety & Director Maternity Services
<b>15. Respect and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, knowledge principles and rights</b>	Ensure that the Women's research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, adheres to the principles outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council publication: <i>Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders.</i>	June 2022 and June 2023	Director of Research
	Advocate for philanthropic funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and researchers.	July 2022 and July 2023	Director of Research
	Feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers' achievements and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research outcomes in Women's internal and external publications.	July 2022 and July 2023	Director of Research









# GOVERNANCE

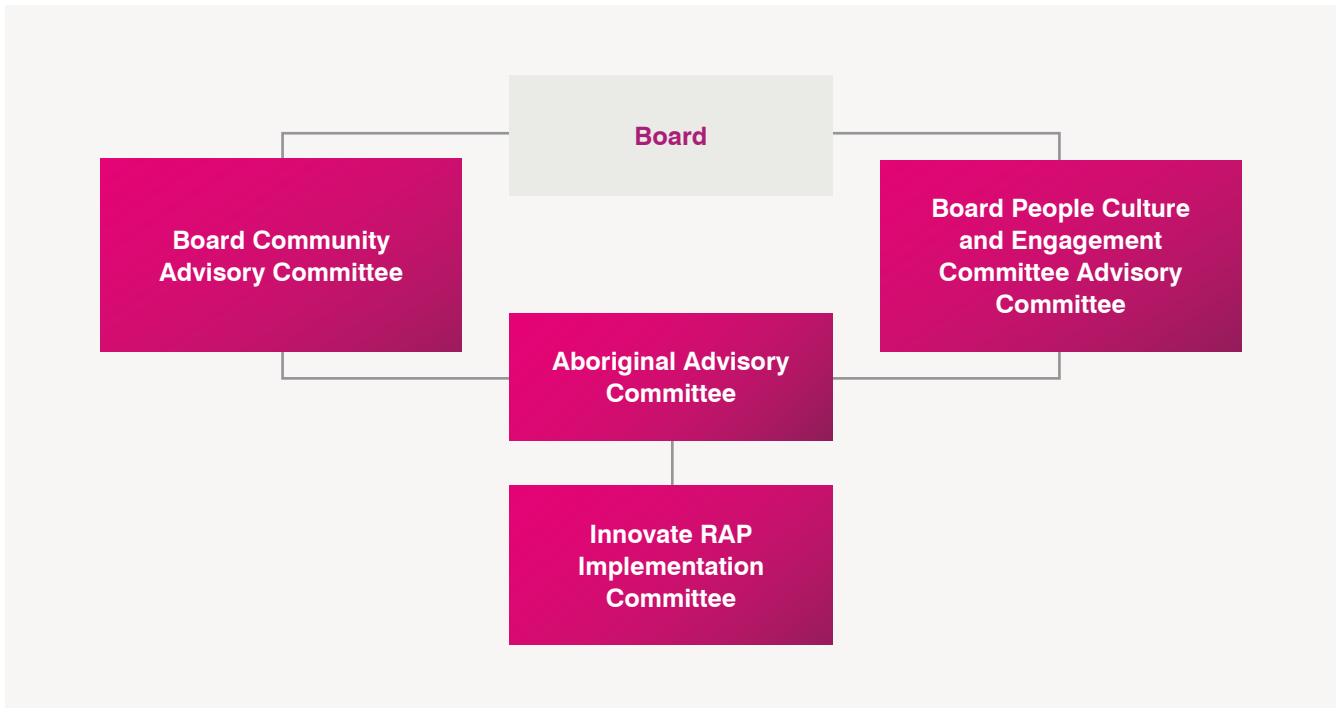
The Women's is committed to effectively governing our Reconciliation Action Plan. This includes shared organisational ownership, accountability and transparency of the plan and its outcomes internally, with our peers and partners, and most importantly to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities we serve.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>16. Maintain an effective Innovate RAP Implementation Committee to drive implementation and governance of the Reconciliation Action Plan</b>	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Innovate RAP Implementation Committee and review annually.	April 2022 and April 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Innovate RAP Implementation Committee and review annually.	April 2022 and April 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Meet at least six times per year to drive and monitor Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	March, April, June, August, October, December 2022 and 2023	Chief Operating Officer
<b>17. Maintain an effective Aboriginal Advisory Committee to support and promote reconciliation and culturally safe practices across the hospital</b>	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representation on the Committee and review annually.	June 2022 and June 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Apply a Terms of Reference for the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and review annually.	June 2022 and June 2023	Chief Operating Officer
<b>18. Advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in committees and strategic documents</b>	Consult with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and other internal governance committees with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, in the implementation of the Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	June 2022 and June 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Ensure at least one member of a Board Sub-committee identifies as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.	June and December 2022, June and December 2023	Chief Operating Officer

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>19. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments</b>	Define resource needs for Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	April 2022 and April 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Engage our senior leaders and staff in the delivery of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	June, September, December 2022 and March, June, September, December 2023 and March 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	June 2022 and June 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Appoint and maintain an internal Reconciliation Action Plan Champion from senior management.	April 2022	Chief Executive Officer
<b>20. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally</b>	Complete and submit the annual Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022 and 30 September 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
	Report Reconciliation Action Plan progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	June, September, December 2022 and March, June, September, December 2023 and March 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	Publically report our Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings, annually through a Reconciliation Action Plan Report Card.	October 2022 and October 2023	Chief Communications Officer
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer.	June 2022	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
<b>21. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	September 2023	Director Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Below is the governance structure and committees that oversee the Women’s Reconciliation Action Plan.



## Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Our Aboriginal Advisory Committee provides a forum and space where the Women’s Board, management and staff can seek advice and guidance from members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote reconciliation and to support and promote culturally safe practices across the hospital.

- **Aunty Dr Carolyn Briggs**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Aunty Di Kerr**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Aunty Rieo Ellis**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Nayuka Gorrie**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Dr Vicki Couzens**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Dr Paola Balla**  
External Advisory Committee Member
- **Aunty Gina Bundle**  
The Women’s, Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam
- **Lisa Lynch**  
The Women’s, Chief Operating Officer – Chair
- **Michelle Schwensen**  
The Women’s, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy



---

## Innovate RAP Implementation Committee

The Committee is responsible for leading the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Women's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

- **Lisa Lynch**  
Chief Operating Officer – Chair
- **Tayla Price**  
People Experience Consultant
- **Carolyn Looney**  
Project Officer – Better at Home Project, Improvement and Innovation Advisor, Quality and Safety
- **Fleur Harber**  
Clinical Midwifery Educator/ Graduate Midwife Coordinator - The Women's at Sandringham
- **Fiona McLardie-Hore**  
Research Coordinator, Midwifery and Maternity Services Research Unit
- **William Simpson**  
Manager Child Care Services
- **Claire Burford**  
Care Coordinator, Cornelia Program
- **Stephanie Mahon**  
Manager, Baggarrook Caseload Midwifery Program
- **Monique Keel**  
Diversity and Equity HR Manager, Prevention of Violence Against Women team
- **Storm Henry**  
Baggarrook Caseload Midwife
- **Vicki Carson (Woodward)**  
Obstetrician/gynaecologist
- **Megan Cock**  
Research Manager
- **Tessa Turlouw**  
Program leader – Training, education and quality improvement, CASA House
- **Emma Pert**  
Nurse Unit Manager, Neonatal Services
- **Clare Manning**  
Director, Social Model of Health Division
- **Pragasen Pillay**  
Manager, Procurement & Contracts
- **Sofie Karamzalis**  
Director, Informatics
- **Tania Kent**  
Patient Experience Manager
- **Aunty Gina Bundle**  
Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam, Aboriginal Health Liaison Unit
- **Michelle Schwensen**  
Director, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
- **Clare Morgan**  
Executive Assistant

---

## Reconciliation Working Group

Members of our Reconciliation Working Group met from April 2019 until December 2021. The group led the successful development and implementation of our Reflect RAP and the development of this Innovate RAP.


- **Lisa Lynch**  
Chief Operating Officer – Chair
- **Alyssa Fooks**  
CASA House, Program Leader
- **Claire Burford**  
Clinical Midwife Educator, Maternity Services Education Program
- **Tayla Price**  
People Experience & Wellbeing Support Officer
- **Monique Keel**  
Diversity and Equity Human Resources Manager
- **Emma Steele**  
MRI Supervisor Pauline Gandel Women's Imaging Centre/EMR Project Officer
- **Fiona McLardieHore**  
Research Coordinator, Midwifery and Maternity Services Research Unit
- **Aunty Gina Bundle**  
Program Coordinator Badjurr-Bulok Wilam, Aboriginal Health Liaison Unit
- **Giselle Darling**  
Senior Medical Staff Member – Women's Health Clinics
- **Kerri Felemonow**  
Social Worker, Women's Alcohol and Drug Service
- **Kimberley Nichols**  
External Communications Manager
- **Louise Sampson**  
Community Engagement Coordinator
- **Michelle Schwensen**  
Director, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
- **Natalie Grodzki**  
People Experience Manager
- **Pragasen Pillay**  
Manager Procurement & Contracts
- **Sandra Gates**  
Director, Allied Health and Clinical Support Services
- **Storm Henry**  
Baggarrook Caseload Midwife
- **Pamela McCalman**  
Clinical Midwife Specialist
- **Jo Bell**  
Nurse Unit Manager - Neonatal Services, NICU
- **Clare Morgan**  
Executive Assistant



## THANK YOU


**For public enquiries about the Women's Reconciliation Action Plan, please contact:**

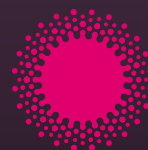
**Michelle Schwensen**  
Director – Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

 03 8345 2837

 [michelle.schwensen@thewomens.org.au](mailto:michelle.schwensen@thewomens.org.au)

 [thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)

 Cnr Grattan St & Flemington Rd  
Parkville, VIC 3052 Australia



the women's  
the royal women's hospital