

INNOVATE

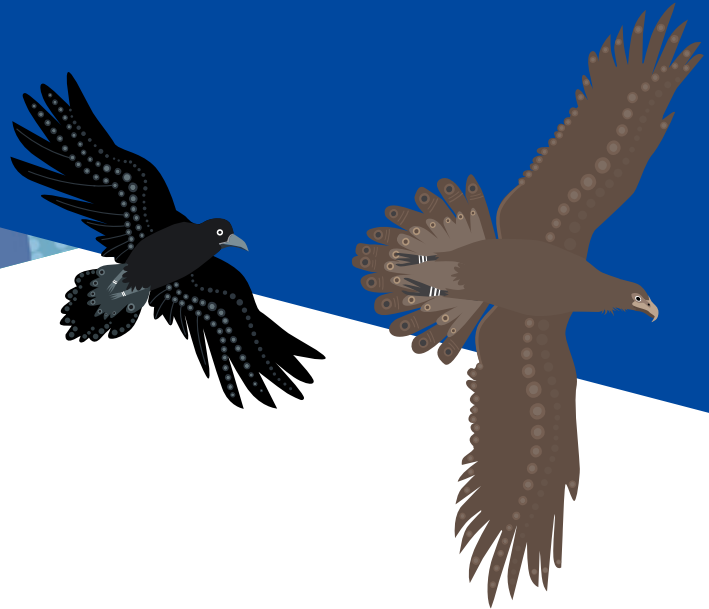
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

March 2022 - March 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Bendigo Health acknowledges that our organisation delivers services on the Country of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Yorta Yorta, Baraba Baraba, Wemba Wemba, and Latje Latje people who are and have been the Traditional Custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We pay our respects to the Elders of these Countries past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that our main hospital is built on Jaara Country, acknowledging its beautiful rivers the Loddon, Campaspe and the Avoca and its animals especially Waa and Bunjil.



OUR STORY

This artwork is a metaphor to represent a map of the Loddon Mallee region, with towns and Health Services represented along the river and surrounding area of country. The river is a significant cultural element moving through country, connecting all Aboriginal groups through its water, while providing resources for animals and plants for bush medicine, the sun gives the energy for life and growth across the land through its warmth. Located around the rivers are circles representing waterholes which are a place of gathering resources and nourishment to give a supportive culturally safe environment, so Aboriginal people and other nations can heal and flourish with help from the appropriate health services. The larger waterhole representing the main campus of Bendigo Health with surrounding waterholes representing Mildura, Echuca, Swan Hill, Kyneton, and Castlemaine. The travelling lines connecting the waterholes show the networking of staff and community accessing resources and services across each region.

Bunjil, the wedge tail eagle, is flying over country representing the creator and protector of all things over our land. Waa the crow is flying behind him for support, with the black cockatoo flying ahead giving guidance. Located in the river are turtles, catfish, and yellow bellies. They are travelling down the river to the Bendigo Health Service to receive healing and support. The seed pods under the tree represent new beginnings and relationships for a healthy life and wellbeing, while the emu incubating the eggs before they hatch represent new birth with resources from the river.

Totems used in this artwork:

Dja Dja Wurrung - Bunjil (Wedge tailed eagle), Taungurung - Waa (Crow), Yorta Yorta (Long neck turtle), Baraba Baraba (Catfish), Wemba Wemba (Red tail black cockatoo/yellow belly) and Latje Latje (Emu).



Artist background: Karen Briggs

Karen is a Yorta Yorta woman, whose ancestral homeland radiates from the junction of the Goulburn and Murray Rivers in North East Victoria. Karen is particularly skilled at creating hand drawn Aboriginal contemporary illustrations and then transforming them into the computer environment using her Wacom board, resulting in vibrant, colourful designs for promotional materials.

Artwork and layout of this RAP was produced by Karen Briggs (Yorta Yorta) from KLB CREATIVE



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THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH STRATEGY DEFINITION OF HEALTH

...not just the physical well-being of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole Community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being, thereby bringing about the total well-being of their Community. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life. Health care services should strive to achieve the state where every individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being and thus bring about the total well-being of their community.

(National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989)



RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO STATEMENT



Reconciliation Australia commends Bendigo Health on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

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

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Bendigo Health to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Bendigo Health will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

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. Bendigo Health is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Bendigo Health's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Bendigo Health on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Standing in the main atrium of the Bendigo Hospital as we celebrated the official opening of the Aboriginal Support Services space was a significant moment for me personally as well as for Bendigo. It was a day where we shared the cultural story of Central Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We heard their story during a Welcome to Country and we cleansed ourselves in the smoke, side by side. Sharing this moment I reflected on how far we have come in the State we call Victoria - the journey we'd been on to get to this point and the journey still ahead of us.

I first became aware of the divide in our community as a kid who grew up, in the early years, in Robinvale. There were six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in my class. Just kids like the rest. But adult society then, sadly, had a different approach, different expectations.

When I was on the Board of the Anne Caudle centre back in the early 1990s, we did not fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags or include an Acknowledgement of Country when we met. Kevin Rudd had not said 'Sorry' and no-one had said we need to Close the Gap.

Bendigo Health is working with our local community to begin to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe and welcome in the health service. The inclusion of an Aboriginal garden in the landscaping, which links to the Serpent Mindi whose head rests in the Aboriginal Support Services space courtyard, is a tangible way we could acknowledge local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the design of the new building. That said, Bendigo Health is a people based organisation and it is the relationships that really matter.

Bendigo Health values the relationships we enjoy with the region's local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and looks forward to developing our service in line with community feedback and need. Bendigo Health values equity and fairness. I am determined to keep driving change with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities so that, together, we all enjoy positive equal health outcomes.

Bob Cameron
Board Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



On February 13th 2008 the Prime Minister, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, said ‘Sorry’ to the Indigenous peoples of this land. Importantly, he acknowledged that First Nations people are the oldest continuing cultures in human history. He apologised for the grief, suffering and loss inflicted and for the removal of children from their families, and for the indignity and degradation inflicted on a proud people and proud culture. He asked that the apology be received in a spirit of healing our nation.

My story begins when my father, who was born on Ndagjuri Land in mid-north South Australia, and my mother, born on Bungandidj Land in south-east South Australia, moved to Ballarat in the 1930s. I was born in 1955 and raised in Ballarat, on Wathaurong Country; not surprisingly, as a child I had no idea this was once someone else’s land. Nor did I know that the Traditional Custodians of these lands were subject to acts of murder, dispossession and degradation. I reflect on my own education and understanding of First Nations people. I was taught at school that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are nomadic hunter-gatherers, thus had no economy, agriculture or aquaculture, no societal structure or assets other than the boomerang, the spear, the woomera, and a branch and bark for a home.

I did not know of the atrocities committed or that frontier wars waged across our country. As a child, I have vague recollections of 1962 when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were given the right to vote. I reckon this event served to reinforce my childhood beliefs that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were nomadic, but something had changed to make them equal to my parents who I would see vote. As a 7 year old, I had no idea what had changed, or even why they did not already have the right to vote.

Time has marched on, my understanding has grown and while I have had the dust removed from my eyes and now know that my forefathers fabricated a story to justify and support colonisation of this ancient land, I also know that my First Nations brothers and sisters did have an economy, a society based on agriculture and aquaculture suited to this dry and fragile island continent, a society with laws and customs, rich in stories that supported the sensitive occupancy and custody of our land.

My understanding allows me to not only express my personal apology for the actions of my ancestors, but to say thank you to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the care they have given to my homeland over so many centuries.

While I have not strayed far from my birthplace, I have lived for three years on another continent and I have experienced my own deep personal connection to country. While I don’t have 60 thousand years of stories and dreams of this place, I do share a deep connection to our land, our country.

I walk forward on this great southern land with hope and promise of shared stories to be told, of common dreams and of a united and respectful culture that is inclusive of all peoples, enabled by the first custodians and the care they have shown for our land for so many millennia.

This is my hope for reconciliation, a healing of differences and a shared respect to be enjoyed by our children; our brothers and sisters under the southern sun.

Peter Faulkner
Chief Executive Officer



BENDIGO HEALTH SUPPORTS 'TREATY IN VICTORIA'.

The Victorian Government is leading the country through its work toward a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal Victorians. We are working together to create a better future for all Victorians and enable true self-determination for Aboriginal people.

What is a treaty?

A treaty is an agreement between states, nations or governments. This can include an agreement between Indigenous peoples and governments.

There is no set form for what a treaty with Indigenous peoples should contain. Each treaty is shaped by the history between the parties and the social and political context in which it is made. In Victoria, there could be one statewide treaty or multiple treaties with individual Aboriginal groups.

The State of Victoria will work with Aboriginal Victorians as equal partners on this journey. It is important for government not to pre-empt what may be in a treaty - we need to listen to the aspirations of Aboriginal Victorians expressed through the treaty process and work together to deliver a treaty or treaties that will benefit all Victorians.

Treaty is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians. It's an opportunity to address wrongs and redefine relationships between the State, Aboriginal Victorians and the wider Victorian community. Bendigo Health supports the implementation of treaty in Victoria.



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION/ STATEMENT OF INTENT

Our vision is for Bendigo Health to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage, cultures and spirituality are valued, respected and celebrated. This ensures access to health services and employment and training opportunities that are culturally safe, free from racism and enriched by a strong living culture, dignity and justice.

It is one where we walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in respectful partnership to achieve equity in life expectancy and to reduce premature death and suffering from preventable illnesses

Bendigo Health is committed to the successful realisation of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We as a Board, in collaboration with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, staff and clinical leaders, will work to improve our services to ultimately achieve better health outcomes for regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are working towards Closing the Gap in health disparities that exists between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and the broader Australian community. This plan is an important formal statement of our commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve this.

We are committed to strengthening existing and building new relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and staff to seek insight, advice and guidance on the advancement of reconciliation across the organisation. Bendigo Health is committed to applying systemic changes that are culturally responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in order to bring about positive change to achieve reconciliation.

Bendigo Health recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Bendigo Health is located. We acknowledge the Loddon Mallee Region which we service has a human history that began with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians. We strongly support recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution and acknowledge that, as a result of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians continue to confront injustices, poor health and wellbeing outcomes, and trauma associated with Stolen Generations.

Bendigo Health, unreservedly, supports the Uluru Statement of the Heart. We will play our part in creating a better future for our First Nations people and give voice to enable self determination.



Aboriginal Support

OUR BUSINESS

Bendigo Health has an important role in the provision of health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria. Our region has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in Victoria.

We are an expanding regional health service more than 4500 staff and 150 volunteers. Thirty paid staff at Bendigo Health identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; these staff work in a range of administration, management and clinical roles. Currently we have nine identified positions at Bendigo Health, one Manager of Aboriginal Services, five Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers, one Koori Mental Health Liaison Officer and two Mental Health Trainees.

Bendigo Health is a 698 bed service that treats more than 44,000 inpatients, triages more than 50,000 emergency attendees and welcomes almost 1,400 new born babies each year. The organisation provides services in emergency, maternity, women's health, medical imaging, pathology, rehabilitation, community services, residential aged care, psychiatric care, community dental services, hospice/palliative care, cardiology, cancer services and renal dialysis to the people of the Loddon Mallee region.

With our main campus based in Bendigo, our services extend throughout the Loddon Mallee with five sites in areas such as Mildura, Echuca, Swan Hill, Kyneton and Castlemaine. Demand on services is increasing rapidly with Bendigo being one of Victoria's fastest growing regional cities. Bendigo Health provides services to the entire Loddon Mallee region - a geographic community that makes up 25 per cent of Victoria, and includes some isolated communities with limited access to health services.

At Bendigo Health, our community extends beyond our patients. It encompasses families and carers of patients, staff, volunteers, partners, donors, future staff and the general public, all of whom form unique relationships with Bendigo Health.



WHAT RECONCILIATION MEANS TO OUR STAFF

In National Reconciliation Week 2019 we asked our staff at Bendigo Health, 'What does Reconciliation mean to you?'

These are some of the answers:

"Land Rights, Treaty, compensation"

"Understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural, spiritual and educational practices"

"We are 'ONE', we are Australian"

"Storytelling, Truth, Equality"

"Unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians"

"Support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart"

"Recognition, Acceptance, Unity"

"Listening, caring and acknowledgement of our first Australians"

"Voice. Truth Story-telling"

"Truth, De-Colonisation, New Possibilities"

"We're all in this together"

"Listening, caring and acknowledgement of our first Australians"

"Acknowledges the past and appreciation of value Aboriginal heritage brings to Australia today, moving forward together"

"Actively participating as a health worker in Aboriginal people - led advocacy and health care"



CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS CULTURAL HUMILITY

This, our first RAP, establishes a strong foundation for us to build on, and it will strengthen and inform our plans for the future as we continue to be part of and positively influence the community conversation about reconciliation. We look forward to continuing to work with our communities, stakeholders and Reconciliation Australia to achieve the goals that are set out in our RAP.

We acknowledge the hard work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders at Bendigo Health both past and present who have supported this organisation to reach this point. We would be honoured to have Elders from across the Loddon Mallee Region support the Bendigo Health Reconciliation Action Plan as we look to them as leaders we can turn to for inspiration and guidance. This plan is a collaborative effort that we hope will be informed by valuable insight and advice from a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across our communities.

Reconciliation Action Plan Champion

Director Aboriginal Services, Diversity & Health Promotion, is Bendigo Health's RAP Champion, with responsibility for driving engagement and awareness of the Reconciliation Action Plan throughout Bendigo Health.

Engagement Process

The development of the RAP as overseen by a working group comprising of:

- The Board Director x 2
- Senior Hospital Staff - Directors of Nursing x 2
- Aboriginal Support Services Staff - Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO) x 2
- Manager Aboriginal Services
- Program Worker Research and Innovation
- Director of Aboriginal Services Diversity and Health Promotion (Chair)
- Medical Staff Representative
- Allied Health Representative
- Psychiatric Services Representative
- People and Culture Representative
- Director of Volunteers
- Community Representatives x 2
- Community Elder
- Representative from Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC)
- Representative from Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Dja Dja Wurrung) (to attend as necessary not as part of quorum)

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY SO FAR

Bendigo Health has progressively increased the activities and opportunities within the service to acknowledge reconciliation and learn from First Nations Peoples. We are now ready to expand our work and focus our efforts under the banner of reconciliation so that we continue to learn and grow so First Nations People feel they can trust our service and the people within it. We want to do the best we can but we cannot do it alone. We need guidance from our First Nations Peoples about how to enable self-determination and reduce the inequity that currently exists across our Country. We have a role to play in reconciliation and this plan illustrates our intentions.

BELOW LISTS OUR ACTIVITIES TO DATE.

Flying the Flag: Bendigo Health has permanently flown the Aboriginal flag since 6th of July 2009, and the Torres Strait Islander flag as of 2020.

Acknowledging Country: An Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country policy was created on the August 2011 and reviewed July 2017 and November 2020. It is now included on all meeting agenda templates. A Welcome to Country is facilitated for all major cultural events held at Bendigo Health.

Partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities: In 2011, Bendigo Health and the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative signed their first overarching collective agreement. In 2013, this was built upon with Bendigo Health Women's Services and the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative signing their collaborative collective agreement. This was updated in 2018. In 2019, Bendigo Health made a video celebrating our partnership with the Dja Dja Wurrung which featured the journey of the Serpent Mindi through the grounds of Bendigo Health ending in the Aboriginal Support garden.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation: More than 50% of the members on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community members are part of the Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee.

Cross-Cultural Training: Over 200 staff have been recorded as having attended cultural safety training and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety training. This training has been developed in-house and reflects the Department of Health and Human Services Cultural Safety Framework.

Strategic Commitments: The Bendigo Health Board signed the Statement of Intent for Reconciliation in 2019.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts: Aboriginal Artists have been contracted to create artwork that is displayed in our Aboriginal Support Services space, Children's Ward and Children's Dental Clinic on the creation of Give Our Mob a Voice (Advance Care Plan).

Celebrating Culture:

- NAIDOC Community Day events are hosted by Bendigo Health during NAIDOC week each year. Bendigo Health participates on the NAIDOC committee.
- National Reconciliation Week is promoted and events, such as Elders sharing stories, morning tea, and acknowledgement of significant achievements of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders are held.
- The Dja Dja Wurrung Welcome Baby to Country in October 2019 was hosted at Bendigo Health with a smoking ceremony and receiving of possum skins. This traditional ceremony is performed to welcome young children born on traditional lands.
- In 2019, the Scar tree that was donated by Dja Dja Wurrung and is part of the sacred garden on the land where Bendigo Hospital is built was celebrated.
- In 2019, a celebration of the Serpent Mindi which is a feature in the design of the new Bendigo Health hospital landscaping, acknowledging the land on which the health service is built, was held.
- In 2019, the first lighting of the fire pit in the Aboriginal Support Services courtyard with the Dja Dja Wurrung.

Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures: Desk Flags and Acknowledgement of Country plaques are displayed on all entry points to our services. Use of Dja Dja Wurrung language to name the Children's Dental Clinic.

Dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Support space at Drought Street entrance to Bendigo Hospital: There is a dedicated Aboriginal Support Services space with indoor and outdoor areas that was co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at the entrance of the Hospital. The space was officially launched during Naidoc Week 2017.

Service Provision: On admission to Bendigo Health services, patients and clients are invited to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and are offered cultural and spiritual support via referral to the female and male Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers. In targeted areas in women's and palliative care Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services have been piloted.

Procurement: Whenever possible, Bendigo Health use the Murnong Mamas, a Koorie catering service, for cultural events. For NAIDOC and other key events, Bendigo Health contracts the Dja Dja Wurrung to perform the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.

Dedicated RAP lead: In July 2020 the Director of Aboriginal Services, Diversity and Health Promotion was appointed the senior organisational lead for the implementation of our RAP.



RELATIONSHIPS

Bendigo Health understands that relationships are key to the strengthening of reconciliation within our organisation. Good relationships enable people to connect, for the sharing of experiences, good governance for self-determination, open communication, engagement and strengthening of partnerships.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. 	July 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	April 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate BBQs for members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with Bendigo Health staff to provide opportunities to build relationships between the community and staff. 	December 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for Bendigo Health staff to attend Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative women's and men's sessions. 	August 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers based with Aboriginal Support Services. 	December 2022	Director Volunteer Services, Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host the bi-annual Dja Dja Wurrung Welcome Baby to Country for all babies of all cultural backgrounds born at Bendigo Health. 	November 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator and Chief, Corporate Affairs
	2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2022, May 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Steering Committee members to participate in an external NRW event. 		May 2022, May 2023	Chair of RAP Steering Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 		May 2022, May 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services Chief, Corporate Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one NRW event each year. 		May 2022, May 2023	Chief, Corporate Affairs Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register all Bendigo Health NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. 	May 2022, May 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage our staff to visit Reconciliation Australia's website, and promote local National Reconciliation Week events they can attend. 	May 2022, May 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services Chief, Corporate Affairs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the CEO in National Reconciliation Week activities to enable such things as internal podcasts to reflect on the meaning of the Week, and promote internal and community activities. 	May 2022, May 2023	Chair of RAP Steering Committee
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation. 	April 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publically. 	April 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator Chief, Corporate Affairs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. 	August 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator Chief, Corporate Affairs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation. 	June 2022	Chair of Aboriginal Advisory Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide regular updates on RAP activities through newsletters (including the Koori Grapevine), social media and within the Aboriginal Support Services space. 	October 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator Chief, Corporate Affairs
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	August 2022	Chief, People Officer Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. 	February 2023	Chief, People Officer Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. 	September 2022	Chief, People Officer Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism. 	June 2023	Chief, People Officer Manager Aboriginal Services



RESPECT

Through our activities we will build the knowledge and understanding of our leadership team and staff to understand the cultures, and the history to build pride and appreciation of First Nations people. The impact that colonisation still has for First Nations People's must be acknowledged and acted on if positive change is to be enabled. Bendigo Health must actively call out racism and maintain a constant focus on enabling self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and patients; ensuring voices are heard and actions resourced.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	September 2022	Director Workforce Development, Manager of Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy. 	August 2022	Director Workforce Development, Manager of Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff. 	February 2023	Director of Organisational Development, Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for RAP Steering Committee members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. 	March 2023	Director Organisational Development, Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available Reconciliation Australia's 'Share Our Pride' online resource to all staff and volunteers. 	April 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator Chief, Corporate Affairs
<p>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	July 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. 	July 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. 	April 2022	Chair Aboriginal Advisory Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. 	April 2022	Chair Aboriginal Advisory Committee

ACTION

DELIVERABLES

TIMELINE

RESPONSIBILITY

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and circulate resources which outline where to access information regarding the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisation's sphere of influence. 	June 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide mentoring and training to support front of house staff to "Ask the Question" of every patient every time so that appropriate cultural support can be arranged if required. 	January 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs & RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff and volunteers are briefed and understand appropriate protocols for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and receive appropriate cultural safety information and training to create cultural safety and confidence. 	August 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services and Chief, Corporate Affairs
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Steering Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	July 2022, July 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator, Manager Aboriginal Services & RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	August 2022	Chief, People Officer & Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff. 	July 2022, July 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs & RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain membership of the Bendigo NAIDOC committee. 	July 2022, July 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain sponsorship of the Bendigo NAIDOC committee. 	July 2022, July 2023	Chair RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a communication strategy to promote NAIDOC Week events to raise awareness and share information about the meaning of NAIDOC Week with our staff, volunteers, and patients, including information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. 	June 2022, June 2023	Chief, Corporate Affairs Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek feedback about NAIDOC Week events and activities that members of our RAP Steering Committee participate in and report back through a weekly email and social media platforms. 	August 2022, August 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
8. Celebrate and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and dates of significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communication plan for increasing organisational awareness and sharing of significant dates around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements. 	March 2022	Chief, Corporate Affairs Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
9. Create an environment within all Bendigo Health sites that are culturally welcoming and friendly places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display an Acknowledgement to the Traditional Custodians of the land at entry points of all Bendigo Health buildings in the region as a sign of respect. 	January 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Manager of Buildings and Infrastructure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Cultural Advisory Group comprising of Community members, Traditional Custodians and Elders to advise on matters concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural requirements related to the health service settings. 	November 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs & RAP Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via the Improving Care for Aboriginal People (ICAP) program provide Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers to assist patients and their families to navigate through the mainstream health service system. 	March 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display artwork by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. 	June 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and Acknowledgment plaques throughout the organisation including all entry points. 	January 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs & RAP Coordinator



OPPORTUNITIES

By creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and operators to engage with Bendigo Health, we are a part of enabling economic growth and prosperity for local people. Opportunities such as these create a sustainable system which can benefit generations to come, in multiple ways. We want to provide opportunities to enable more First Nations health care professionals to become qualified and a part of the existing health care system to broaden perspectives and be a part of enabling an equitable approach to health care.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build our understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	July 2022	Chief, People Officer & Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	August 2022	Chief, People Officer & Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	February 2023	Director Workforce Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. 	September 2022	Director Workforce Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. 	July 2022	Aboriginal Programs & RAP Coordinator Director Workforce Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Bendigo Health stall at TAFE Indigenous careers day. 	November 2023	Director Workforce Development & Manager Aboriginal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships, cadetship, internship, and volunteering) and build relationships with local schools 	March 2023	Director Workforce Development Director Clinical Learning and Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are encouraged to apply' in all job advertisements. 	March 2022	Director Workforce Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce. 	May 2023	Director Workforce Development

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a Bendigo Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteer mentoring network. 	July 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Director Volunteer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to take up leadership opportunities within Bendigo Health through mentoring, training and 'acting up' when colleagues are on leave. 	August 2023	Director Workforce Development & Manager Aboriginal Services
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy. 	October 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	September 2022	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. 	August 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	May 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	June 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	April 2023	Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Director Procurement Services
12. Support equal and equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more defined pathways for entry into careers at Bendigo Health through the provision of scholarship and mentoring programs, incentives, trainee and cadetship programs, and volunteer pathways. 	February 2023	Manager Aboriginal Services, Director Workforce Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Weenthunga Aboriginal Girls mentoring program to enable pathways to employment in Bendigo Health and the health service system 	September 2022	Manager Aboriginal Services Director Workforce Development

ACTION

DELIVERABLES

TIMELINE

RESPONSIBILITY

- Advertise more extensively the opportunities the opportunities for pathways to employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into Bendigo Health

February 2023

Manager Aboriginal Services,
Director Workforce
Development



GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING PROGRESS

It is important to create ownership of this plan at multiple levels of our organisation. Through regular reporting and consultation we can celebrate our achievements and identify gaps.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Steering Committee (RSC) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RSC. 	March 2024	Bendigo Health Board Member & Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RSC. 	April 2022	Bendigo Health Board Member & Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate quarterly meetings of a RAP Steering Committee. 	March 2022, June 2022, September 2022, December 2022, March 2023, June 2023, September 2023, December 2023, March 2024	Chair, RAP Steering Committee & Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for Innovate RAP development and implementation. 	May 2022	Manager, Aboriginal Services & Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	July 2022	Manager, Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	June 2022	Manager, Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator & Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learning both internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	September 2022, September 2023	Chair, RAP Steering Committee

ACTION

DELIVERABLES

TIMELINE

RESPONSIBILITY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. 	March 2022, June 2022, September 2022, December 2022, March 2023, June 2023, September 2023, December 2023, March 2024	Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. 	August 2022, August 2023	Chair, RAP Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. 	May 2022	Chair, RAP Steering Committee & Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator
16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	September 2023	Chair, RAP Steering Committee & Aboriginal Programs and RAP Coordinator

CONTACT

Andy Sloane

Director, Aboriginal Services,
Diversity and Health Promotion

P (03) 5454 6579 E andrea.sloane@bendigohealth.org.au

