



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2021 – June 2024



Life in all its fullness

UnitingCare's reconciliation story is embedded on a foundation layer acknowledging over 65,000 years of culture that have guided us here today.

Artwork by Tarni O'Shea - South Sea Islander and Butchulla artist and designer. Commissioned in 2020.

The central element represents rejuvenation of the land through fire, constructive conversations, and creating an environment of learning and healing. It evolves to reinvigorate the environment, just as UnitingCare adapts to support and guide people through personalised care.

This only happens when equality, respect, compassion and self-determination are present. These are core values guiding UnitingCare's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Nurturing the growth of this environment are UnitingCare business functions. These represent the vital role UnitingCare and all parts of the organisation play in sustaining the vitality of the environment.

Every element contributes to the health of the environment, helping to share knowledge and build relationships.

Freshwater and saltwater flows around this, connecting UnitingCare to people far and wide.

Throughout, the centre is radiant and flourishing, representing the growth and opportunities that come with being connected and empowered.

When all these elements work together, a nurtured spirit ignites and thrives. With ongoing care, the environment grows stronger, empowering UnitingCare to let its spirit soar.

Commissioned by UnitingCare to celebrate the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan in 2020.

We walk together

Artwork by Robert Barton, Kalkadoon man from far North Western Queensland. Commissioned in 2011.

This artwork details the many different paths that have been taken on UnitingCare's reconciliation journey. The dotted features of blue, green and white lines contrasted against the deep red ochre background symbolises the complex weave of people, stories and histories coming together through the shared vision of reconciliation.



Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, UnitingCare pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and the unique role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples play in the communities we serve.

We acknowledge our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope to move to a place of justice and partnership together.

Preamble: Affirming the Rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Human rights are the foundation of everything we do. The treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples throughout Australia's history has not consistently respected the most basic human rights.

While we work to affirm the rights and dignity of all people, UnitingCare as an organisation and its employees, ensures proactive leadership and action to help repair the harm caused to many generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through past injustices, government policies and social attitudes.

In doing this, UnitingCare recognises the overarching importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by Australia as a nation on 13 September 2007. The inherent principle within the Declaration is that Indigenous Peoples are equal to all other peoples, while simultaneously recognising their right as First Nations Peoples who have a unique relationship with Country, to be enabled to grow and strengthen their cultural identity, free from discrimination of any kind.

These sentiments are also reflected within the Uniting Church in Australia's Covenant (1994). This is a mutual commitment entered into between the national body of the Uniting Church and the national Indigenous body of the Uniting Church (known as the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress). The Covenant reflects on the wrongs of the past and the Church's commitment towards empowerment, truth, justice and moral leadership. It is a covenant to walk together in reconciliation and to look forward to our future together. It is these principles that form the foundation of the UnitingCare reconciliation journey.

This document is intended to be read in the spirit of a truthful recognition of our history that will inform a vision of a shared, equitable and respectful future and the acceptance that the responsibility for creating that future rests within every individual in the present.

Contents

UnitingCare artwork story	1
Acknowledgement of Country	2
Preamble: Affirming the Rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	2
Message from our UnitingCare Board Chair	4
Message from our CEO	5
Message from our Director of Mission	6
Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO	7
Why do we come to work every day	8
Our vision for reconciliation	10
Our reconciliation values	10
Our work	11
Our service groups	12
Pinangba	13
Aged Care and Community Services	14
Family and Disability Services	15
Hospitals	16
Our national reach	18
Our commitment to the Covenant	19
Our reconciliation journey	20
Our approach to reconciliation	23
Our focus on reconciliation	24
Our reconciliation action groups	25
Governance and leadership	26
National voice for UnitingCare Australia	28
Engagement and reconciliation awareness	30
GroundWater Gathering	34
Cultural appreciation	36
Impacts of cultural learning and appreciation	38
Workforce and procurement development	40
Creating pathways and supporting futures	42
The communities we serve	43
Tracking and reporting	44

Message from our UnitingCare Board Chair

At UnitingCare, our vision is for people from all walks of life to 'Live life in all its fullness'. Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians is fundamental to achieving this vision and the mission of our organisation.

UnitingCare draws on a rich history with many respected brands coming together, all with a strong commitment to reconciliation. This RAP has been developed through four RAP working groups and an extensive consultation process engaging with over 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous employees across the state. This has shaped many ambitious targets being set as part of this RAP. While we recognise that there will be many challenges along the way, UnitingCare's leadership team and Board are strongly committed to RAP goals and the vision of Reconciliation Australia for a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

We will continue to challenge ourselves through this RAP and uphold our responsibilities to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve. It is essential that the sentiments in the RAP are not only met but built upon as we support self-determination and ensure that foundational documents, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are key drivers in delivering our commitments for our shared future.

The Board and I commend this plan to you and are proud to give it our support.

Nigel Alexander
UnitingCare Board Chair



Message from our CEO

UnitingCare is committed to reconciliation and developing a deeper understanding and strategic response to social impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the communities we serve.

UnitingCare has been a consistent partner to reconciliation throughout the nation for some time. Our history does not begin with the inception of our Reconciliation Action Plan in 2012, but rather in 1994 when the Uniting Church of Australia entered into a covenant agreement with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Since then we have taken many steps to ensure strong partnerships, which more recently can be seen through the change of the Uniting Church of Australia's constitution to affirm the rightful place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by recognising First Peoples sovereignty.

As a provider of health and community services, including many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, I am very pleased with what we have achieved so far, delivering our commitments to Reconciliation Australia and the communities we serve. The work within our Pinangba Services (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery arm of UnitingCare) continues to flourish in Aged Care and Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation, by providing culturally rich and sustainable services for communities from Cherbourg to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait.

In March 2019 UnitingCare Chair, Nigel Alexander and Federal Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch, were joined by residents, employees and community members on Thursday Island to officially open the \$24.83M redevelopment of our Star of the Sea Elders Village assuring the dignity of our Elders and innovation in aged care.

Building on this, our Family and Disability Services continue to provide quality services, including the development of our second NEWPIN service in South East Queensland joining our Cairns service as well as a multitude of programs running throughout the state to support children, young adults, families and grandparents to live life in all its fullness.

We are thankful for the trust that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups have in us. These relationships ensure we are continually guided and informed by community to create spaces that offer hope and healing in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Craig Barke
CEO UnitingCare





Message from our Director of Mission

I am deeply humbled and encouraged by the strong commitment UnitingCare has demonstrated towards reconciliation with our First Peoples. Our commitment to reconciliation is central to who we are in our mission and purpose.

We see this lived out through fostering respectful relationships, and valued partnerships that empower our staff, volunteers and those we serve who identify as being First Nations Peoples of this land.

Our work so far has demonstrated strong performance in the following areas:

- Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the workplace
- Culturally informed service delivery, founded on truth telling
- Cultural competency
- Growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
- Advocacy – walking with First Peoples

The stories that are shared as part of this RAP demonstrate our unrelenting commitment to reconciliation that is inherent in our DNA. As part of the Uniting Church in Australia we hope for a nation which acknowledges the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of this land, respects the land on which we live, and are committed to empowering First Peoples in taking control of their own lives and destinies. The Uniting Church is the first church

in Australia to constitutionally acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and, in 2018, the 15th National Assembly recognised Australia's First Peoples as Sovereign Peoples in its constitution.

UnitingCare in its Mission Framework calls out its commitment to walking together with First Peoples. The importance of reconciliation goes beyond our service delivery. We are committed to foster just, inclusive and equal relationships, recognising the place of our First Peoples in Australia. We promote reconciliation and mutual respect by working actively in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to develop and deliver services that reflect the beliefs, values and needs of our First Peoples to progress self-determination.

Only through working in partnership together can we contribute to a just society for all people. I believe that we are uniquely placed in our reconciliation journey to use our spheres of influence across this Nation with hope for a reconciled future.

Rev. Bruce Moore
Director of Mission



Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate UnitingCare on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its fourth overall.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations to realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise. Through the creation of this Stretch RAP, UnitingCare continues to contribute to the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have taken this consideration and goodwill, and transformed it into action.

As one of the largest providers of community services in Australia, UnitingCare has a mandate to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, providing services that enable them to live full lives. Consequently, combined with its long history of working alongside

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, UnitingCare has considerable scope to drive reconciliation across its work and sphere of influence.

This Stretch RAP builds on the foundations and initiatives UnitingCare established in its previous RAPs. As a service provider to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, UnitingCare has worked to build culturally appropriate and First Nations-led care into its business; including Pinangba, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led service delivery arm of UnitingCare, focussing on cultural identity, strong community relationships and partnerships. UnitingCare has also signalled its commitment to using its sphere of influence to push for substantive First Nations self-determination, including holding discussions with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress on elevating the aspirations in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

This Stretch RAP sees UnitingCare continue embedding and expanding its reconciliation commitments across its work and sphere of influence. This includes implementing a range of initiatives internally to foster a culturally safe and dynamic workplace for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including a scholarship and a structured mentoring program; hosting an annual First Nations employee forum; and developing a campaign for its employees to undertake individual RAP pledges. Further, in its services, UnitingCare has committed to the aged care quality and safety framework with the express intention of supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in its care; as well as also co-designing a new combined Western and Indigenous governance model for Pinangba, to better reflect the requirements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it serves. Together, these initiatives signal UnitingCare's intention to place its reconciliation commitments, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and leadership, at the forefront of its work.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend UnitingCare on this thoughtful and ambitious Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Why do we come to work every day?

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Each of our brands is connected by a single purpose, to help the people we serve experience life in all its fullness.



Many brands.



One shared goal.



Pinangba operates as an independent business unit of UnitingCare working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland, and delivers a range of services including aged care, respite, family therapy and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.



Our vision for reconciliation

To be culturally responsible and committed to social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We will be unified, positive and healthy.

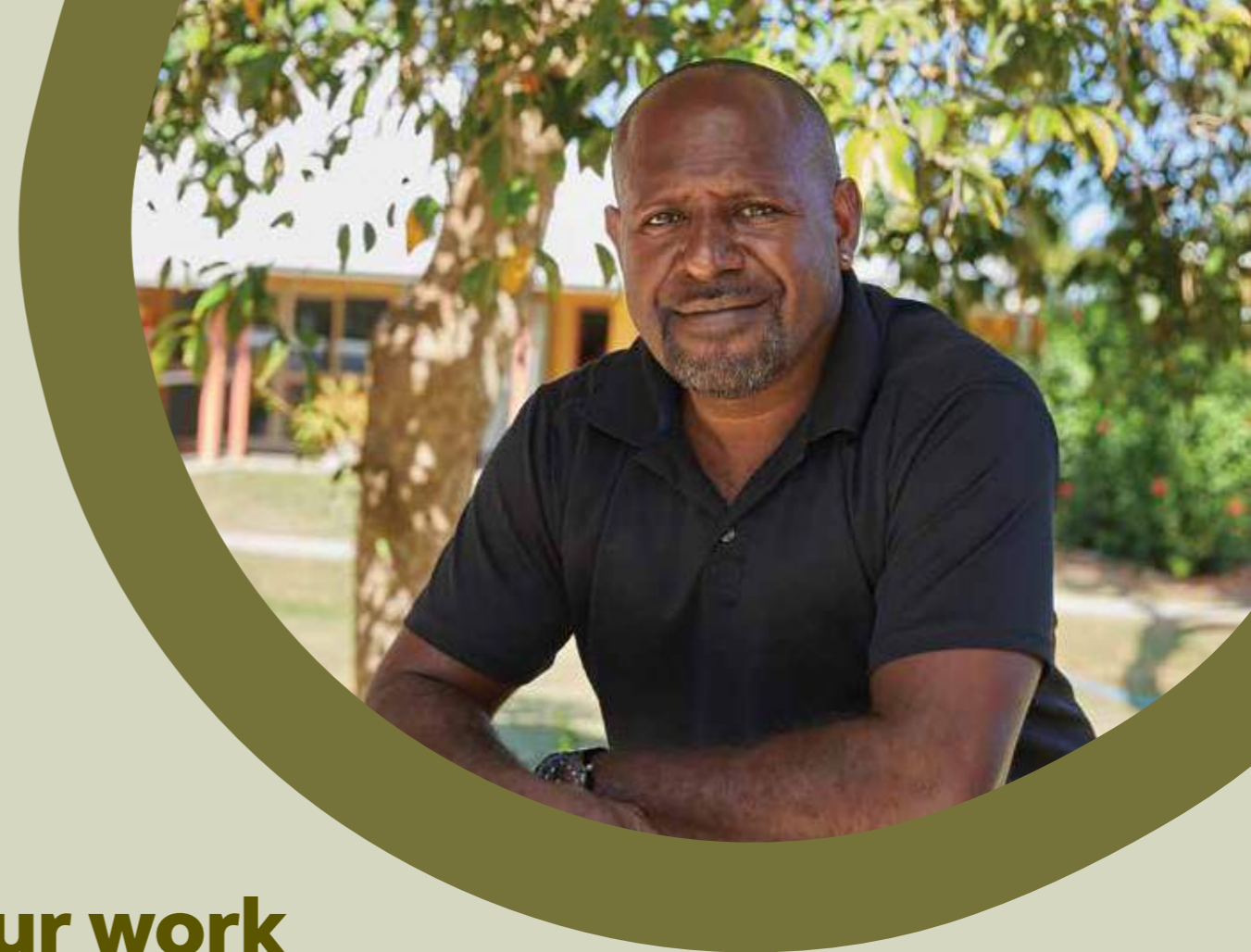
This vision for reconciliation aligns with UnitingCare's mission.

UnitingCare claims its place in the mission of God through its health and community services, research, advocacy and community development.

As part of the Uniting Church, the mission of UnitingCare is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities as we: reach out to people in need; speak out for fairness and justice; care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.

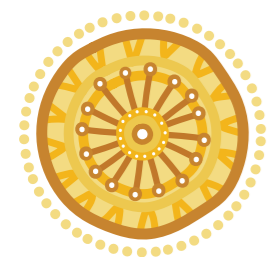
Our Aged and Community Services, Family and Disability Services, and Hospitals are vital expressions of this mission.

Note: The use of the word 'healthy' in our vision comes from the World Health Organisation definition as 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.'



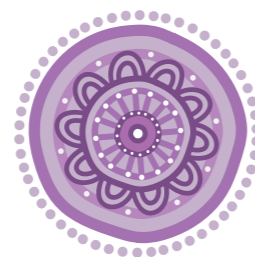
Our reconciliation values

The core values guiding our reconciliation journey are:



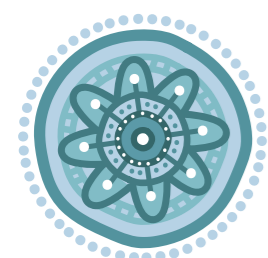
Self-determination

It is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to decide how best to move into the future.



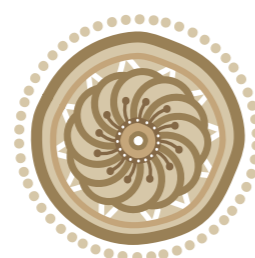
Relationships

Healthy relationships are central to building cooperative partnerships based on trust and respect.



Equality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be heard and influential within the workplace.



Respect

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are Australia's First Nation Peoples. To have this reality acknowledged and accepted is at the heart of respect.

UnitingCare developed these values in 2012. These values have been aligned with our commitments to reconciliation and how we do our work ensuring culturally safe services within the organisation.

Our work



17,000 employees



9,600 volunteers



410 (2.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce



1.5 million volunteer hours



460 locations supporting more than 600,000 people



10 Lifeline Crisis Support Line contact centres



Four private hospitals



56 residential aged care homes



127 Lifeline retail stores

Our service groups

Every day UnitingCare strives to provide the care and service that enables people to have the best possible lives, whatever their circumstances, wherever they live and whichever service they use.

Aged Care and Community Services (inc. Pinangba)

- Generalist and specialist nursing services
- Residential aged care services
- Allied health services
- Personal care, social support and domestic assistance to people in their own homes
- Respite care
- Seniors' housing
- Pastoral care and counselling
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation and family therapy

Family and Disability Services

- Lifeline - (suicide prevention, telephone counselling, shops and community recovery)
- Child and family care
- Counselling (including financial counselling)
- Crisis support
- Disability support
- Prison ministry

UnitingCare Hospitals

- The Wesley Hospital - Brisbane
- St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital - Brisbane
- St Stephen's Hospital - Hervey Bay
- Buderim Private Hospital - Sunshine Coast

ARRCS (Australian Regional and Remote Community Services)

- Allied Health Services
- Day therapy centres
- Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service
- Disability Services
- Domestic assistance
- In-Home care packages
- Personal care
- Residential aged care
- Respite care.

Some services are specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. UnitingCare also works with Wesley Mission Brisbane to extend the reach of The Uniting Church.



In 2012, a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, potentially about to close their doors, were transitioned into the UnitingCare family and quickly adopted the name Blue Care Indigenous Services.

UnitingCare respectfully supported a smooth transition, which placed the services in a strong position to consolidate their identity and grow.

Being a time of such critical change it left many employees in a place of uncertainty, fearing being absorbed into a large mainstream organisation that might lead to a loss of culture and identity. What we actually saw was employment remaining stable because everyone remained connected to our Elders in the villages. Strong internal leadership combined with the foresight and leadership of decision makers in UnitingCare created stability and hope.

After settling into UnitingCare and continually building towards the services as leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care providers, the next step was to create a unique identity that reinforced belonging and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In May 2018, a new identity for our Blue Care Indigenous Services was launched in Cherbourg; Pinangba

was welcomed with enthusiastic support. Cherbourg is on Wakka Wakka country and 'Pinangba' is a Wakka Wakka word meaning 'remember'.

A formal launch followed on Monday 21 May, as team members from our Pinangba services, along with residents, family members, the local community, UnitingCare Executives, board members and representatives, joined in the celebrations with Cherbourg Shire Council Mayor Arnold Murray at the Ration Shed Museum.

UnitingCare Group General Manager Tamra Bridges said "being part of Pinangba is not just a job; it's our leaders picking people up on their way to work who need care; it's our service managers giving residents a haircut because they trust no one else; it's our leaders going into our services at all times of the morning because they don't want our Elders being alone in their last hours. Social justice is not a day job, it's something you live and breathe, it lights the fire in the belly of all our Pinangba employees."

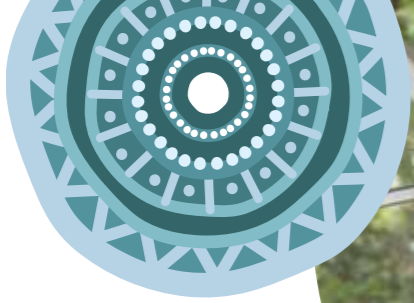
Pinangba is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lead service delivery arm of UnitingCare. The foundations of Pinangba are built from our cultural identity, strong community relationships and partnerships, and our belief in a just and equitable world, as captured in our vision:

"We deliver culturally informed services through innovative service delivery to progress self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through unique and holistic care; prioritising social justice to nurture physical, mental and spiritual healing".

Pinangba operates as an independent business unit of UnitingCare working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland, and delivers a range of services including aged care, respite, family therapy and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.

We believe that the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples has led us to service these communities in partnership with UnitingCare agencies, such as Blue Care, in search of healing through truth and justice. Together we build the future we want to live in.





Aged Care and Community Services

Blue Care – Live life your way

For more than 65 years, one thing has continued to set Blue Care apart: our commitment to empowering you to live life your way.

Our story began from one person's genuine desire to serve Queenslanders and improve the lives of those in need of care. Today, our people make more than three million visits to Queenslanders each year, providing the same holistic care, service and companionship that's

been our hallmark since the very beginning. For us, care is about putting our customers and their loved ones first. Working together, we design and deliver the support they need while being a trusted adviser at the moments that matter.

A simpler way to live life

This focus on individuals has helped us become one of Queensland's largest and most trusted providers of in-home care, residential aged care, disability services, independent and supported retirement living, and allied health services.

Whether we're on the road, in your home or in centres, everything our dedicated and passionate team of more than 8,000 people do is built on our commitment to recognising individuals while enabling independence, choice and freedom.

By providing simple and honest advice and guidance, we can make the decisions easier and

deliver outcomes that are better suited. Whether we're supporting someone who has been injured to live in their home, helping a family member with respite care as their loved one ages or empowering people with disability, we understand people want independence and to feel a valued part of their community.

Setting standards in drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Pinangba Drug and Alcohol services, delivered through our Stagpole Street Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit in Townsville and the Cape York Family Centre in Cooktown, continue to lead the sector in its commitment to the highest standards.

The services support local families with culturally appropriate healing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lives have been affected by substance misuse.

In May 2020, these services achieved the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards EQUiP6

certification for safe, high quality care. The certification remains voluntary in the sector and Pinangba continues to set the standards for its peers.



Family and Disability Services

UnitingCare Family and Disability Services (FaDS) is a respected industry leader and one of Queensland's largest community service providers, with a range of services that provide support to vulnerable individuals, families and communities across the state.

Every day in the community we engage with people from all walks of life. We deliver skilled, evidence-based interventions for those facing adversity and utilise our reach and skills to confront justice. We are committed to working alongside people with disability and their families to imagine and build personally meaningful lives.

Coolamon – Leading Family and Disability Services through change and cultural content

FaDS continue to represent reconciliation through authentic advocacy and leadership of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across Queensland. As a result of this commitment the original Working Together Advisory Group (WTAG) responsible for Reconciliation in FaDS was reviewed.

The group was reassigned to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to continue the work under a self-determined model which included taking on the traditional name of the Coolamon Group in 2018.

The Coolamon Core Group is made up of 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander FaDS staff across Queensland including a number of key partners such as the RAP team, PID Senior Administration Officer and Multicultural Partnership & Engagement Advisor. The collective continues to provide opportunities for change and hold space for cultural business to take place in an appropriate way.

The group do this by:

- Sharing / exchanging cultural experience or information to support staff learning and development
- Embedding and researching cultural protocols and appropriate practice

- Supporting auditing and compliance (HSQF) requirements by ensuring our services and delivery are culturally safe
- Initiating purposeful gatherings or events
- Offering cultural representation in FaDS meetings and conferencing
- Identifying training and resources
- Delivering cultural reviews of service
- Embedding the RAP in the work we do
- Exploring opportunities for continuous improvement.



Hospitals

UnitingCare is one of the largest private hospital groups in Queensland, providing a comprehensive range of private medical services and is renowned for its clinical excellence in a number of specialised areas such as oncology, cardiology and maternity services.



Paving the way for generations to come

Ayesha Skeen credits who she is today to what she describes as the rich experience of growing up in a tight-knit family, raised by a single mother in Brisbane's north, and always knowing that her Aboriginal culture was etched into her identity.

It's this strong foundation that has driven Gubbi Gubbi and South Sea Islander woman Ayesha to represent First Nations Peoples within the health sector.

Starting her clinical career as an Aboriginal Health Care Worker, Ayesha began feeling restricted in her scope of practice and was

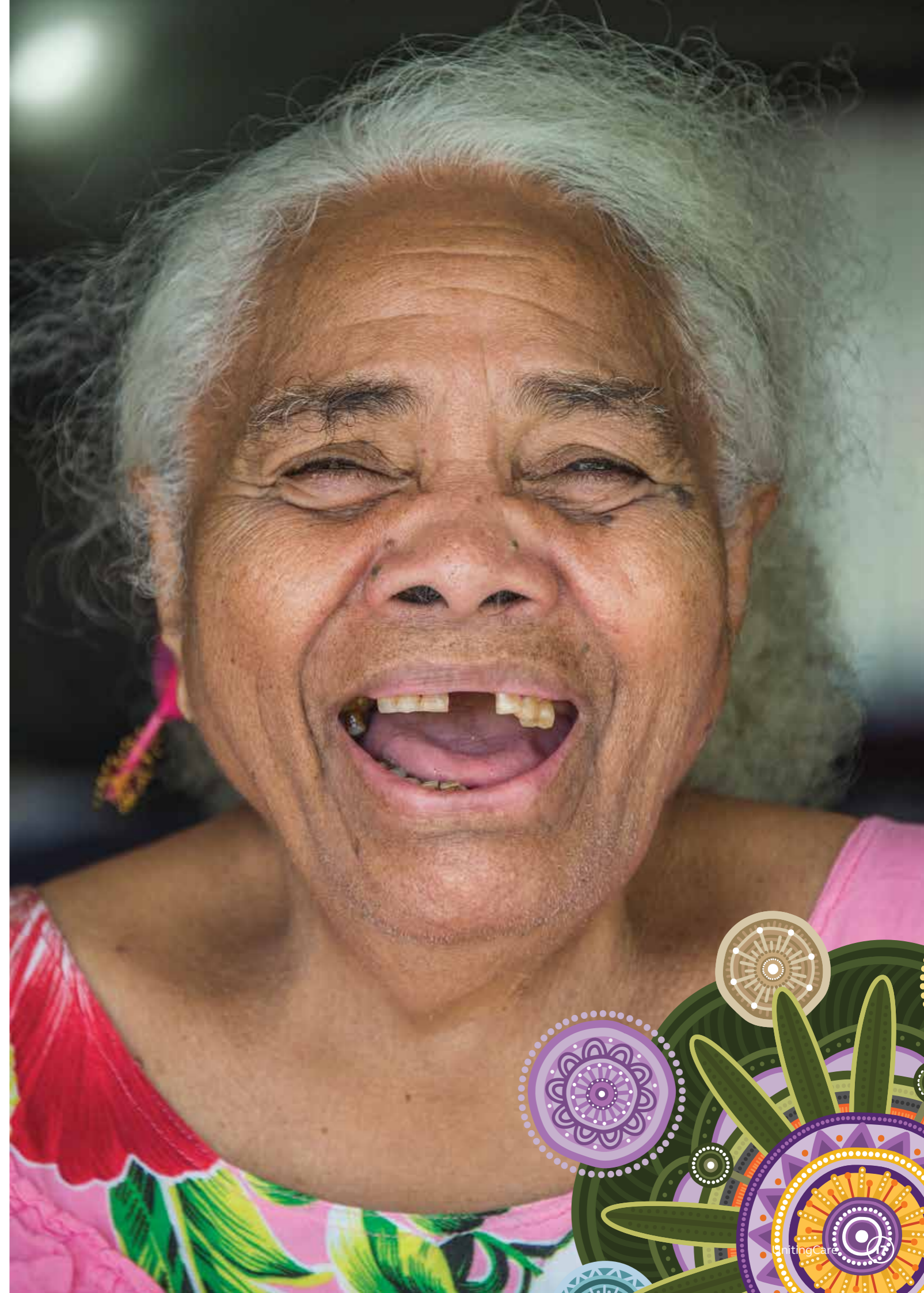
motivated to do more for her community. This led her to pursue nursing as a career, studying her Bachelor of Nursing while she was actively working full-time as an Enrolled Nurse. Ayesha is now in her second rotation as a Wesley Hospital Graduate Nurse, and values the support of the program and the knowledgeable nurses that she works alongside.

"I know that the opportunities I have now would never have been available in previous generations. That's why I try to make the most of studying and work opportunities whenever I can," says Ayesha.

Ayesha holds a strong connection to culture and believes in breaking

down barriers and building positive progress for our Indigenous communities: "I've always held a strong desire to work as a remote area nurse ever since I began my studies, and it still continues to be a goal of mine to strive for in the future. My end goal with nursing has always been to work within the community."

It's Ayesha Skeen's commitment to care and healing that confirms she is a perfect representation of UnitingCare's values for reconciliation.



Our national reach

UnitingCare Queensland is placed as a unique part of the UnitingCare Australia network, one of the largest providers of community services in Australia. With over 1,600 sites, the network employs 50,000 staff and has over 30,000 volunteers supporting over 1.4 million people.

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church's community services network and an agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

In its Statement to the Nation in 1977 the Uniting Church pledged to seek the correction of injustices and work for the eradication of poverty.

UnitingCare Australia has a mandate to advocate with the Church, to Government and the broader community on policies and practices which enhance the dignity of people, especially those who are most vulnerable. We work towards a community in which every person meets their full potential.

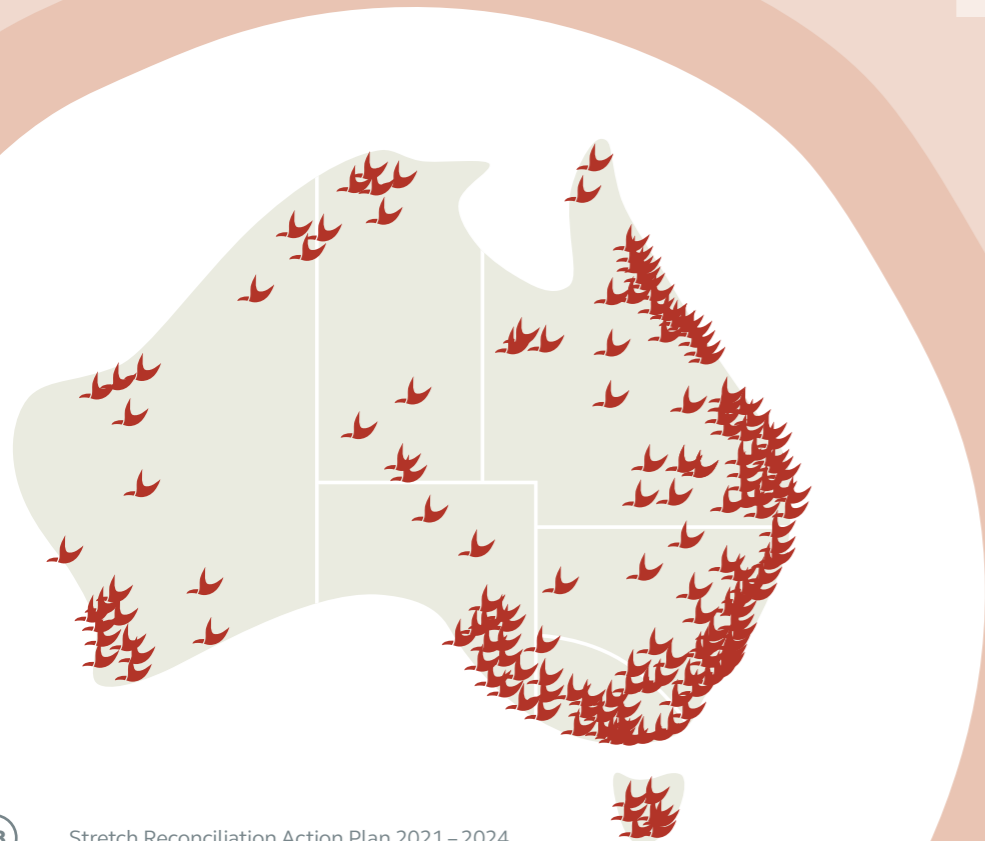
The work of UnitingCare Australia is grounded in the values and vision of the Uniting Church in Australia, the expertise in the

Church's network of service providers and the experience of those people who use those services.

UnitingCare Australia's work focuses on relationships, positioning and influence. We maintain bipartisan working relationships across all political parties and with key politicians, public servants and thought leaders at the national level. Within this environment UnitingCare offers expertise, credibility, independence and integrity.

Statistics

-  **50,000 employees**
-  **30,000 volunteers**
-  **1,600 sites**
-  **1.4m people supported**



Our commitment to the Covenant

UnitingCare is committed to the intent of the 1994 Covenant entered into by the Uniting Church of Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

We believe that maintaining the integrity of the positive history we have with the Church and our brothers and sisters of the UAICC will be a key driver in moving reconciliation into the future and creating stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australia.

Presented by Pastor Bill Hollingsworth, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Chairperson to Dr Jill Tabart, President Assembly Uniting Church in Australia, on the 10th July 1994.



The Covenant painting presentation Seventh assembly, Uniting Church in Australia 1994

The painting we present to you contains many sacred stories to do with the Wukandi ceremony which Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra spoke of in his sermon. The painting shows the sacred places of significance to the Golomula, Marraju, Marrakulu and Dhartiway Clans. The painting shows the sacred places of significance to the Golomula, Marraju, Marrakulu and Dhartiway Clans. It cannot be copied or used in any other way without the permission of Clan Elders.

Each Clan has a separate pattern, and this painting uses the patterns of the Golomula Clan. It is the story of the Wagalak Sisters.

The four goannas in the painting symbolise the four Clans we have named, who form an alliance

together, with responsibilities to the land. Central to the story in the painting is water – this sacred water which is called 'Mirriny' is a sacred symbol to Golomula.

Clans are grouped together in an alliance called a Riggitj, which has important responsibility for the land, law and ceremony. In the sacred ground shown in this painting, many ceremonies are held; the Wukandi, already mentioned, initiation ceremonies, cleansing ceremonies and ceremonies to teach men as they move through the stages to the Dhalkara and Djerrikay stage, i.e. law men.

This painting has been thoughtfully and carefully prepared, knowing that we are learning to covenant with each

other that we shall stand in solidarity with each other, in a spirit of understanding – that we shall share each other's pain and struggle.

You members of Assembly and visitors are being initiated in receiving this painting – you are initiated to stand with us, the members of Congress in our struggle.

Even though you cannot understand the deep meaning of this painting, the more you seek to discover Aboriginal Spirituality, the more your Spirit will touch ours, and our covenanting together will become a reality.

This painting we offer as a sign of our covenanting together.

Our reconciliation journey



Bicentennial Statement to the Nation

1988



The Covenant

1994



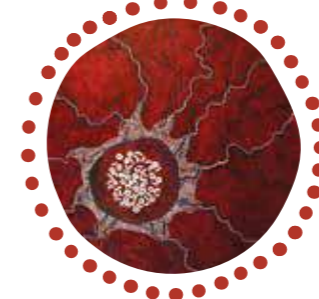
Time for Grandparents program adapted to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

2008



Change to the **Preamble of the Constitution**

2009



Commissioned Robert Barton artwork, **"We walk together"**

2011

General Reconciliation Action Plan 2012 - 2013

Indigenous Services **"Pinangba"** transition into Blue Care
Indigenous Multi-Skill Trainee Program

2012



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2014 - 2017

ARRCS was established in the Northern Territory

2014



Inaugural **UnitingCare Reconciliation Awards**

2015



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2017 - 2020

2017

Rebrand of Indigenous Services as **Pinangba**
Launched **Keep our kids connected** campaign
First Indigenous Leadership and Management Program
Launched **Indigenous Traineeship Program**
Launched **Indigenous Cadet Program**
Inaugural **GroundWater Gathering**
Recognising **First Peoples sovereignty**

2018



First National Gathering of First Nations Leaders

2019



Launching fourth Reconciliation Action Plan to further progress social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities

2021



Our approach to reconciliation

At UnitingCare, each of our targets and commitments within our RAP align to Reconciliation Australia's pillars - **relationships, respect and opportunities** - as well as the **five dimensions of reconciliation**.

These, along with UnitingCare's mission and our values for reconciliation, inspire our way forward to impact Australia's reconciliation agenda alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

Institutional integrity

- We embed community engagement in all service provisions so social outcomes and economic change meet the needs of community at a local and national level.
- We empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance so decisions made for mob are made ethically and cultural safety is ensured at all services.
- We enable outcomes under our RAP that provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by providing funding to support local action.

Historical acceptance

- We use our organisation as a platform to tell these stories so all employees are aware and can share what they have learnt with the wider community.
- We capture the stories of our people - employees and clients, so we hear their voice.
- We go beyond acceptance so we enable a deep-rooted understanding.

Unity

- We work to build readiness for unity and constitutional reform so we can move beyond unity as something we do for our First Nations Peoples, to something we do with our First Nations Peoples for all Australians.
- We want to deepen our cultural awareness and celebrate our achievements so that we challenge the unconscious bias, improve connection and empathy across the business (employees, volunteers, customers and communities).
- We take a stronger advocacy position with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities so outcomes are achieved collaboratively, respectfully and with impact.

Equality and equity

- We want to set a mandatory expectation that all of our people complete cultural appreciation training so our organisational culture and capability is built and maintained.
- We want to empower and enhance opportunities for mentoring so we can nurture growth and choices in career pathways.
- We set meaningful targets for recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples so diversity is embedded in our organisation.
- We engage, consult and listen to community voices in all organisational planning stages so that our services are valuable and culturally informed.

Race relations

- We want to make reconciliation everyone's business through awareness, understanding and connection so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples feel trusted and respected.
- We embed RAP outcomes into all policy and provide support to services so that commitment to reconciliation is non-negotiable.
- We want to use the opportunity we have as part of the Church to speak into the political, business and community landscape so reconciliation is actively experienced and evidenced by what we do and see.



Our focus on reconciliation

Governance and leadership

UnitingCare will demonstrate listening and **respect** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their beliefs and values through a commitment to self-determination for Australia's First Nations Peoples; improve systems to support the career goals and aspirations of our workforce; and raise the profile and structures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander influence in decision-making processes.

Engagement and reconciliation awareness

Healthy **relationships** in UnitingCare between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians are vital and essential to reconciliation.

Cultural appreciation

UnitingCare recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Nations Peoples and are defined by learning about knowledge of culture, language and history. To have this reality acknowledged and accepted is at the heart of **respect**.

Workforce and procurement development

Employment **opportunities** are essential to ensure communities benefit from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce comprised of people who are respected and supported to reach their full potential. In doing this we commit to improving procurement opportunities and workplace environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to enable them to fully participate within a culturally diverse organisation.

The communities we serve

Relationships thrive within the organisation and through the work of all UnitingCare services we demonstrate respect, trust, connection and practical understanding of how we work together. Good **relationships** help us to deliver our quality services with compassion and to provide a voice for a fair and just society.

Our reconciliation action groups

UnitingCare is a large health organisation with brands specialising in some of the most complex health systems.

The UnitingCare Reconciliation Action Plans have been implemented across the business by specialist committees within their field to ensure maximum impact.

UnitingCare's fourth Reconciliation Action Plan was developed through the ongoing collaboration and support between:

- UnitingCare RAP committees
- Senior leaders from across the organisation, including Blue Care FaDS and Hospitals
- Over 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from across Queensland.

The Advisory Group on Reconciliation (AGR) provides governance and strategic direction for the organisation's reconciliation activities, and promotes and supports implementation of the commitments made in UnitingCare's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The group includes representatives from across the organisation and meets each quarter. The AGR is co-chaired by the Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnership and the RAP Executive Sponsor, UnitingCare Director of Mission.

Additional subcommittees have been formed to ensure RAP deliverables are actioned within services; these include a sub-committee for Family and Disability Services (Coolamon),

Hospitals RAP Group and Aged Care and Community Services RAP Group. In addition, corporate services contribute with sub-committees including Procurement, Communications and People and Culture. Each subcommittee reports back through to the Advisory Group on Reconciliation for progress reporting.

All our committees aim to ensure 50% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership at all times and are responsible for the development and implementation of the RAP across all groups of the UnitingCare business. They act as a creative, supportive and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and provide a safe space for non-Indigenous employees to ask questions and lend their crucial expertise and advice.



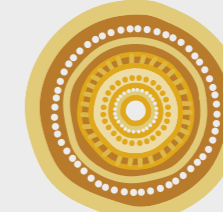
Advisory Group on Reconciliation



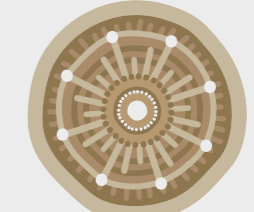
Coolamon Family and Disability Services



Aged Care and Community Services



Hospitals



Corporate Services, People and Culture, Procurement and Communications

Built on the foundation of core RAP values and previous outcomes

Governance and leadership

For the purposes of this RAP UnitingCare has included an accountable executive for reporting purposes and a team responsible for the delivery of each action.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Continued governance by the Advisory Group on Reconciliation (AGR)	Oversee the development, endorsement and launch of UnitingCare RAP 2021-2024	March 2021	Self-Determination	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Advisory Group on Reconciliation
	Meet four times per year (quarterly) to receive reports from service streams and RAP Sub Committees	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021-2024		
	Continue to ensure there are a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples represented on the AGR			
	Continue executive sponsorship (Director, Mission) throughout the life of the RAP			
	Review and update the AGR terms of reference and review of memberships			
Continue to publish AGR minutes on intranet sites				
Ensure strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership at all levels of the organisation	Develop a fundraising strategy that delivers opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership programs and initiatives	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021-2024	Self-Determination	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Develop an organisation-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership program that contributes to the success and development of employees both personally and professionally	June 2022	Equality	
	Implement a scholarship program to identify and develop the next generation of leaders. Invest in two scholarships per year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within UnitingCare for the life of RAP	Report September 2021-2023		Accountable Group Executive, People and Culture Responsible People and Culture Subcommittee
	Ensure 5% (based on recruitment target of 5% and number of SLT within the organisation) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are appointed to senior leadership positions within UnitingCare	March 2022 March 2023 March 2024		Accountable Chief Executive Officer Responsible Executive Leadership Team
	Develop platforms that responsibly and appropriately recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples at Executive and Board levels of the organisation i.e. seek advice from consultants and explore partnerships with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)	Report September 2021-2023		Accountable Chief Executive Officer Responsible Group Executive, People and Culture Group Executive, Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Implement a best practice governance model that incorporates both western and Indigenous governance practices and systems	Build governance practices that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination within UnitingCare	June 2021	Self-Determination	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in governance and decision making through all levels of the organisation by membership on committees, advisory groups etc.	June 2023		
Support the reconciliation agenda publicly and within our services	Identify advocacy opportunities that support positive race relations by: Supporting at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public initiative that has meaningful impact on public policy by publically supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart	Report September 2021-2023	Relationships	Accountable Director, Corporate Affairs Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Host four (4) lunch and learn sessions to raise awareness internally			



“It’s important we build systems that incorporate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance. This will support a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to flourish and assist in addressing the health inequality of the communities we serve.”

Gavin Mackey,
Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships

National voice for UnitingCare Australia

It was an historic week in September 2019 with First Peoples Leaders from UnitingCare Australia's network and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress meeting together for the first time in Canberra. It marked a new beginning for a Uniting First Peoples Voice within the Uniting Church of Australia.

We gathered together in the National Botanical Gardens for two days, and the discussions led to the emergence of a way forward that will elevate the First Peoples Voice across the breadth and depth of the Uniting Church and our agencies. This goes some way towards honouring the strategic priorities of both UnitingCare Australia and the National Assembly, together with the Assembly justice statement A Heart for First Peoples.

UnitingCare Australia CEO, Claerwen Little said, "This inaugural meeting was an important step forward, but the challenge is to build on the energy and enthusiasm and develop the governance structures and processes to make our aspirations and goals a reality. UnitingCare Australia and the Uniting Church have publicly supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart, but

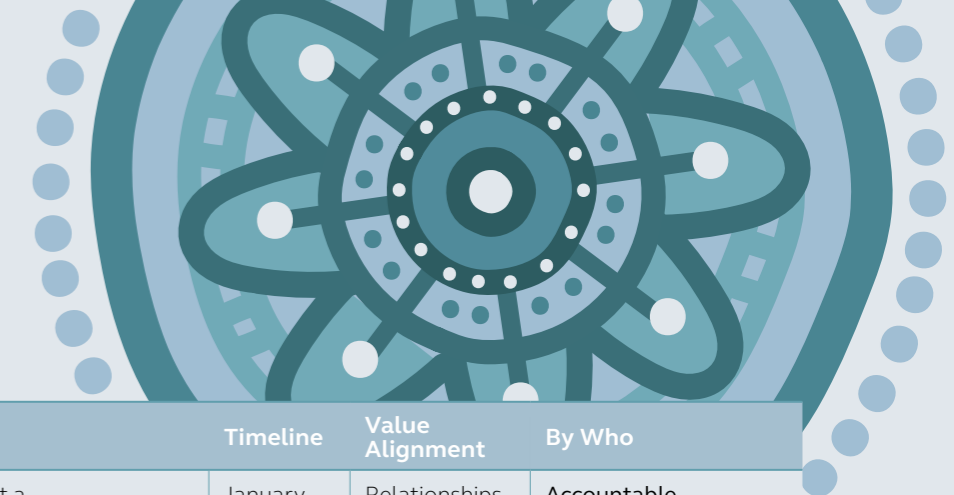
we also recognise we need to do more to elevate the Voice of First Peoples in our own organisations."

Emerging leaders were encouraged and supported by Elders at the gathering to lead the conversations in meetings at Parliament House with Federal Indigenous Minister Ken Wyatt, Senator Rachel Siewert from the Greens, Senator Pat Dodson, the Hon Linda Burney MP and the Hon Warren Snowden MP from the Labor Party.

There is a great deal of excitement and energy around the possibilities presented in creating a Uniting First Peoples Voice. Non-Indigenous people who were present at the gathering are equally enthusiastic about a future for this Voice. A working group has been established to progress what we started and map out a possible way forward.



Engagement and reconciliation awareness



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Advisory Group on Reconciliation members to participate in one external NRW event	27 May – 3 June, 2021–2023	Relationships	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Communications RAP Sub Committee
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all employees			
	Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW			
	Host UnitingCare Reconciliation Awards			
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website			
	Nominate the UnitingCare Reconciliation Award winner for Queensland Reconciliation Awards			
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	Report September 2021–2023	Relationships	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Establish and maintain two (2) formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations			
	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.			
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination	Report September 2021–2023	Relationships Respect	Accountable Group Executive, People and Culture Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy			
	Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.			
	Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.			
	Senior leaders to publically support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.			

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across the organisation and sector	Develop and implement a communications strategy to maintain priority and visibility across the organisation from executive to front line employees and externally	January 2022–2024 refresh	Relationships	Accountable Director, Corporate Affairs Responsible Communications RAP Sub Committee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Develop quarterly newsletter sharing Reconciliation updates and organisational news	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2024		
	Ensure quarterly RAP updates are shared with the UnitingCare Australia network			
	Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.			
	Collaborate with Five (5) RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement ways to advance reconciliation			
	Establish RAP KPI's for Executive and Senior Leader performance plans	June 2021		
	In collaboration with Reconciliation Queensland, host a RAP Learning Circle with Queensland-based health and community services RAP organisations to share learnings and strategies to advance reconciliation within the industry	December 2022–2024	Respect	Accountable Director, Corporate Affairs Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	AGR to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event	First week in July, 2021–2023	Respect	Accountable Group Executive, People and Culture Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to employees participating in NAIDOC Week	March 2021, 2022–2024		
	Support all employees to participate in internal and community led NAIDOC Week events	First week in July, 2021–2023		
	Support 10 internal and community events during NAIDOC Week			
	In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders support two external NAIDOC event each year			

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Establish an internal campaign that pledges genuine support for the RAP core values and actions	Develop and implement a campaign that engages UnitingCare employees to pledge the participation in our RAP journey e.g. commitment to attend training and/or commitment to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples we employ	June 2021	Respect	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Communications RAP Sub Committee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Reach 2000 individual pledges throughout UnitingCare	June 2022		
	Support the Uniting Church of Australia covenant by advocating for pledges nationally	June 2023		
Continue to improve our employee network to recognise and respect the value and knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples bring to UnitingCare's work and success	Host an annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee forum to support the cultural safety and wellbeing of our employees, clients and communities	March 2022	Relationships Self-Determination	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Communications RAP Sub Committee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Actively promote the use of UnitingCare online networks in Workplace (digital online platform)	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021-2023	Relationships	
Publicly advocate for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within our sphere of influence.	Continue to work alongside UnitingCare Australia in advocating for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples i.e. participation in National Gathering and Working Group	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021-2023	Equality	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Support UnitingCare Australia by contributing to advocacy submissions to parliament e.g. Closing the Gap			



“Community engagement and capacity building provides a focus on two-way partnerships rather than one-way community service. Community engagement recognises and invests in the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge, and establishes a partnership that creates two-way learning opportunities, confidence in work practice and delivers meaningful outcomes appropriate for community.”

Renny Woibo,
Family Case Worker



GroundWater Gathering

It takes many hands to do the work of the UnitingCare Family and Disability Services to ensure the cultural safety and wellbeing of our employees, clients and communities. The senior leadership team recognised that to do this for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve a self-determination model would be needed to ensure empowerment and encourage positive outcomes. An outcome of this model is our GroundWater Gathering.

The GroundWater Gathering is our Family and Disability Services' annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference, for all identified employees and specialists.

Its purpose is to bring together multi-disciplinary expertise from across the community sector specialising in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and culturally informed service delivery, so our

Family and Disability employees can learn, explore, connect and share ideas around culture, practice, development and engagement.

Each year the event continues to evolve with wider community reach and capacity.

The 2019 event saw 150 employees attend the conference with a theme of Voice - Treaty - Truth, to align with the national NAIDOC theme. Important shared conversations and learnings included the voice of the child, family and parenting, financial wellbeing, reconciliation and men's wellbeing.

The event and program were developed by the dedicated members of Family and Disability Service's Coolamon Group (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group) and drew upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural processes to provide a truly unique and engaging space for participants to learn, explore ideas, and share cultural knowledge and practice from a Family and Disability perspective.

Opening the event with a Smoking Ceremony and including a ceremony table and traditional food tasting, helped to place culture as the central focus throughout the two days and created a space in which participants were open and ready to share and learn together.

"If we are to truly stand in solidarity and represent our RAP both existing and coming then we must hear the voices of our mob and have them included in the decision making at every level of service".

Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive and it is clear that the GroundWater Gathering will have an ongoing impact for all participants and flow on benefits for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities we serve.

Sharing Cultural Connections, Knowledge & Practice Across UnitingCare Child & Family Services

GroundWater Gathering (the meaning in this context) Ground represents our mother earth and Aboriginal Peoples unique connection to Land and Country. Water represents life for Torres Strait Islander Peoples as waterways and seas surround their Islands and provides a vital food chain for all to share.

Gatherings for sharing and celebrations are age old traditions that we do well. Together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workers welcome you to GroundWater Gathering to share cultural knowledge and practice from a child and family perspective.

Acknowledgement of event Motif to Michelle Greener

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Admin Trainee (Practice, Improvement and Development)

Symbolism: Bringing together everyone to share and celebrate our cultural knowledge and practices. This celebration of knowledge will enrich us all; mind, body and spirit. May you take in this knowledge and let it flow on into the lives of those around you. Whilst enjoying the bringing together of peoples from different locales. May everyone's energies be refreshed and renewed.

Acknowledgement of event name to Aunty Dulcie Bronsch

Senior Project Officer for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders and Time for Grandparents Program.



Cultural appreciation



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	Review the cultural learning needs of our organisation	Report December 2021–2023	Respect	Accountable Director of Mission Group Executive, People and Culture Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team People and Culture Sub Committee
	Review and implement the cultural appreciation training strategy			
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of a cultural learning strategy			
	Commit all senior and executive leaders and Advisory Group on Reconciliation to undertake formal and structured cultural learning			
	Ensure employees undertake formal and structured learning. Including: 50% Online learning 20% Face to Face	Report March 2021–2024		
	Engage local Traditional Owners in co-delivery of face to face cultural appreciation training	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Commit to 10 places for corporate attendance at the GARMA Festival	By August 2023		
	Facilitate at least two experiences per year; one SEQ based and one in another regional location to enable UnitingCare employees to form deeper connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and Peoples (e.g. on Country walks, movie screenings, Indigenous art tours, Bangarra, Mabo Oration etc.)	June 2021, 2022, 2023		

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by observing cultural protocols	Continue to increase employee understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country by further communicating the Cultural Protocols and Acknowledgement cards	September 2021–2023	Respect	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Review and refresh cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country			
	Invite local Traditional Owners or Custodians to provide Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at all major events including: UnitingCare Reconciliation Awards, Senior Leaders, Full Circle Awards, Ground Water Gathering and NAIDOC Week celebrations			
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Employees and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events			
	Ensure 50% or 250 sites of UnitingCare services/offices display Acknowledgment of Country plaques	June 2023		



“Facilitating Cultural Appreciation training is an opportunity to share knowledge with each level of the UnitingCare workforce and provide a critical lens and understanding of why culturally safe and appropriate practice is vital to our service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.”

Rona Scherer,
Cultural Appreciation Delivery Officer

Impacts of cultural learning and appreciation

UnitingCare is committed to increasing the understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

As part of these commitments, cultural appreciation workshops have been rolled out across the state to inform a deeper understanding and respect for the communities we serve and these are having a huge impact on lifting the cultural awareness in our workforce across our organisation.

It is critical that a safe place is created so that discussion and questions flow freely and are treated with honour and respect. The opportunity is to enjoy face to face learning and increase knowledge about Australia's First Peoples and cultures, which in turn increases trust in UnitingCare,

that not only values professional development but also values Australia's First Peoples.

One First Nations employee observed the improved change in the immediate work environment due to the new understanding colleagues gained about Australia's true history, the importance of cultural safety, and being welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Another participant said, "The training was very informative and made a good link from past to present. Although the training was about legacy, it was very positive, with a positive mood even though the topic was very emotionally demanding at times."

Some of the participants have had such positive experiences in the training their leaders have organised for entire teams to participate in the workshop.

The appreciation for the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the overwhelming injustices and trauma dealt with as a consequence of colonisation results in participants developing a deeper sense of empathy and becoming compelled to share their learnings with friends and family. It reinforces their place in UnitingCare's cultural journey and how all employees contribute to UnitingCare being unified, positive and healthy.



Workforce and procurement development



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to consult on our human resources, recruitment, retention, workforce development and professional development strategies on an ongoing basis through the life of the RAP	June 2021-2023	Equality	Accountable Group Executive, People and Culture Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team People and Culture Sub Committee
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021 -2024		
	Review contracts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned recruitment agencies on our panel	June 2021-2023		
	Review human resources and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace	June 2021-2023		
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment to 3% of the workforce	March 2022 - 2% March 2023 - 2.5% March 2024 - 3%		
	Review and refresh Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce plan	March 2021-2023		
	Recruit 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Trainees per year for the life of the RAP	March 2021-2023		
	Establish an internship program in partnership with Career Trackers	June Annually		
	Recruit eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates into existing graduate programs per year	March 2021-2023		
	Develop and implement a structured mentoring program to ensure the success and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members	June 2022		
	Develop a workforce plan toolkit for leaders to better support the recruitment, sourcing and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (including talent pipeline management)	December 2022		
	Develop an Indigenous Employee Value Proposition and related collateral	June 2022		

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy that includes an identified commitment of spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by category	Report on target through the Procurement Strategy and provide to Reconciliation Australia in September 2021-2023	Equality	Accountable Chief Financial Officer Responsible Procurement Sub Committee
	Develop, communicate and update opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to all employees	September 2021-2023		
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses			
	Maintain commercial relationships with 50 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses			
	Train all relevant employees in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation			



“ **UnitingCare plays a critical role in creating both access and participation of First Peoples in our workforce, furthermore, this goes to the heart of who we are and what we aspire to achieve. Creating sustainable opportunities enriches our diversity and workplaces bringing new learnings and evolving our engagement as a collective society. It is critical our workforce represents the communities we serve.** ”

George Sutherland,
Group Executive, People and Culture

Creating pathways and supporting futures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are among the most disadvantaged peoples in Australia with an unemployment rate five times higher than that of non-Indigenous Australia. During the past 5 years Queensland has witnessed many programs and initiatives that provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with a certificate three level qualification.

This level of education represents 18.6% of the First Peoples population with only 4.2% of the population holding a diploma level qualification and 3.6% with degree level and 1% with postgraduate level qualifications.

Through this identified gap in diploma level qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, UnitingCare initiated a Leadership program that saw 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders participate in a Diploma of Leadership and Management to increase nationally recognised qualifications and strengthen their leadership skills in becoming influential ambassadors for their communities, teams, UnitingCare

and ultimately reconciliation within Australia.

One of these graduates is Lakota Beadnell. Lakota began her journey with UnitingCare during high school where she worked within the UnitingCare Volunteer team. After volunteering for a few months Lakota saw the traineeship opportunities and decided to apply for one of the roles. Successfully obtaining a Business Administration traineeship split between the Recruitment team and Learning and Development, Lakota continued to dedicate herself to professional development and learn more about UnitingCare business functions.

When her traineeship was coming to end, Lakota was offered a 3-month contract on a project with Disability Services as an Administration Support Officer. "In three short months I gained so much knowledge and experience of the organisation and was able to develop my administration skills quite a lot," Lakota said.

Once the project came to an end Lakota was offered a Cadetship in the Learning and Development team where she completed

a Diploma of Leadership and Management – Lakota is now employed full time as a Learning and Development Support Officer.

Lakota said, "My experience at UnitingCare has been really enjoyable. Each opportunity and mentor that I have been blessed with at UnitingCare has given me the support needed to reach my career goals and aspirations as well as providing the tools to succeed. I have enjoyed every second of my journey and have learnt so much. Throughout each of my roles I have been appropriately challenged and been given the opportunity to prove to myself and others the strength of my skills and my constant desire to learn and grow".

These pathway programs have been an annual operational function since 2017 and have been fundamental in strengthening the UnitingCare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.



The communities we serve

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Ensure UnitingCare services are culturally appropriate and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities	Develop and implement commitments within the aged care quality and safety framework that supports the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in our care	September 2021	Respect	Accountable Group Executive, Aged Care and Community Services Responsible ACCS RAP Sub Committee
	Report against the Aged Care and Community Services action plan quarterly to the Advisory Group in Reconciliation	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander industry experts to co-design a new governance model for Pinangba. The new governance model must not only satisfy the organisational, operational and regulatory requirements of UnitingCare (Western governance models) but also consider the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve (Indigenous governance).	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Develop an action plan to implement commitments in this RAP and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national health standards (Hospitals) with an increased focus on cultural appreciation, employment and employee engagement	September 2021		Accountable Group Executive, Hospitals Responsible Hospitals RAP Sub Committee
	Report against the Hospitals action plan quarterly to the Advisory Group in Reconciliation	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Implement FaDS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Appreciation Strategy 2020-2023	June 2021		
Report against the FaDS action plan quarterly to the Advisory Group in Reconciliation	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023	Accountable Group Executive, Family and Disability Services Responsible Coolamon Group		



“In serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, families and communities, it is imperative that we as an organisation are aware of historical practices and how these have shaped the experiences and power imbalances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This awareness allows us to apply a holistic approach in our service delivery and affirms that cultural considerations will be at the forefront of everything we do.”

Tania Murray,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Specialist

Tracking and reporting

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	By Who
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia	September, 2021–2023	Relationships	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	May 2022		
	Complete and promote a UnitingCare RAP Annual Report	September, 2021–2023		
	Report RAP progress to ELT quarterly	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
	Communicate quarterly updates on RAP progress to all employees	September, 2021–2023		
Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings	September, 2021–2023			
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Develop and implement systems and capabilities to track, measure and report on RAP activities	September, 2021–2023	Relationships	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Embed resource needs for RAP implementation.			
	Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, 2021–2023		
Review, refresh and update RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP (V) based on RAP (IV) learnings, challenges and achievements	September 2023	Relationships	Accountable Director of Mission Responsible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	Send draft RAP (V) to Reconciliation Australia for feedback	October 2023		
	Submit draft RAP (V) to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement	March 2024		



Contact details for public enquiries about our RAP

Gavin Mackey

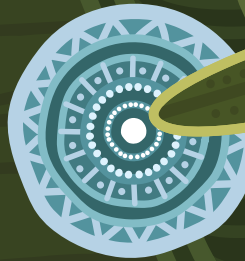
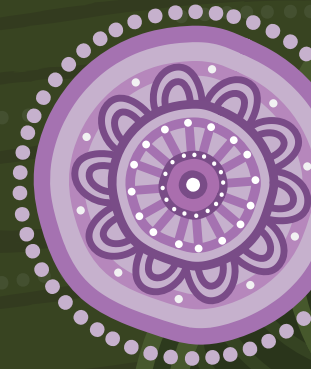
Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships

0427 190 698

Reconciliation@ucareqld.com.au

unitingcareqld.com.au/RAP





Proudly representing
Blue Care | Lifeline | ARRCs | The Wesley Hospital | Buderim Private Hospital
St Stephen's Hospital | St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

unitingcareqld.com.au