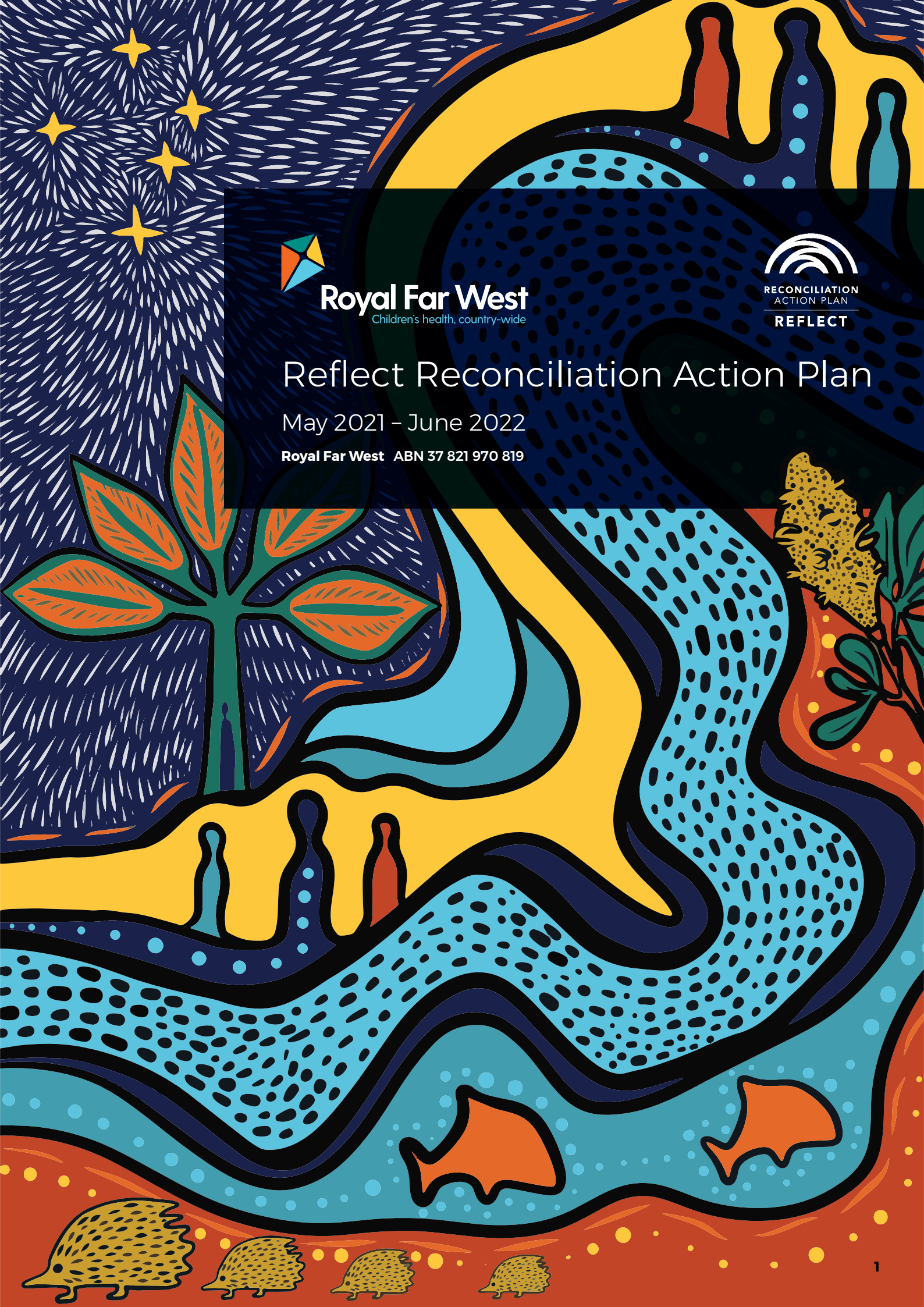


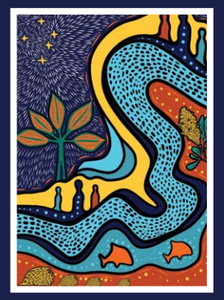
Royal Far West
Children's health, country-wide

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
REFLECT

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2021 – June 2022

Royal Far West **ABN 37 821 970 819**



Cover artwork

‘Journey of Hope’

Artist

Frances Belle Parker (using elements of Jessica Birk’s designs) 2021

Acknowledgement of Country

Royal Far West acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and the ongoing and important wisdom shared through their continued connection with the land, waters and community. We respectfully recognise the Elders of the past and present, and walk with the children who will become future Elders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain images or mentions of deceased persons.

Artist statement

The artwork ‘Journey of Hope’ is a collaborative piece between myself and my late cousin Jessica Birk. The two of us have always created works reflecting our proud Yaegl heritage.

This piece is meant as an accompaniment to the fence design we created at Royal Far West (RFW) in 2018 and incorporates similar themes and design elements with the theme of healing, connection and belonging. It has always been our aim in these works produced for RFW to be comforting, welcoming and inclusive to all children who come here, regardless of their background. All should be made to feel at peace through these works.

In this piece, titled ‘Journey of Hope’ I have incorporated symbols and designs to tell a story and lead the viewers’ eyes throughout. The river is the central symbol that flows through this work from the bottom left to the top right. In our culture the river is a symbol of healing, hope, new life and a life-giving vein.

Beside the river I have included a coastline and figures; these represent a shared journey of healing. No one walks their journey alone. The journey is reinforced throughout the artwork with the inclusion of dashes and dots representing tracks.

Beside the river, and to where the river runs, is the ocean. The ocean is incorporated as a symbol of cleansing and healing and is a direct reference to the location of RFW in Manly. Two fish have been included, again reinforcing the idea of a shared journey, travelling together, and hope.

A family of echidnas traverse the land, and these four echidnas represent a family’s journey of love and support.

A banksia emerges from the right of the work and has been incorporated as a symbol of resilience and strength. Banksias are known for their remarkable ability to bounce back and flourish after bushfires. Banksias are strong and prove their strength through their natural regrowth and regeneration in nature. This banksia represents the strength of every child and family who enters, proving they will leave stronger and more resilient.

The Southern Cross and stars have been included with great prominence in the top left of this work. These ancient wonders are a symbol here of guidance and navigation, leading the figures and leading the children on their path. Aboriginal people have navigated the landscape through the constellations in the night sky for thousands of years. The night sky is an important element of Songlines within Country. A tree stands tall and features a spirit figure within the trunk. This spirit figure represents the ancestors of our people guiding us and protecting us on our journey to healing.

Our Business

Royal Far West (RFW) is one of Australia's oldest and most respected charities and is the only national charity dedicated to the developmental health and wellbeing of Australia's country kids.

Established in 1924, RFW provides a truly integrated service offering health, education and disability services for country children and their families at the Centre for Country Kids in Manly, as well as virtually via telecare and in local communities.

Through a team of more than 90 paediatric specialists, RFW supports children aged 0–12 years with a range of concerns including speech and language delays, behavioural and conduct disorders, early life trauma and mental illness, autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders.

At RFW we believe that:

- Healthy country children are critical to our nation and our future
- Every child has the right to be respected as an individual and we acknowledge their specific needs, rights and contributions
- Access to the right support at the right time can reset a child's life trajectory
- Access alone is not enough, quality of services and outcomes matter
- To support a child's health and wellbeing, it is vital to support the parents, carers, educators and community that support the child
- An integrated and collaborative approach is the best way to surround the child.

RFW's workforce totals 222 staff including 112 fulltime (FT); 80 part-time (PT) and 30 casuals.
It is unknown how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are currently employed, however, this is something we will seek to understand and grow through this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
The organisation's geographic reach is national with our programs currently operating in NSW, QLD and WA. The organisation's head office is in Manly, on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Our RAP

Royal Far West is passionately committed to ensuring we provide culturally safe and accountable health, education and disability services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, organisations and communities. We are also committed to advocating for equal access to services for all regional families, particularly our First Nations families.

The Reflect RAP provides a step by step framework to ensure that the principles and actions RFW will apply and achieve will lead to a more culturally competent workforce and more culturally safe environment for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners and families. The Reflect RAP will also enable RFW to document, celebrate and publicise all the current engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families taking place across the organisation. Over the course of a year, mapping our considerable existing activities will allow RFW to truly reflect and celebrate the great work we already do, whilst considering the next steps, such as how RFW will implement a standardised process on when and how to appropriately seek advice on service co-design and culturally sensitive issues.

Reconciliation at RFW is a journey we have been on for some time now and we see it being an important part of our organisational strategy, how we live our values of Caring, Connected, Passionate and Impact, and informing our clinical service models and workforce development into the future as we create and enhance a safe cultural space for our client families and staff.

Our work in this important area is led by the Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Emery. As our RAP Champion, Jacqui is responsible for driving internal engagement and awareness of the RAP across the organisation.

We have also established a RAP Working Group, which has a minimum of 10 members, representing teams from across the organisation, including clinical and non-clinical staff. RFW has also engaged the services of an Aboriginal facilitator, Benny Eggmolesse, from Aakither to guide the development of our RAP framework, conduct staff cultural competency training and provide expertise for an Aboriginal Employment Strategy. We have also been supported by Susan Moylan Coombs and Lois Birk from the Royal Far West School, who have been providing feedback on the RAP framework.

RFW has a long history of supporting Aboriginal children, families and communities in rural and remote Australia. Currently, approximately one quarter of RFW client families identify as Aboriginal. Our current commitment is reflected in RFW's Strategic Plan 2021–2025, specifically:

Priority:
Strengthen our Services

Focus Area:
Increase our focus on partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and build our cultural competency and safety

Success Measure:
Our expertise and support is valued by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with whom we work

Royal Far West's reconciliation journey to date:

November 2014, Walgett AMS and RFW sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding to reflect our partnership.

August 2015, Indigenous leaders from Fitzroy Crossing WA visit RFW.

December 2015, RFW CEO and Head speech pathologist visit Fitzroy Crossing to advance our developing partnership.

2016, RFW staff member April Jones drafted the Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework.

October 2016, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre and RFW sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise our partnership.

February 2017, consultant Teela Reid was commissioned to complete a Framework for RFW, which became the Cultural Innovation Blueprint.

August – November 2017, 20 RFW staff participated in the national Stronger Smarter Institute cultural awareness training, leading to several small projects to better support our Aboriginal client families.

October 2017, a smaller group of eight staff commenced meeting regularly as the Aboriginal Cultural Engagement Working Group, to formally review the draft blueprint from a RFW perspective, implement and monitor progress.

November 2017, RFW finalised our Aboriginal Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Protocol. The RFW Board adopted this protocol for all of its meetings.

The Working Group agreed to meet approximately every six weeks, with membership including representatives from all Directorates and the RFW School.

May 2018, the revised blueprint was circulated internally for feedback.

June to December 2018, the Working Group elected to focus on staff training and recruitment as two priority areas for consideration.

December 2018, RFW opened the Centre for Country Kids in Manly, with an official Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony and a dedication plaque to the local indigenous clans of Manly. RFW also unveiled our Beach to Bush – Healing Connections fence installation, designed by three Indigenous artists to reflect our Aboriginal heritage.

In January 2019, RFW produced a co-design and development strategy for Indigenous service models as part of the scale up of our disability program Windmill.

March 2019, RFW as a member of the NRHA votes to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Working Group submitted a case for a RAP to the Executive Leadership Team.

May 2019, then Business Director, Jacqui Emery took on the Exec Sponsor role for the Working Group.

June 2019, the working party attending cultural awareness training conducted by specialist Indigenous training organisation Murumal.

July 2019, RFW held our first NAIDOC week celebrations in collaboration with the Gunyadu First Nations Women's Aboriginal Corporation – an Aboriginal group based on the Northern Beaches. This week included various engagement events for clients and staff, (a smoking ceremony, Aboriginal art display, yarning circles on the theme for NAIDOC week and basket weaving).

August 2019, RFW reached the final 12 (out of 1,000 applications) for the Macquarie Foundation's 50th anniversary award for a proposal around the development of a remote community model to working with remote indigenous communities to improve developmental and life outcomes for their children.

August 2019, we officially launched our intention to all staff to proceed with a RAP for RFW and called for expressions of interest to join a new RAP Working Group to replace the Cultural Engagement Working Group.

February 2020, RFW held our first RAP Working Group and approved a proposal to work with Aakither to develop a Reflect RAP, deliver Cultural Competency training and deliver an Aboriginal Employment Strategy. We also changed the RAP Working Group name to the Reconciliation Journey Team (RJT) to reflect our deep commitment to embed culturally safe practices at RFW, as opposed to a one-off project.

March 2020, RFW held our first RAP workshop with Benny Eggmolesse from Aakither and engaged with local Aboriginal leaders for their guidance and input, including Lois Birk, Susan Moylan Coombs and Charles Davis from NSW Health. RJT Terms of Reference were finalised and endorsed.

April 2020, the RAP was put on hold to respond to the challenges of the Pandemic.

May 2020, RFW held the second virtual RAP workshop with Benny Eggmolesse from Aakither. We also recognised National Sorry Day through all our communication channels – internal and external.

June 2020, RFW recognised Mabo Day, and held third RAP workshop with Benny Eggmolesse from Aakither.

July 2020, a draft Reflect RAP framework was finalised and socialised with internal and external stakeholders. Feedback, including from the RFW Board was included in a revised framework.

July-Sept 2020, 40 staff involved in Cultural Competency full day workshops. The RAP is included in the FY21 RFW Business Plan.

September 2020, secured Aboriginal northern rivers artist Frances Belle Parker to create the artwork for the RFW Reflect RAP.

October 2020, three-year employment data collated to commence Aboriginal Employment Strategy. Preparing for the postponed NAIDOC week in November.

June 2021, conditional approval was given by Reconciliation Australia for RFW's first Reflect RAP.

Royal Far West partnerships / current activities

Royal Far West has several partnerships with Aboriginal services and community groups including Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Valley, WA; Walgett AMS; Griffith AMS; Rivmed in Wagga; Wanaruah Lands Council, Muswellbrook; Bourke AHS; Murrin Bridge Land Council, Lake Cargelligo; Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke, that are focused on collaborating to deliver clinical services to children; The Gaimaragal Group and the Gunyadu First Nations Women's Aboriginal Corporation focused on building cultural knowledge and understanding in our local area.

One of our deepest and most meaningful partnerships is with the Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre. In August 2015, Indigenous leaders from Fitzroy Crossing, WA, visited RFW to observe RFW's Paediatric Developmental Program. After almost 12 months of sharing knowledge and understanding, in October 2016, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre and RFW signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise our partnership known as the Fitzroy Crossing: Marurra-U partnership. Since that time the partners have worked together to address the complex needs of children of the Fitzroy Valley in the Kimberley region of WA. Children and families in the Fitzroy Valley are impacted by high levels of early childhood and intergenerational trauma, fetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD) and the remoteness of the communities, which impact service access and infrastructure.

The Fitzroy Crossing: Marurra-U partnership is a deep community project that delivers education within community around child development and the impact of trauma on the body and the brain, and has tested new service models including delivering allied health services into remote schools via Telecare and parent/carer camps. The approach is informed by the work of First Nations thought leaders, including Professor Judy Atkinson.

This year activities have included enhancing teacher and Aboriginal educator access to professional development and learning; delivering a camp focused on strengthening family connection; and support and working with Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS) clinicians to provide psychology assessments in community, addressing gaps in local services.

Top to bottom:

Children and families in Fitzroy Valley

RFW partnership with Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre

A playful moment between a clinican and child

Internal activities / initiatives

In February 2017, RFW established a Cultural Blueprint with support from Teela Reid and subsequently the Reconciliation Working Group engaged Benny Eggmolesse to deliver cultural awareness training and development. Other activities we have engaged in are NAIDOC Week celebrations; recognition of and communication through our internal and external channels about significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and policies; Smoking Ceremonies and Aboriginal movie screenings to support knowledge and understanding. In December 2018, we represented our Aboriginal historical and current connections in the construction of a 100-metre fence/installation featuring artwork from three Aboriginal artists, Jessica Birk, Frances Belle Parker and Andrea Pindan, named "Healing Connections – Beach to Bush". The fence borders the entry way to our Centre for Country Kids in Manly and our guesthouse for our families, Drummond House.

Top to bottom:

Master Weaver Karleen Green explains the traditional way of weaving to staff and children visiting the RFW School.

Smoking Ceremony organised for the RFW team by social work intern, a Yuin lore-man.

Healing Connections – Beach to Bush - fence installation at RFW.

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence and maintain existing relationships through the development of an engagement plan.	November 2021	Community Programs Manager, Head of Clinical Care
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group from different backgrounds and sectors to guide and approve all RAP actions	June 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2021	Head of Partnerships, Head of Clinical Care
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2021	Head of Clinical Services
	All RFW staff to participate in an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organised immersion event.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture. Head of Advocacy and Government Relations

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	June 2022	CEO and Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Communicate to our supporters, partners, funders, and clients our commitment to reconciliation through our channels around culturally important days and events throughout the year.	June 2022	Head of Marketing and Fundraising
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2021	Head of Partnerships Head of Advocacy and Government Relations
	Build restorative justice and truth and reconciliation into the RAP process through consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, partners and stakeholders. Engage deeply with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients at Manly and in community to understand and support the healing journey and reflect feedback through changes to relevant policies and procedures.	Progress reported November 2021	Head of Clinical Services
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey, including NRW celebrations.	May 2021	Head of Advocacy and Government Relations
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	June 2022	Head of Advocacy and Government Relations
	Conduct a review all HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, ensure cultural consideration, diversity and inclusion.	February 2022	Head of HR

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for an ongoing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	All RFW staff to participate in an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organised immersion event.	June 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Develop an organisational 'Working in Community Guide' for use across all programs, including engagement and relationship with key stakeholders in all partner communities - based on advice and leadership from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts.	November 2021	Community Programs Manager, Head of Partnerships and Head of Clinical Care
	Provide broad cultural training across all levels of the organisation.	June 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	August 2021	Head of HR
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	July 2021	Head of Advocacy and Government Relations
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Progress Reported on in February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2021	Head of Marketing and Fundraising
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2021	Head of Marketing and Fundraising
	Provide opportunity via client free time for staff to participate in events for significant days during NAIDOC Week like Staff Day of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.	June 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.	September 2021	Head of HR
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2021 Progress reported October 2021	Head of HR
	Identify potential partners to support a pipeline of recruitment.	April 2022	Head of HR
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Indigenous Procurement Policy and processes (RFSIPP).	February 2022	CFO
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2022	CFO

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Journey Team (RJT) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RJT to govern RAP implementation.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RJT, including ratification of RJT ToRs.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RJT.	May2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2021	Executive Director, Business, People & Culture
13. 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	Chief Executive Officer
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer

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