



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

August 2024 – July 2027

In seeking reconciliation we affirm and encourage greater appreciation of culture, unity in practice and justice represented through social actions. Each day we will live out our hope for restoring relationships between those who are aliened.

Proudly representing

BlueCare | Lifeline | ARRCs | The Wesley Hospital | Buderim Private Hospital
St Stephen's Hospital | St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

STRETCH

Acknowledgement of Country

UnitingCare Queensland acknowledges the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the First Peoples and Custodians of the lands, waters, seas and skies of this country.



We pay our respects to Elders past and present for their continued care for Country, traditional knowledge keeping, storytelling, bravery and welcoming.

We commit to living out the spirit held within the Uluru Statement from the Heart; in lifting the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, supporting truth telling and walking together as First and Second peoples on the path to Treaty. We are grateful for the unique and valued contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, volunteers, associates and partners make to inform the quality of care we provide and for the many reconciliation allies we have within our organisation.

“We will work purposefully for the continued strengthening of emerging Elders and cultural leaders within the communities we serve.”

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING:
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN IMAGES AND NAMES OF DECEASED PERSONS.

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 and values 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; and care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.

Our Aged Care and Community Services, Family and Disability Services, Residential Living and Hospital and Health Services, as well as the community relationships we work to foster 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’.

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.

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 UnitingCare Queensland's core reconciliation values of: Self-determination and Cultural Governance, Respect and Relationships, Connecting to Country and Wellbeing and Equality and Equity are used to guide the daily works of reconciliation.

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 in 2020, this artwork has been representing our reconciliation story since the launch of our fourth RAP in 2021.

ARTWORK BY TARNI O'SHEA - SOUTH SEA ISLANDER AND BUTCHULLA ARTIST AND DESIGNER.

Leading through learning

Over the life of our last RAP we have come to know that we are not fully engaging the voices of UnitingCare's 400+ First Nations identified employees. With this in mind, we developed a First Nations leadership mentoring program which is designed to connect First Nations aspirational leaders with Senior Leaders across our organisation in a journey of learning and walking together.

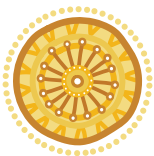
We developed this RAP through a process of Fish Trap Consultations conducted in Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Logan, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Redcliffe and Toowoomba. UnitingCare staff, particularly First Nations staff, as well as interested peoples from local community were invited to speak their truth and bring their best reconciliation thinking and hopes into safe yarning spaces.

The main themes to emerge from these consultations were the need for internal leadership pathways for First Nations peoples, developing an anti-racism policy and procedure, creating allyship networks and cultural champions across the organisation, and ensuring that cultural protocols, spirituality and perspectives are valued and form part of the holistic care we offer every day to the people we serve.

The Fish Trap Consultation process alongside the learnings gained within our Advisory Group on Reconciliation and Interrelated Governance Structure has informed the development of the below reconciliation values, which underpin the actions found within this RAP.

Our reconciliation values

The core values guiding our reconciliation journey are:



Self-determination and Cultural Governance

It is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to decide how best to build a future that is representative of their community needs. Governance systems that include representation from First Nations peoples and respect cultural protocols will be better equipped to co-create strategy which supports self-determined decision making more broadly across the organisation.



Equality and Equity

Equality of outcome for First Nations peoples will be improved through adapting normal business practices to build equity in social participation. Being ready to think creatively and respond accordingly to the needs of those we hope to serve is the foundation of quality allyship in reconciliation.



Respect and Relationships

Respect sits at the core of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of this nation is the beginning step in establishing respectful relationships. Being purposeful in our efforts to build relationships of trust and collaboration will enable cultural perspectives to improve community engagement outcomes.



Connection to Country and Wellbeing

Country is the source of healing and spiritual connection for First Nations peoples. Being deliberate in caring for Country will enrich wellbeing for all peoples. We will strengthen opportunities for culture to inform environmental and personal wellbeing for all we serve.



Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Our vision for reconciliation	2
Life in all its fullness artwork	3
Leading through learning	4
Our reconciliation values	4
Message from our UnitingCare Board Chair	6
Message from our CEO	7
Message from the Moderator	8
Message from Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress - Queensland Regional Council Chairperson	9
Message from our Director of Mission	10
Reconciliation Australia CEO Statement	11
Our reconciliation journey	12
Guiding Principles and Global, National and Localised Frameworks	16
Our commitment to the Covenant	24
Our service groups	26
Aged Care and Community Services	27
UnitingCare Full Circle and Reconciliation Awards	38
Family and Disability Services	40
UnitingCare Hospitals	48
Governance and Leadership	52
Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	60
Culture in the Workforce	64
Environmental and Personal Connections	68
First Nations Economy	70
Reporting and Storytelling	71
The future is First Nations	74



MESSAGE FROM OUR UNITINGCARE BOARD CHAIR

Deeper understanding

UnitingCare's Board acknowledges the peoples of the Yuggera Nation and the Jagera and Turrbal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where UnitingCare's central office resides. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging on all the lands on which our employees, volunteers and customers live.

With a strong track record in embedding RAP initiatives effectively, first through *Reflect 2012 – 2013*, followed by *Innovate 2016 – 2020*; and then *Stretch 2017 – 2024* plans; UnitingCare is ready to be a leader in advancing national reconciliation.

Walking with First Nations peoples in respectful relationship is part of the missional heart of UnitingCare. Arising out of the stated purpose of Jesus Christ, this mission 'to have life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) is central to our RAP program. It is what guides every action our more than 18,000 people take every day, working together as advocates for reconciliation to benefit those we serve.

As an agency of the Uniting Church in Queensland, our commitment to reconciliation is also driven by the covenant relationship with First Peoples formally entered into by the Uniting Church in Australia with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. It affirms our belief in the First Peoples of Australia as sovereign peoples in this land and our commitment to stand with Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people in their struggle against disproportionate disadvantages.

The Board is grateful to UnitingCare's people for demonstrably advancing the organisation's partnership with Reconciliation Australia. This *Stretch RAP* represents the culmination of positive and sustained impacts achieved through UnitingCare's RAP program to date; through our commitment to truth telling and the deeper understanding gained through actively listening to the stories which are shared, we have thus gained.

The UnitingCare Board commends this plan with unequivocal support and a deepening commitment to reconciliation with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia.

Jim Demack

UnitingCare Board Chair

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Strong partnerships



At UnitingCare we are steadfast in ensuring First Nations peoples – who are our employees, customers, partners and suppliers – feel acknowledged, heard, included and supported.

The activities delivered and outcomes achieved during our previous Reconciliation Action Plans proved the importance of a structured and strategic approach in journeying towards our vision for reconciliation.

This has led us towards healthier and deeper relationships with Traditional Owners based in trust and respect, which have continually guided and informed us in offering hope and healing in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through genuine opportunities for our people to learn about culture on Country, we have gained and applied new insights to foster positive outcomes for First Nations employees and communities.

Backed by our long and proud history of walking together and working purposefully with First

Nations peoples; we have been able to create and embed enabling frameworks and plans at a strategic and operational level, despite an often challenging regulatory, social and political environment. I believe it is incumbent on us, now, to utilise the access, connection and trust we have gained to eliminate systemic issues of exclusion, disadvantage and inequality experienced by First Nations peoples of the country.

Therefore, UnitingCare's *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch RAP)* raises the bar on our expectations and drives a unified focus on our reconciliation commitments through specific and measurable actions to make a significant and positive difference for First Nations peoples.

This RAP also benefits from the deep knowledge and experience of our cultural strategy leader network, extending across Pinangba (UnitingCare's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care and Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation services), ARRCs (Australian Regional and Remote Community Services), the Coolamon Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team.

From them comes considerable opportunity to standardise localised culturally appropriate practices and procedures across UnitingCare's services and to create spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can participate authentically and truly thrive.

Importantly, this RAP drives us to continually challenge ourselves to do more, to be a leader in reconciliation, for the benefit of the communities we serve in Queensland and the Northern Territory – always in close partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, employees, volunteers and communities.

I am very grateful to those who shared their stories and gave of their time, expertise and commitment to UnitingCare's *Stretch RAP* and am proud to share this important piece of work with you.

Craig Barke

UnitingCare Chief Executive Officer



MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Spirit of unity

At the heart of the Uniting Church in Australia identity is a covenant commitment to a relationship with the First Peoples of this land and recognition of their careful stewardship of Country.

We affirm as a Church the sovereignty of our First Peoples seeking to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in decision-making, striving to enable the living out of their right to self-determination. We walk together looking towards building a church and nation of justice and reconciliation, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another.

As Moderator of the Uniting Church Queensland Synod, I am deeply committed to support UnitingCare Queensland in their ongoing works of reconciliation and the actions that are part of this *2024 – 2027 Reconciliation Action Plan*. I find myself reflecting on the profound significance of our reconciliation journey, but also recognise that there is so much more that can and should be done. This plan is not merely a document, it is a compass guiding us towards a future where understanding, respect and unity flourish in community together.

Our commitment to reconciliation is woven into the very fabric and DNA of our activities, services and culture that is part of UnitingCare Queensland. The key focus areas that are central to this RAP prioritise and contribute to reconciliation in Australia, recognising the importance of acknowledging the past, healing

wounds and forging a shared path forward together. This plan acts as a promise to actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to listen, learn, collaborate and give voice.

The stories that are shared as part of this RAP demonstrate an unrelenting commitment to reconciliation and powerfully acknowledge that every person matters and deserves to be given dignity, worth and respect. We are uniquely placed as a Church and through the trusted relationships of UnitingCare across Queensland and the Northern Territory, that communities of all nations will find hope with pathways for a reconciled future.

It is my hope that we will continue to walk this path together, hand in hand, recognising that reconciliation is not a destination but an ongoing journey. May our actions echo the spirit of unity, bring healing and hope that reverberates across our land. May we not rest until this is so!

Rev Bruce Moore

Moderator Uniting Church in Australia,
Queensland Synod

A MESSAGE FROM THE
UNITING ABORIGINAL
AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN
CONGRESS - QUEENSLAND
REGIONAL COUNCIL
CHAIRPERSON



In 2023 I was honoured to be elected and commissioned into the role of Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress - Queensland Regional Council. Our council is known as *Muth arrak* (Fire Stick) in the Thaynakwith language group of the Cape communities of Mapoon and Napranum.

I am grateful that UnitingCare Queensland has provided support to co-facilitate three gatherings over three years for members of UAICC Queensland's Christian Eldership, which enabled the cultural and spiritual works of knowing and being to be undertaken.

As part of my responsibilities of providing pastoral support to our communities, I offer Chaplaincy to the community of Hollingsworth Elders Village and my faith is affirmed with

each visit of fellowship with Elders who call Hollingsworth home. We sing together, cry together, laugh together, share story and most importantly pray together. Life with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is simple in nature, we need to observe the protocols of faith, spirituality, friendship and family. We love spending time together in safe spaces, surrounded by family, where we can be our full unhindered and glorious selves.

My hope for this new Reconciliation Action Plan is that UnitingCare Queensland continues to partner with the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod in developing spiritual and cultural wellbeing carers throughout our communities. We need to form and build up First Nations spiritual and pastoral carers on the ground in every community in which UnitingCare has footprint, to heal the deep wounds that reside within the hearts of our peoples.

We as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know how to heal each other, but

we do seek justice in the form of continued support from organisations like UnitingCare Queensland. Our people need to be developed to use their knowledge and voices to influence change from within the structures which seek to serve us.

Psalm 133

1 How good and pleasant
it is when God's people live
together in unity!



PRONOUNCED "MOOT-TH" IN THE THAYNAKWITH LANGUAGE, FIRE STICKS OR FIREDRILLS WERE AN IMPORTANT TOOL USED TO IGNITE TINDER FOR FIRES. THE THAYNAKWITH NAME FOR THE POSSUM SCRUB AREA IS MUTH ARRAK. MUTH ARRAK IS THE PLANT SPECIES (*CLERODENDRUM FLORIBUNDUM*) USED TO MAKE FIRE STICKS. © JEFFREY WRIGHT, 2007, SUPPLIED BY THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM.

Rev Aunty Roberta Stanley

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian
Congress - Queensland Regional Council
Chairperson



MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MISSION

Transformative journey

I am honoured to extend a warm welcome and share in the introduction as the Director of Mission at UnitingCare Queensland to the transformative journey outlined in our Reconciliation Action Plan (2024 – 2027), being a unambiguous expression of our mission practice of Walking Together as First and Second peoples.

At the heart of this plan lies the sacred commitment of the Uniting Church in Australia to covenant with First Peoples and it is with great enthusiasm and determination that I take on the shared responsibility of guiding our mission within this significant context. This is an initiative that not only recognises

the historical significance of reconciliation but actively engages in creating a future of unity, understanding and improved outcomes that all people may live life in all its fullness.

The Uniting Church in Australia's commitment to covenanting with First Peoples is not just a statement of intent; it is a call to action and relationship. This is a shared commitment with leadership, eldership, service agency, church and community. As we embark on this next stage I am excited to see the collaborative contribution across our leadership to a workplace culture that not only values diversity but actively works towards reconciliation.

The recent First Nations affairs national conversation has demonstrated clearly that UnitingCare Queensland has the corporate cultural capability to inform respectful engagement on matters of importance to

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, primary reconciliation outcomes that align with the Uluru Statement of the Heart, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Closing the Gap Report 2023 are yet to be realised within UnitingCare Queensland as fully embedding wide spread informed cultural governance and intentional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership development within our services.

The Reconciliation Action Plan is more than a document; it is a living manifestation of the values that underpin the Uniting Church in Australia as expressed through the service of UnitingCare in Queensland. It represents a profound acknowledgment of the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in this land, the need to heal historical wounds, to seek justice and build genuine relationships with the First Peoples of this land. Our Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027 commits us all to being part of this transformative journey. Together, let us strive towards a future where the principles of the Reconciliation Action Plan become a lived reality, enriching our organisation and helping to bring life in all its fullness to the communities we serve.

In closing, I invite all members of the UnitingCare Queensland family to join hands in this meaningful endeavour. Let us work together to embody the principles of our Reconciliation Action Plan, ensuring that our mission reflects the spirit of unity, respect and equity.

Rev Dr Peter Armstrong

UnitingCare Director of Mission

RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA
**CEO
Statement**



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

Formed around the pillars of *relationships*, *respect*, and *opportunities*, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise. Delivering health, aged care, disability and community services to thousands of people a day and with over 16,000 employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory, the scope of UCQ's sphere of influence is considerable.

UnitingCare Queensland's approach to reconciliation is to integrate its commitments

to reconciliation into its daily operations, with a core focus on building culturally appropriate and First Nations-led care into its business to better support the unique and varying needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Critical reflection is key to meaningful participation in the RAP program and, over the life of its last RAP, UCQ learned it was not fully engaging the voices of its 400+ First Nations identified employees. With this in mind, it developed a First Nations leadership mentoring program, designed to connect First Nations aspirational leaders with senior leaders across its organisation. Such leadership pathways support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in the development of culturally appropriate care.

In this new RAP, UCQ is expanding on these commitments around self-determination. Health and aged care support is a deeply personal and vulnerable experience, one that

is often underscored by intergenerational or personal trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Recognising that First Nations-led practices can help support patients through their healthcare journey, UCQ has committed to implement a governance model that incorporates Indigenous governance practices and systems across the organisation.

With its conscious reflection on past challenges and renewed commitments in this RAP, UCQ continues to demonstrate leadership in reconciliation, driving considerable outcomes across its sphere of influence. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend UCQ on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our reconciliation journey

1988

Bicentennial Statement
to the Nation



1994

The Uniting Church **covenant** relationship with First Peoples is at the heart of our reconciliation journey.



Read more
about our
Covenant here

2008

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



2014

**Innovate Reconciliation Action
Plan** 2014 - 2017

ARRCS was established in the
Northern Territory



2015

Inaugural UnitingCare
Reconciliation Awards



2017

Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
2017 - 2020



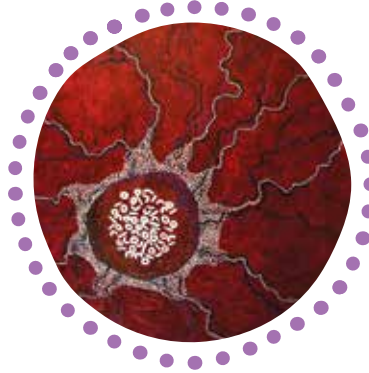
2009

Change to the **Preamble** of the **Uniting Church in Australia Assembly Constitution**



2011

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



2012

General Reconciliation Action Plan
2012 - 2013

A group of Indigenous services were transitioned in to BlueCare and known as **BlueCare Indigenous Services**

Indigenous Multi-Skill Trainee Program

2018

Naming of BlueCare 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**

2019

First National Gathering of First Nations Leaders



2021

Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
2021 - 2024



Our reconciliation journey

2021

Launched First Nations employee and partner developed **Cultural Appreciation** online learning modules as tier 1 mandatory learning across all services with 30,000+ completions per year



2022

Celebrated 10 years of **Partnership with Reconciliation Australia** with an Allyship in Reconciliation event hosted by Professor, Journalist and Philosopher Stan Grant



2023

First Nations leaders from across our services raised their voices to speak truth to justice in reconciliation



2023

Launch of Pinangba Services **Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026** and co-creating Pinangba's community led governance framework



2023


We **supported a Yes vote** to the proposed law to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice



2024

Launched with a Walk on Country our inaugural **Dreamline Leaders First Nations Mentoring Program**





UnitingCare understands the healing that occurs when people are intentional in connecting to Country. We create opportunities for staff to spend time on Country with Traditional Custodians learning about their stories and traditions.

Guiding Principles and Global, National and Localised Frameworks



Uluru Statement from the Heart

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial' and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature' and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors.

This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet.

We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates.

This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

OPPOSITE PAGE: SIGNED ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART



United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples UNDRIP

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007 (AEST). The Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

The Declaration is divided into the following broad thematic areas:

- Over-arching principles (Articles 1 - 6)
- Life, integrity and security (Articles 7 - 10)
- Cultural, spiritual and linguistic identity (Articles 11 – 13)
- Education, information and labour rights (Articles 14 – 17)
- Participatory, development and other economic and social rights (Articles 18 – 24)
- Land, territories and resources rights (Articles 25 – 32)
- Indigenous institutions (Articles 33 – 37)
- Implementation of the Declaration (Articles 38 – 42)
- General provisions of the Declaration (Articles 43 – 46)

The provisions in the Declaration to be interpreted in accordance with principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith.

Source: humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples

Now is the time to act



An excerpt from an opinion piece by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO, appeared in The Guardian Australia on Sunday 29 October 2023

The day the proposal for a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous voice was rejected by the majority of my fellow Australians will be remembered by many as a sombre day in our country's history.

After the result, there is much pain to process. However, more than 200 years of cruel and wanton dispossession has clearly revealed that the people of our First Nations are resilient and enduring. We will heal and we will forge the way ahead through other ways and means.

We must find strength in the groundswell of support. Millions of Australians mobilised around First Nations justice throughout this referendum year. They are still there with us.

People like my non-Indigenous brother who called me after the result, give me great hope. He and others like him have become more engaged through this process. They have developed a deepened understanding of our shared histories, the difficulty of making substantive change and the barriers that need to be overcome.

Now is the time for action. There is so much that we can do together to educate and inspire the next generation.

As we look forward to future opportunities, it is valuable to reflect on the origins and subsequent trajectory of the referendum.

I was there at the momentous constitutional gathering in 2017 on the ancient lands of the Anangu, standing with other First Nations leaders from across this vast nation of nations, as the Uluru Statement from the Heart was presented.

We united in hope, striving to chart a path forward that would extend an invitation to all Australians to join us in putting an end to the exclusion of our people from the constitution – the birth certificate of the modern Australian nation state.

I express my gratitude to all of our people, and to non-Indigenous Australians, who boldly and courageously campaigned for the voice. I assure you your efforts were not in vain. A momentum for change has been created with millions of Australians, and there are numerous paths ahead. With open hearts and open minds, we can unite as a nation and navigate our way towards truth, justice and a better future for all who now call these lands home.

June Oscar AO

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

UnitingCare Queensland commits to continue to seek justice by supporting the works of UnitingCare Australia and the Uniting First Peoples Network, in advocating for the Australian Government to develop a national program to implement UNDRIP and schedule it to the definition of human rights in the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011 (Cth)

Mr Tony McAvoy SC is quoted within Australian Parliamentary Business as saying;

“I find that the ability of non-First Nations people to understand the way that the machine of government and the laws move against us to be rather limited because they see it through the lens of non-Indigenous people. But when you are on the receiving end you can see it very clearly.”

Closing the Gap

“In March 2019, a formal Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Partnership) was established between the Commonwealth Government, state and territory governments, the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (the Coalition of Peaks) and the Australian Local Government Association”

Source: www.closingthegap.gov.au/partnership

These parties to the agreement seek to improve the health, education, employment and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by working together to realise four Priority Reforms and seventeen outcomes and targets.

Priority Reform One	Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making
Priority Reform Two	Building the Community-Controlled Sector
Priority Reform Three	Transforming Government Organisations
Priority Reform Four	Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

In January 2024, the Productivity Commission released a Closing the Gap review - Study Report.

“The key message of the report is that fundamental changes are required to deliver on the Agreement.”

For meaningful progress to be made towards the objectives of the Closing the Gap Agreement, governments must share power for decisions that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Governments need to trust that by relinquishing control over decisions they are enabling better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Source: www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/closing-the-gap-review/report

UnitingCare Queensland commits to seeking justice by supporting and informing the works of UnitingCare Australia and the Uniting First Peoples Network. In advocating for the recommendations outlined within the Closing the Gap review dated January 2024, UnitingCare commits to allocating resources towards large scale systemic change initiatives which support self-determination across our services.





Cultural learning takes many forms. It is in our spoken, written, danced, sung and painted stories. It begins in the early years and continues throughout our entire lives.



Our Covenant with First Peoples

UnitingCare Queensland, as part of our corporate constitution, hold the Covenant with First Peoples as a key guiding principle of our Reconciliation Journey.

We commit to making a meaningful difference by approaching all relationships with Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander staff, residents, patients, clients, volunteers, businesses and partners in the spirit of respect. We value the unique cultural and spiritual perspectives of First Peoples and seek to live out the vision of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



“I think our culture is about just being respectful, sharing and caring for one another. And just being honest with one another and we gotta do that. It’s probably more important for us in the 21st century than it’s ever been.”

Uncle Eric Law

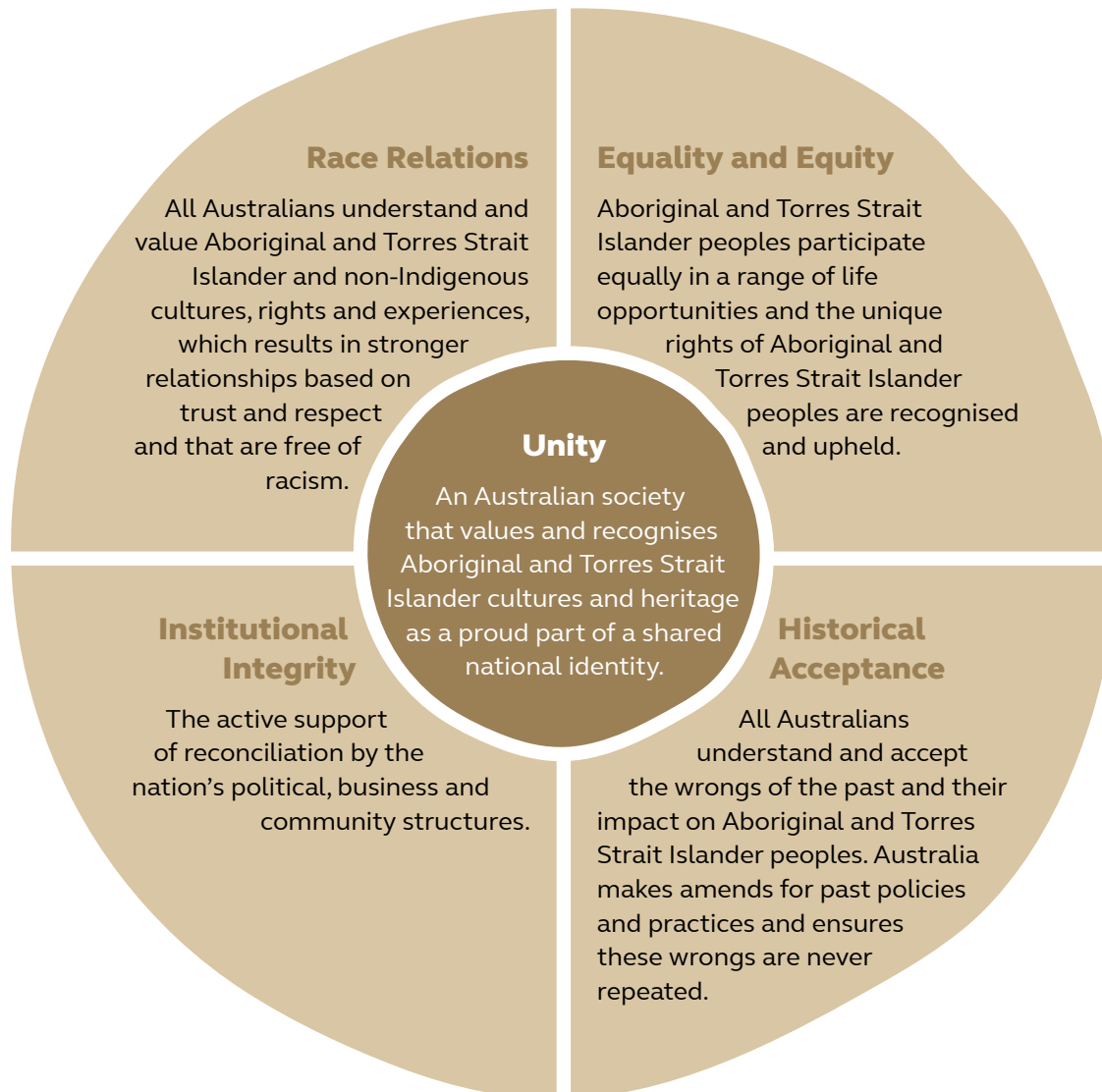
Proud Wakka Wakka man from Cherbourg

UNCLE ERIC LAW IS A CONTRIBUTING ELDER IN OUR COLLABORATIVE VOICES OF OUR COVENANT STORYTELLING PROJECT WITH THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA QLD SYNOD



Five Dimensions of Reconciliation

Reconciliation Australia works to promote five interrelated dimensions of Reconciliation. These dimensions cannot be seen as a single issue to be addressed in isolation. A contemporary and relationship approach to reconciliation encourages all peoples who call these lands home to weave these healing threads together.



“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples possess the knowledge to create healthy communities. We have land, sea and sky stories, we have creation and spirituality stories and we have Country that can heal us in reciprocity for our healing it.

Government agencies and corporations as part of strategy development are encouraged to invest time in building respectful relationship with First Nations peoples to bring forward new Songlines to success by reversing systemic participation inequities.

Being invited into a consultative conversation is not enough. We need to have our voices welcomed into all thinking spaces where we can listen, learn, share and co-create new paths of unity.”

Kym Korbe

Proud Guwa Koa Traditional Owner and Kuku Yalanji woman, with historical ties to Wakka Wakka

KYM KORBE IS EXECUTIVE OFFICER UAICC QLD & COVENANTING AT THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA QUEENSLAND SYNOD



We commit to walking together as First and Second peoples

UnitingCare, as an institution of the Uniting Church Queensland Synod, has the great privilege of delivering health, aged care, disability and community services to thousands of people a day throughout Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Continuing the legacy left by the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches community services that united in 1977 around their shared mission; our purpose remains to extend UnitingCare's reach and services to people who need our support most.

Now, as one of Australia's largest charity organisations, we remain grounded in the beliefs of UnitingCare's founders – that everyone deserves the chance to live life in all its fullness.

This inspires us every day to change people's lives for the better, through more than 460 locations including hospitals, residential aged care facilities, retirement living and family and disability services.

UnitingCare proudly represents BlueCare, Lifeline, 13YARN, ARRCs, The Wesley Hospital, Buderim Private Hospital, St Stephen's Hospital and St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital.

Person Centred Care

Our goal is to consistently deliver compassionate and respectful care based on our values, in accordance with your wishes.

- **Compassion:** We recognise the uniqueness of each person and their circumstances. We promise to listen to people's needs and wants

As at June 2024



total employees

16,884

First Nations employees

418

total volunteers

8,575

First Nations volunteers

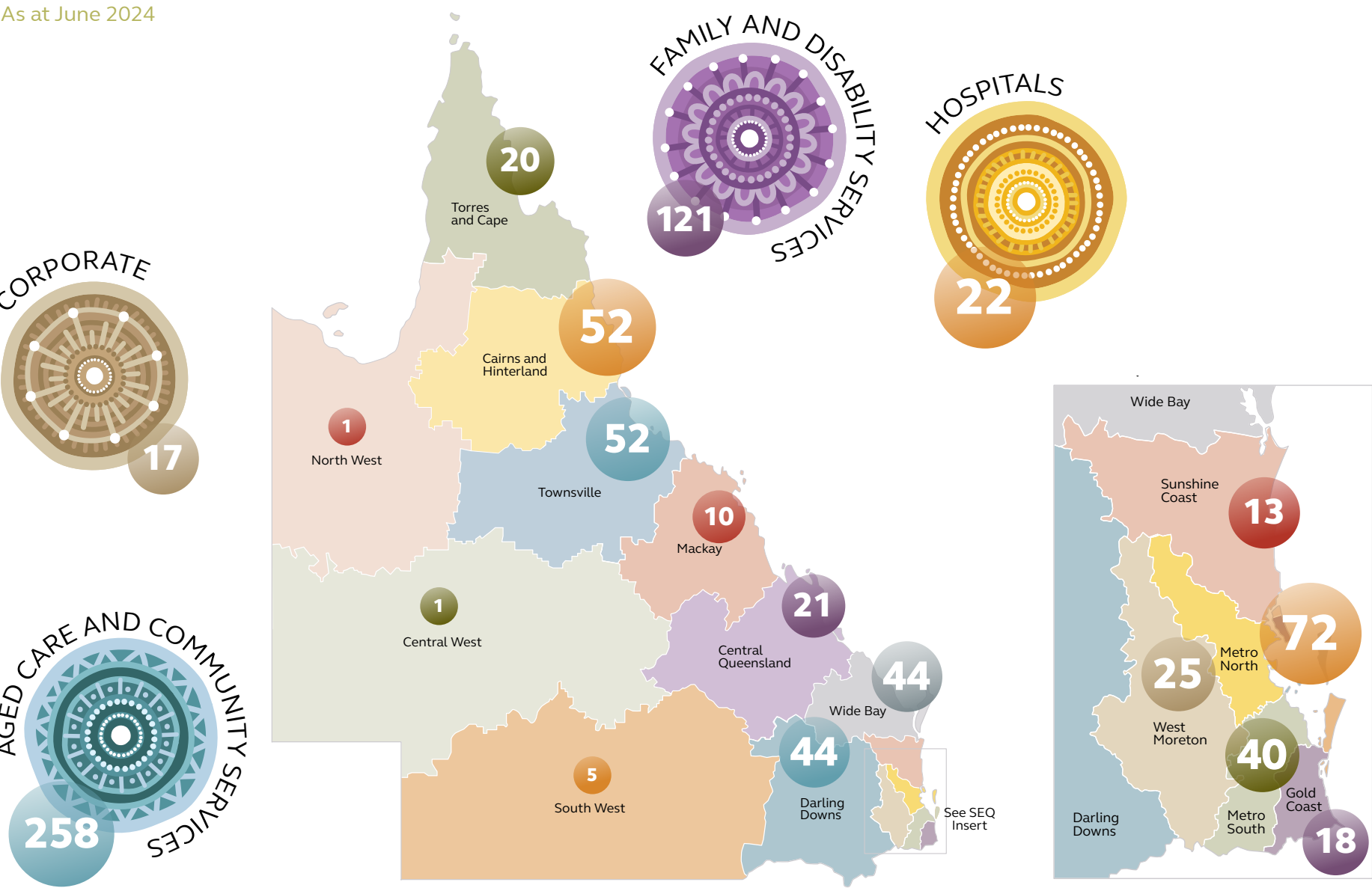
82

and to work alongside to navigate holistic individualised care and services.

- **Respect:** We respect people's choices and values. We see people as a whole person and hold ourselves accountable for the care or services provided.
- **Justice:** We are committed to ethical practices and promise to distribute our services fairly.
- **Work together:** We promise to be inclusive and respectful of the identity of all peoples in seeking full engagement and participation in designing services.
- **Leading through learning:** We use innovation and best practice to deliver holistic care to clients, patients, residents, staff and volunteers.

UnitingCare Queensland First Nations Healthcare and Community Services Workforce

As at June 2024





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
- Retirement Living

Family and Disability Services

- Community recovery
- Lifeline Crisis Support and 13YARN
- Lifeline retail (shops and online)
- Counselling (for children, families, couples and dispute resolution)
- Homelessness and Domestic and Family Violence support
- Elder Abuse Prevention Unit
- Gambling Help Support
- Disability support
- ProjectSEARCH employment services
- Financial Resilience and Wellbeing
- Family Support Services (Secondary, Intensive and Remote)

- Early Childhood, Early Education Services
- Out of Home Care

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)

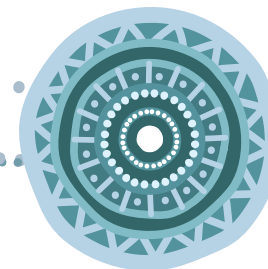
- Allied Health Services
- Day Therapy centres
- Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service
- Disability Services
- Domestic assistance
- In-Home care packages
- Personal care
- Residential aged care
- Respite care

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

Aged Care and Community Services



We create environments that allow Elders and older peoples to share time together in yarning. We value the healing and life-giving powers of connection to each other and connection to Country.



MESSAGE FROM OUR GROUP EXECUTIVE

Purposeful shift

I am proud and humbled by the commitment to reconciliation and walking with First Peoples I see lived out each day across BlueCare.

During the last ten years, reconciliation within BlueCare has shifted more purposefully towards creating frameworks where self-determination is promoted and valued. Pinangba Services, as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused service, is creating spaces and time for active and deep listening to inform their practices. Through this they are working responsibly towards a community leadership and governance model and will continue to see First Nations leadership promoted.

As BlueCare has introduced the Neighbourhood Model into our community services, we

have created a framework for community engagement at a localised level. Knowing that place-based respectful practice principles are key to successful relationships with First Nations peoples, we will promote all BlueCare Neighbourhoods to engage with local Traditional Owners and community members.

I am also fortunate to support the work of our Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARCCS) and actively support their ongoing commitment to the advancement of First Nations peoples to ensure residents lead their best life in a culturally respectful place.

As a leader, I understand that to do my best work as an ally I need to be in personal or professional coaching relationship with First Nations peoples. I am committed to continuing on my own cultural journey of learning from

respected Elders and leaders within community, who teach me how best to support our reconciliation aspirations.

I look forward to the next four years as we focus on embedding clinical cultural practice, cultural safety, and wellbeing methodologies more deeply across BlueCare services.

Cathy Thomas

Group Executive, Aged Care and
Community Services

THE WORD, CONCEPT AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE THAT IS DADIRRI IS FROM THE NGAN'GIKURUNGURR AND NGEN'GIWUMIRRI LANGUAGE GROUPS OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF THE DALY RIVER REGION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

MESSAGE FROM OUR GROUP
GENERAL MANAGER

Working together



BlueCare remains committed to our reconciliation journey whilst walking alongside First Nations Peoples in showing respect for the hardship of the past and collaboratively working together towards self-determination and recognition in a way that reflects cultural needs and ways.

BlueCare Community Services will continue to serve our First Nations clients through care and support services for those in need across our communities reflecting services delivered in accordance with cultural awareness and practice expectations.

Equally, BlueCare Community is committed to providing the employment opportunities of First Nations peoples within our diverse workforce across the state and ensure our workplaces are culturally safe places to work and foster an environment that nurtures and supports career pathways within and across our services and organisation.

Maria McLaughlin-Rolfe

Group General Manager – BlueCare
Community Aged Care and Community
Services

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, 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 to age in place, we understand people want independence and to feel a valued part of their community.

As part of UnitingCare, we believe everyone deserves to live life in all its fullness. Even more importantly, we believe individuals, families and communities deserve the freedom to live life their way.





Steward of culture and care

Enid Newie is a proud Torres Strait Islander woman from Waibene (Thursday) Island whose passion for aged care nursing has seen her employed as an Enrolled Nurse in BlueCare's Wynnum Residential Aged Care Facility for 19 years.

Enid is dedicated to providing person-centred care to all residents, and as Senior Enrolled Nurse leads a care team of 3 - 4 Personal Carers each shift aiming to set an example for, and be a mentor to, her colleagues through clinical and cultural knowledge sharing.

As a strong woman of culture and with her natural leadership in the workplace, Enid has joined UnitingCare's Dreamline Leaders First Nations Mentorship Program in the hope that the experience will be invaluable in building confidence and developing further on her leadership skills. Enid is also excited by the opportunity to participate in the program with a cohort of First Nations peers.

Enid says: "I would love to see mentorship, kinship and reaching out to one another to debrief in our busy work life to connect with each other in a meaningful way. I value the opportunity of developing relationships with other First Nations emerging leaders across the organisation and building stronger community connections which support cultural wellbeing."

Since commencing the program, Enid has found value in the relationship that's being built with her Mentor, a Senior Leader within the organisation, and has felt a real connection with shared learnings happening between them both.

Enid hopes that being part of Dreamline Leaders will build her capacity and assist in the process of transitioning from bedside nursing to leadership roles in the future, giving her access to more career options and avenues for choice; and that being a First Nations leader inspires other UnitingCare First Nations employees to step into their own leadership journey.



Pinangba services are transforming culturally informed care

Pinangba is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led service delivery arm of UnitingCare Queensland. The foundations of Pinangba are built from our cultural identity and strong community relationships and partnerships.

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.

We work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland, delivering 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 BlueCare, in search of healing through truth and justice.

Pinangba services operate in many communities across Queensland, from the Torres Strait

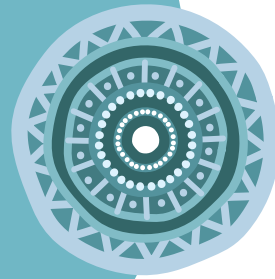
Islands to Cherbourg. We are privileged to serve some of the most culturally rich communities and people in Australia.

We are proud to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elderly peoples and Elders and to people impacted by drug and alcohol substance misuse.

Our services include:

- Star of the Sea Elders Village (SOSEV) - Thursday Island
- Cape York Family Centre (CYFC) - Cooktown
- Hollingsworth Elders Village (HEV) - Cairns
- Shalom Elders Village (SEV) - Townsville
- Stagpole Street Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit (SSDARU) - Townsville
- Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village (NKBEV) - Cherbourg

A CASE STUDY: **Nan Eva's Story**



Nan Eva is fondly referred to as Nan by all in the Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village (NKBEV) and in the Cherbourg community. She is a proud Gunggari woman, with her mob spanning across Charleville and Roma areas in Queensland. Nan Eva celebrated her 100th birthday at the end of 2022.

In 1932, at the age of 9, Nan was placed into a Cherbourg Dormitory. This was an unfamiliar environment and sadly, the transition was a challenge, as was the case for most of the children in the dormitory.

Later in life, Nan returned to the dormitory; however, this time she was employed to assist with the daily living needs of the children and went on to do this for approximately 20 years. She also went on to advocate for community members in a number of roles, in both a voluntary and paid capacity. This included working on the local council and within the courts.

Despite the trauma of being removed from her homelands, her family and her culture, Nan went on to have 6 children and many grandchildren.

She is a well-known and highly respected member of the Cherbourg community.

In 2006, Nan entered NKBEV at 83 years of age. This is a place that she now considers her home and feels that she is surrounded by love and support from within the community.

When asked how she felt about living at NKBEV, she stated, “it is a home away from home. I have everything I need here and I couldn’t ask for anything more. We are like a big family and even though many people know that I come from out West, I feel like I belong here.”

Regular meetings are held for the residents and Nan is a frequent participator in advocating for the needs of others in the centre. Nan states that she often voices her opinion and feels that she is being heard, she is valued and that her culture is respected.

Value, respect and feeling at home are important aspects for Nan in her engagement with NKBEV. Additionally, Nan has outlined some key considerations that she would like the NKBEV to further explore, including:

- i. Increase the cultural activities available in the centre (which were impacted by COVID). Culture is incredibly important to Nan and whilst she feels this is acknowledged and respected, she would like to see this further developed at NKBEV (as further outlined in

the engagement findings). Nan states, “This is not just an aged care centre, it is our home.”

- ii. Increase engagement endeavours with the community. Prior to COVID, there were events held at the centre and community members would often attend. The Elders thoroughly enjoy when the community visits the centre and it also provides an opportunity for the community to see how their family members are being cared for, as evident in Nan’s statement: “This is a home for their Elders and they want to make sure they are being looked after properly.”





Sharing cultural traditions

James Stanley is a proud Kabi Kabi and Wakka Wakka man currently completing a Horticulture traineeship at Pinangba's Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village as part of the Indigenous Employment Initiative (IEI) Program.

The RAP Team has fostered partnership opportunities between UnitingCare, BlueCare and The Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation to offer Kabi Kabi peoples the opportunity to work and study within BlueCare facilities.

Growing up in Murgon, James was taught to preserve, honour and share his culture. As a new father, he is so proud to be able to pass his family's stories, cultural lore and understanding of Country down to his

children and community through the way he lives his life. James is a testament of Culture not being something that can be lost if you are living it daily.

While working on the grounds of Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village, James performs smoking ceremonies each month for the residents and staff, to support positive mental and spiritual health and wellbeing. Staff and residents are grateful to James for his passion to share his cultural traditions with his community.

The partnership between UnitingCare's RAP Team, The Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation and BlueCare's Property Team has ensured that the opportunities provided by the IEI Program are accessible and effective in elevating future employment and leadership outcomes for its participants.



Reconciliation is at the heart of Pinangba's values, vision and the services that we provide, it is also something that we live and breathe through the launch of our strategic plan 2023 - 2026.

We remain steadfast in our journey towards community-led governance and we are committed to self-determination by building stronger partnerships and relationships and as a part of this, we are focused on capturing the voice of the peoples, families and communities that we operate in. We are both proud and privileged to serve some of the most culturally rich communities and peoples in Australia.

Personally, the journey has been an enriching process and watching the work carried out every day at all of our services, Aged Care and Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation alike, makes my heart sing. I am so proud to be a part of the Reconciliation process and what it means for our Pinangba Residents, Families and Staff and importantly the Communities we serve.

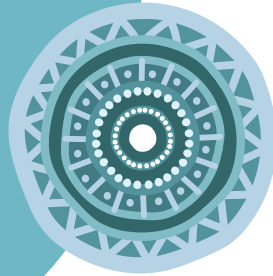
Andrea Fox

General Manager Pinangba



A CASE STUDY:

Workforce Development and Leadership



Since 2015, Pinangba has been actively developing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and heavily supporting workforce development.

The Pinangba workforce development strategy specifically related to the Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) services, Cape York Family Centre (CYFC) and Stagpole Street Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit (SSDARU) was not only to increase service capacity, but to increase career and succession planning opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Since 2016, the AOD services have had approximately 45 team members complete a Certificate IV Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drugs (MH/AOD), 20 team members have completed a Diploma in Counselling and 23 team members have completed a Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy. On average, a minimum of 85% of staff successfully completed their courses and went on to complete additional training on offer. The training

programs selected for the AOD services were specifically selected to support the overarching modified systemic family therapy model of care of both services and to fit the client and staff cohort. Courses were explored with multiple organisations with a view to source appropriate training through an Indigenous Registered Training Service. This aligned with our Pinangba values and the UnitingCare Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Gallang Education and Training was selected to provide the Certificate IV MH/AOD with Diploma Counselling and the Graduate Certificate Family Therapy delivered by La Trobe University. This latter agency was chosen after much negotiation in relation to the delivery of training blocks and supports required by staff to participate effectively at a university level whilst working full-time, with many participating from remote communities. Training on the job provided the platform to apply the learnings throughout every level of training directly to the workplace and client journey to increase client outcomes.

Additionally, La Trobe University provided a culturally safe learning environment by collaborating with an Indigenous Advisory committee and employing Indigenous consultants to advise on the course content.

As an outcome of these training endeavours, the service and team capacity and the clinical and professional standards of the team has risen significantly. Throughout the initial blocks, all staff were offered the opportunity to complete the Cert IV MH/AOD and at least 90% of staff across both services participated. The teams upskilled together, creating a collective educational space and an opportunity for two-way learning (clinical and cultural).

Some participants entered the services in entry level positions as Duty Officers, Administration staff or Cultural Activities Officers and enthusiastically completed all training courses on offer. All participants are now working in the clinical team managing caseloads, with one participant moving into an assistant service manager position.

In elaborating on this participant's workforce development journey, Renee Harrigan commenced with the Cape York Family Centre (CYFC) in 2014 as a part-time Administration Officer. In discussion with her manager in 2016, Renee identified her career pathway and career development opportunities and commenced her journey by participating in the Cert IV MH/AOD.

Renee's Leadership Story

Renee is a proud Kunjen woman. She grew up in Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw and has strong family and cultural connections throughout the Cape.

This knowledge and connection enabled Renee to support clients entering the service from remote communities and engage with community members to encourage community supports.

Renee transitioned into a Family Case Worker position in 2017 whilst she was completing a Diploma in Counselling and continued to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients' healing journey within the service.

Renee says training with Gallang ensured cultural safety and encouraged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to share cultural knowledge and values through the curriculum, which was reinforced by the facilitators and students. She adds,

“Through this training program, I was able to better understand how the impacts of intergenerational trauma can link to substance use and the overall implications this can have on mental health.”

Renee says she found the training program gave her the opportunity to discuss therapeutic modalities within the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as well as lived experiences, which is replaced by the workplace framework and structure.

Renee received support in her workplace to attend training, complete assignments and apply newly developed clinical knowledge. This support was maintained via Operational and Professional Supervision, Practice Group Meetings and engagement and input in team discussions. Renee says, “I not only received a great deal of operational support, which was pivotal to this process, but I also felt that my cultural needs and values were acknowledged and respected throughout the process.”

In 2021, after completing her Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy and commencing a Diploma in Leadership and Management, Renee was successfully appointed as the Assistant Service Manager of the Cape York Family Centre along with three other team members. “The transition into this role was a slow one because that is what I needed at the time and initially, I wasn't sure that I had what it took to become an Assistant Service Manager. However, the continued career pathway conversations and subsequent training plans that were put in place, combined with the fact that my manager could see my potential and provided me with continued support, instilled a confidence and

belief in myself and my mind shifted to: maybe I do have what it takes,” Renee says.

Renee is now part of the Pinangba Management Team, encouraging other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to identify career pathways and take up training opportunities to develop their skills. Whilst managing operational requirements can be challenging when multiple team members are participating in training; the gradual increase in staff skills and application within the workplace increases staff capacity to achieve the overall goal of positive outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, as well as increasing career advancement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

“I am proud of my accomplishments and so are my family. Without the training and leadership provided through Gallang and the continued support provided by my workplace, I would not have been able to get to where I am.”



Pinangba Strategic Plan

Pinangba Services has embarked upon a transformational journey towards community-led cultural governance, and the mechanisms for achieving co-created systemic change are contained within their Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026.

You can read their strategy here:
www.unitingcareqld.com.au/services-and-support/people-we-support/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/pinangba

Strategic Focus

Development of a Strategic Plan for Pinangba is an important part of governing these services in a genuine and proactive way.

Through our engagement and the current landscape of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health the following strategic focus



areas have been identified to ensure capability and future planning is created to ensure Self-Determination for the communities we serve and enhance current business activities.

Focus areas include:

- **Governance** - Enable a human rights-based framework that recognises and genuinely implements a self-determination model of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance.
- **Leadership and Workforce Development** - Improve workplace and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enable full participation within a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace.


- **Communities we serve** - Utilising the values and principles demonstrated in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custom and lore, support managers to effectively implement initiatives that enable culture in care.
- **Service Delivery** - Strengthen service delivery and support communities through partnerships and capacity building to underpin the development and implementation of new programs that assist Pinangba to close the gap in socio-economic disparities for communities in which we work.

Strategic Values

Respect The celebration of uniqueness and difference of the peoples we have the privilege of serving is essential in our commitment to strengthening our partnership with communities to improve the physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities we serve.

Family Building strong foundations of family is important to Pinangba and our core values to ensure our Elders and Clients are safe, supported and connected.

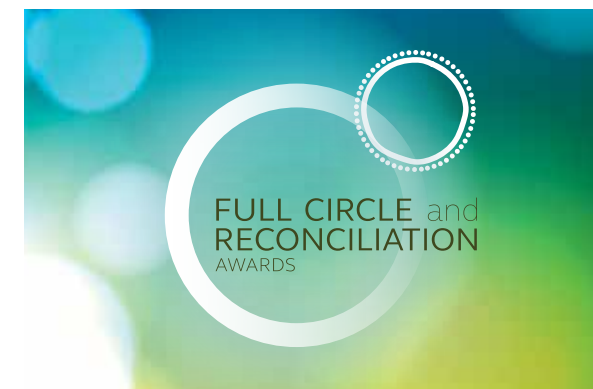
Belonging The value of belonging may be in direct contrast to the lived experience of some of Pinangba Elders, staff and clients. To Pinangba, belonging is the empowerment of our First Nations people to create connections, a sense of family and provides an opportunity to establish faith, hope, resilience and safety to ensure their story is heard.



RIGHT: TRADITIONAL LAND OWNER UNCLE REGGIE ULURU

“As an agency of the Uniting Church in Queensland, our commitment to reconciliation is also driven by the covenant relationship with First Peoples formally entered into by the Uniting Church in Australia with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. It affirms our belief in the First Peoples of Australia as sovereign peoples of this land and our commitment to stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

Jim Demack, UnitingCare Board Chair



UnitingCare Full Circle and Reconciliation Awards

The Full Circle and Reconciliation Awards recognises the meaningful work undertaken each day, across Queensland and the Northern Territory, to support thousands of Australians to live more fulfilling lives.

The awards reflect and celebrate the diversity of our organisation by offering the following areas of recognition for employees, volunteers and reconciliation.

The two reconciliation specific award categories are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Healthy Communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Award

This person:

- Recognises self-determination is an integral part of UnitingCare's reconciliation values.
- Goes above and beyond in their role to embed cultural knowledge and reconciliation into their service or function.
- Has fostered allyship within and beyond their team.
- Displays inclusive and respectful leadership to their co-workers, clients and/or service.
- Has leveraged our scale and reach as an organisation through enhancing partnerships to enrich the communities we serve.



Healthy Communities Award

This person or team demonstrates the following values:

- **Relationships:** fosters healthy relationships between our organisation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- **Respect:** respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and advocates for services that are culturally appropriate and accessible.
- **Self-determination:** as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employee or through extensive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities takes ownership of the journey towards reconciliation.
- **Equality and Equity:** delivered services and/or programs which directly or indirectly contribute positively to one or more of the national Closing the Gap targets.



2023 Healthy Communities Award Winner

Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village, Aged Care and Community Services

Ny-Ku Byun Elders Village (NKBEV) is a Pinangba service based in Cherbourg on Wakka Wakka Country. The local council motto ‘Many Tribes, One Community’, is seen every day at NKBEV. Elders often do not want to leave their homelands and to have a service that is still in their community amongst their families, culture and connections is a priority.

Elders are front and centre of everything the team does at NKBEV; daily activities suggested by Elders are conducted with a commitment to incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custom and lore, enabling culture in care.

A safe cultural space has been created for Elders through a commitment to employing First Nations peoples from the local community, with more than 50% of NKBEV staff identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.



2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Award Finalist

Mia Hampson, Aged Care and Community Services

Mia Hampson embodies UnitingCare’s Reconciliation values in her work leading the Pinangba Strategy; stepping into the role with a deep willingness to learn, to share her story, and to work together on Closing the Gap.

“Mia is committed to creating and supporting opportunities and culturally-safe spaces for Elders and Mob to live and work in Pinangba services.”

Through extensive community consultation, including Elders, staff, and Indigenous communities, Mia and her team have created a strategy which is considered and has the interests of our First Nations peoples at its heart – setting Pinangba up to support the communities in which they work over the long term.



2023 Healthy Communities Award Finalist

Cape York Family Centre, Aged Care and Community Services

The Cape York Family Centre (CYFC) was purpose-built to deliver residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation services to families. The model utilises a modified systemic family therapy framework to provide an opportunity for a family to identify the addiction and its effects on the family unit, rather than isolating the addiction to an individual family member.

The service considers all family systems and subsystems impacted from the addiction and previous trauma; and works holistically with the family to prevent future use and repair relationships to support the ongoing recovery journey.

The CYFC is the only residential drug and alcohol service in Queensland to utilise the application of systemic family therapy within a drug and alcohol residential setting, inclusive of the family unit.

Family and Disability Services



UnitingCare Queensland through our Family and Disability Services supports young peoples to create self-determined lives supported by respectful relationships and high levels of cultural wellbeing.





Unwavering Commitment

Family and Disability Services (FaDS) is part of the UnitingCare family. 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 vision to confront injustice.

As one of Queensland's largest not-for-profit community services providers, we play a significant role in providing opportunities and programs that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the delivery of our unique service offerings within our three service groups, Lifeline Retail, Family Services and Disability Services. Our commitment to our organisational RAP objectives is

unwavering and we will continue to build on our strong foundation of cultural awareness and understanding.

We are committed to living and breathing reconciliation in everything we do. It's not just about learning from our First Nations staff and clients to better their experiences with our brand; it is about walking side by side with an open heart and mind, to become truly strengthened in our continuous journey towards the unity required to progress First Nations matters.

We will continue to build on the already strong working relationships and partnerships we have with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and networks, jointly supporting clients and shaping how services can wrap around a person or family.

We will continue our focus on supporting the decision to transition First Nations young people and clients to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations as part of the Residential Care roadmap.

We will continue to provide Family Law services in conjunction with Refocus, to enable a softer entry into the difficult pathway navigating family and asset separation.

We will continue to build on our success of transitioning some First Nations young people and carers who were part of our Foster and Kinship Care team, to be supported by KICS in the Brisbane Region and CQID in Central Queensland. At their request we are mentoring Warrama Li in Toowoomba, who recently commenced caring for young people in the child protection system, and who had not previously provided residential out of home care. This will build stable and safe homes and programs for young people while providing best practice program support within the guidelines of a licensed service.

We will listen to and act on feedback from First Nations people to ensure our services are inclusive, culturally safe, respectful, and accessible.

Our partnership with Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID) demonstrates these commitments. CQID leads the delivery of the Intensive Family Support Program in Rockhampton, and we will work in partnership to provide specialist Domestic and Family Violence advice as well as case work collaboration expertise in order to enhance outcomes for families which are culturally safe.

Donna Shkalla

Group Executive, Family and Disability Services

ARTWORK BY DEZTNY BYE



Cultural empathy training for leaders

On the 7 June 2023, the First Nations Practice Lead Krystal Beazley and the Coolamon Group organised Cultural Empathy training for leaders in Family and Disability Services. The day of learning was organised specifically for all Senior Leaders and Statewide Managers across Queensland. Taking place at Nyanda Cultural Tours, among the picturesque Nudgee Waterholes, the session was facilitated by Madonna Thomson, a member of the Jagera People and a grandniece of the late Senator Neville Bonner.

The purpose of the day was to engage leaders in a culturally appropriate training experience and build on cultural knowledge, understanding and capability as leaders to engage more effectively

with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

This inaugural event was a valuable opportunity for leaders to deepen their 'knowing, being and doing' through deep listening and connecting offsite with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and services. Together, leaders explored the many elements of the historical timeline, local history and unpacked taking reconciliation further from a leadership perspective.

The teams also enjoyed a shared morning tea infused with local seasonal bush tucker by First Nations supplier, FigJam & Co, and finished with a reflection on current practices and service delivery. As a collective, the group committed to continuing the important conversation of

cultural empathy with their programs and ensuring a grassroots lens is a part of the important work we do across Queensland Family and Disability Services.

In moving forward, the First Nations Practice Lead and Coolamon Group will continue to host these cultural immersion days and learning opportunities for staff as a part of our commitment to Reconciliation. We will continue to build on cultural capability and explore ways to equip our teams to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services. We will ensure our work is guided by community and shaped through a holistic approach to care. We will do this through empowering leadership, allyship and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Making Tracks in Out of Home Care

On Friday 28 July, Family and Disability Services Out of Home Care (OOHC) programs for Moreton House and Jet Cottage hosted the inaugural 'Making Tracks' event in partnership with the First Nations Practice Lead and the FaDS First Nations Leadership Group, The Coolamon Group. Not only a first for the Moreton Bay Region, but for ALL of the OOHC programs in Southeast Queensland.

Senior Care Practitioner Trish Awhimate shares: "Our intention is to bring Culture to the forefront. We hope to create, explore, seek out and create tangible experiences that reconnect our young people with their land, sea, rivers, communities and ultimately their own Connection to Country. This will also remind us of the importance of spiritual connection through ceremony that is thousands of years old, performed by the ancestors of the children who reside in our programs. We will achieve this in collaboration with our brothers and sisters of the Coolamon Group and the Traditional Owners of this country."

Making Tracks will demonstrate that alongside our existing frameworks, Culture can guide the way we CARE for our children, inform program planning and be woven throughout our CARE plans.

Through our continued dedication to work in a way that is child-centred and needs driven, the Moreton House and Jet Cottage teams cement our commitment to improving the residential care experience for all children, when we work in a way that is culturally-informed.

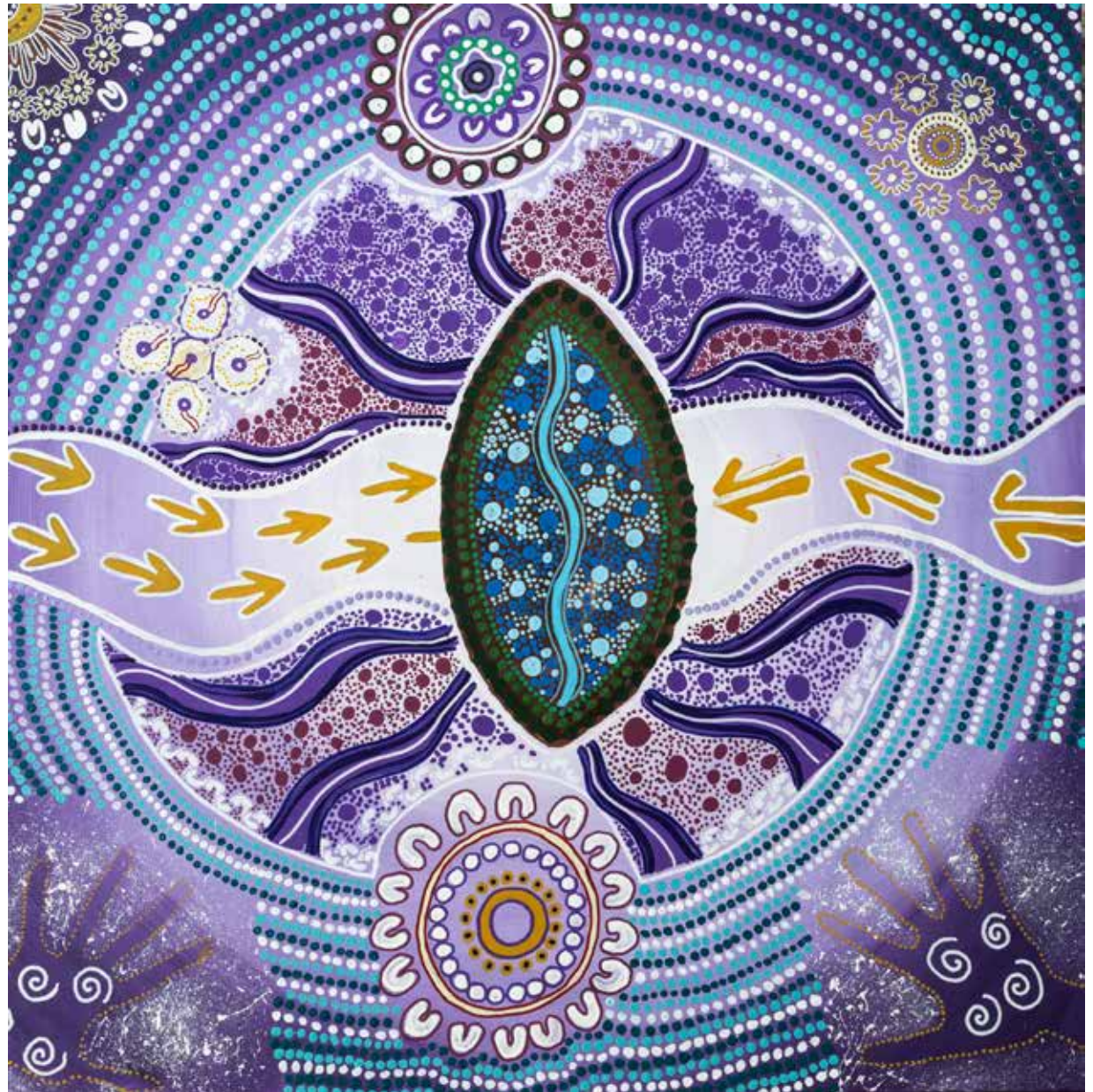
"If I can see it, I can be it."



The Coolamon Group Artwork Launch 2023

The Coolamon Group is the First Nations Leadership Team and Reconciliation Advisory Group for Family and Disability Services.

When the group was established in 2018, the First Nations leaders emphasized the importance of having a symbolic artwork that represented the purpose of the cultural group and offered a sense of identity through storytelling. Fast forward a few years, the Coolamon Group embarked on a journey this year with the Recreational Therapy Program in partnership with Recreational Practitioner Elisha Lindsay, General Manager Luke Lindsay and the team at the Cherbourg Safe House. Through these partnerships, the Coolamon Group shared their vision of having First Nations participants create a symbolic artwork through a grassroots lens and were committed to offering the people we serve the opportunity to tell the story of the Coolamon Group journey.



COOLAMON GROUP ARTWORK BY SHARLECE FISHER AND SHAYE COMPTON

The first step was to go to Country and spend time on Wakka Wakka lands with the local community of Cherbourg and Kingaroy. The team connected with local artists Sharlece Fisher and Shaye Compton in connection to the Cherbourg Safe House and spent the day by the water at the local dam. Together, the team engaged in a range of Art Therapy activities and from the session the concept of the Coolamon Group artwork was established. Through a relationship of respect, trust and self-determination, the Coolamon Group provided a brief of ideas to the local artists to create a commissioned art piece that truly represented all elements of the Coolamon Group.

For several months to follow, Sharlece and Shaye worked hard on the artwork as a part of the Recreational Therapy Program facilitated by Elisha Lindsay. Soon after, the Coolamon Group were advised the artwork was complete. Brimming with excitement and anticipation the team invited both artists to attend the 2023 GroundWater Gathering. The First Nations gathering took place in August 2023 and was attended by over 150 participants across Queensland Family and Disability Services. As a part of the formal program, Sharlece Fisher and Shaye Compton were invited to officially launch the Coolamon Group artwork and share the story of their creation.

The artists took to the stage with bravery, courage and honour to present their incredible work to the Coolamon Group and wider audience. There was not a dry eye in the room as the artwork was revealed and

a well-deserved standing ovation had the young women truly acknowledged for their talent, skill and generous contribution to the Coolamon Group.

The team are deeply moved and wholeheartedly grateful for the journey shared with Sharlece and Shaye. The result is above and beyond anything we could have ever imagined and we are incredibly proud of the experience we were able to offer our young people in community. It was so enriching to see these young women share their talent and gifts in a way that will touch the hearts of many, for years to come.

We are proud that the story of the Coolamon Group is built on the essence of heart, grassroots practice, care, truth-telling

and connection to Culture, Country and Community. We are proud of the identity and sense of belonging offered to us by our young aspiring artists and will always walk tall in the spirit of the elements that represent who we are and what we stand for. On behalf of the Coolamon Group, we say thank you to Sharlece Fisher and Shaye Compton for telling our story in such a meaningful way and we wish you all the very best for a bright and prosperous future.

The Coolamon artwork is now on display at Hows Road office in Nundah. This is the home of the Coolamon Group and the team look forward to sharing this special space of creativity, connection and culture with all guests and staff well into the future.

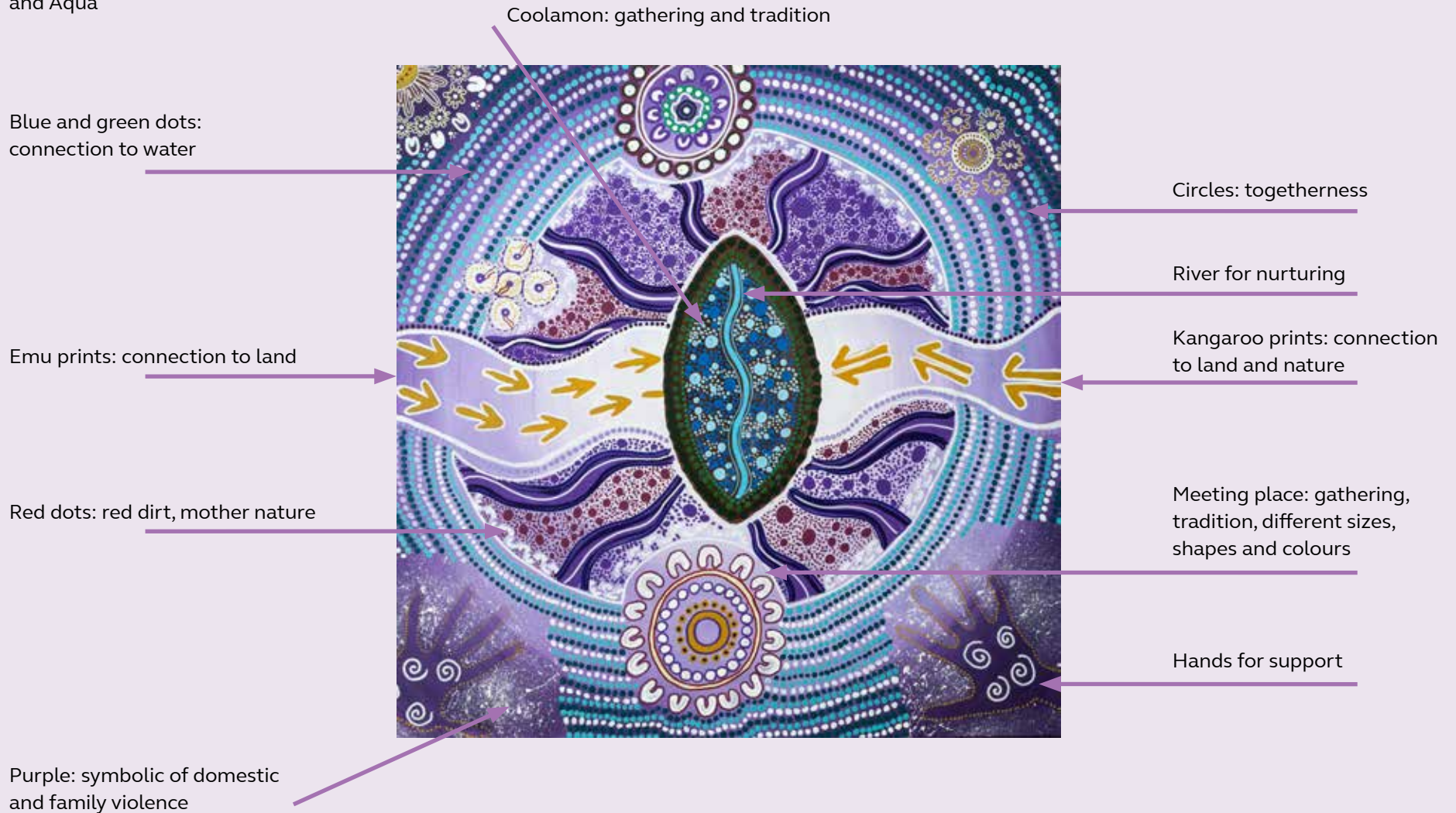
A special message of thanks

The Coolamon Group would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Luke Lindsay, Elisha Lindsay, Jody Willoughby, Angela Harrison, Joanne Trentin, Vivien Bull and all of the team at the Cherbourg Safe House for making this experience possible and for believing in the Coolamon Group and supporting our First Nations young people in community.

The meaning of the artwork

Words: Tradition, Sharing, Gathering, Nurturing, Support, Togetherness, Connection, Culture

Symbols: Coolamon, Circles, Fluid, Meeting Place, People, Land, Sea, Purple and Aqua





13YARN

On 16 March 2022, 13YARN opened its phone lines for the very first time, marking a significant milestone in crisis support and suicide prevention services in Australia.

13YARN stands as the first ever culturally safe 24/7 National Crisis Support and Suicide Prevention Service dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, established through funding from the Australian Government in collaboration with Lifeline Australia and Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia.

In its capacity as a national initiative, UnitingCare has played a crucial role in facilitating service delivery across Queensland. With 10 centres spanning from the Gold Coast to Cairns, alongside ongoing efforts in building a remote workforce, UnitingCare has been instrumental in extending the reach of 13YARN's services across the state.

Since its inception, 13YARN has been a community-driven endeavour, incorporating insights from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals across diverse demographics including age, family status and geographical settings characterised by elevated rates of suicide and self-harm. The service is designed to resonate with cultural and historical contexts that shape the mental wellbeing and suicide experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the communities that support them.

The core objective of 13YARN is to foster the resilience and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities, while also providing and enhancing support avenues. Central to our approach is the assurance that community members will be connected with a fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter, fostering an environment of understanding and non-judgmental listening.

“Our Mob – Serving Our Mob.”

Aunty Beverley Muckan

Our Crisis Supporters in Queensland hail from diverse backgrounds, including Traditional Owners, emergency services and Elders, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the communities we serve. Diversity lies at the heart of our service, acknowledging the unique experiences and challenges within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities while offering moments of hope and connection.

In our commitment to ongoing service delivery and community relevance, we have encountered challenges, such as discrepancies between training language and phone interactions. Through community-led dialogues, we have addressed this disparity, recognising language as a pivotal distinction between 13YARN and traditional helpline services.

In collaboration with UnitingCare, we are committed to advancing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resilience, diversity, leadership and excellence. We are dedicated in offering opportunities for professional growth and skill development for our 13YARN Team of Crisis Supporters in our ongoing efforts towards fostering reconciliation and addressing its complexities.

2024 has seen the 13YARN service extended for another four years and we will continue to move forward with the ethos of “Our Mob – Serving Our Mob.”

UnitingCare Hospitals



UnitingCare Queensland operates one of the largest not-for-profit private hospital groups in Queensland and are proud to deliver a range of specialist healthcare services out each hospital, which are as diverse and special as the communities they serve.

As part of UnitingCare, each hospital's mission and focus is on improving the health outcomes of individuals, families and communities and caring for them with compassion across their life's journey. This means consideration of the holistic wellness and support of the whole person, because in our eyes everyone deserves to live life in all its fullness.

Each of our hospitals are unique in their expertise of clinical and complex services, yet are all equally committed to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to ensure health equity and quality of culturally safe care.



Buderim Private Hospital holds a deep and real connection to Kabi Kabi Country (Sunshine Coast); and provides the community with a comprehensive range of surgical and medical services including emergency, maternity, intensive care, cardiovascular, obstetrics and gynaecology, urology, cancer care, general medicine, renal and respiratory services, orthopaedic and mental health care.

Proudly not-for-profit, the passionate team of over 700 dedicated staff deliver quality healthcare to more than 24,000 patients each year.

Buderim Private is also DVA's only accredited post-traumatic stress disorder service between Brisbane and Townsville.



The Wesley Hospital sits at the heart of Brisbane, on the lands of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples. Here, more than 800 Medical Practitioners and 2,000 staff come together to provide care for communities far and wide.

The Wesley offers comprehensive care across a wide range of acute tertiary-level medical and surgical services with a particular focus on cancer care, cardiac care, women's and children's care, and complex surgical care. This includes the busiest robotic surgery programme and the first Robotic Surgery Centre of Excellence accredited in Australia.

As one of Australia's iconic and largest private not-for-profit hospitals, The Wesley is proud of the valued role we play in the Queensland community.



Based in Brisbane since 1958, on the lands of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital has a strong history of specialising in complex health needs, cardiac services, orthopaedics, neurosurgery, vascular surgery and rehabilitation; and is the first private hospital in Queensland to have a cardiac surgical unit.

Created as a memorial to the service of war veterans, St Andrew's provide cutting edge technology and care for all people who value exceptional quality of care and a sense of community in a leading private hospital.



As Australia's first fully digital hospital, St Stephen's gives the Butchulla (Hervey Bay) community access to one of the country's most advanced healthcare facilities.

From its origins as a local centre caring for local people, St Stephen's has developed into an innovative not-for-profit regional hospital; providing holistic care to local, regional and interstate patients and their families.

St Stephen's is small enough to provide individualised care from specialists, nurses and allied health staff but large enough to cover a majority of health care needs. This includes surgical, medical, oncology, radiotherapy and rehabilitation.

First Nations person-centred clinical leadership

Breeanna Watkins is a proud Wakka Wakka woman whose professional journey with UnitingCare Queensland commenced in 2021 with the St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital's Graduate Registered Nurse Program.

After completing the program Bree was employed full-time by the hospital as a Registered Nurse where she could continue to actively advocate for health equity and use her voice to model change across the healthcare system.

Bree is passionate about the education of healthcare workers to understand intergenerational trauma and the impact this has on patients' ability to participate in the self-determination of their health journey.

Bree says: "Working within an organisation that is committed and driven towards



reconciliation is an empowering and heartwarming feeling. To have your voice heard, opinions valued and your thousands of years of cultural history recognised and celebrated is a tremendous feeling, a feeling of belonging and connectedness."

St Stephen's Hospital's commitment to community

In December 2023, St Stephen's Hospital unveiled an artwork project more than three years in the making which Clinical Nurse Manager, Beatrice Wallis, has led from the beginning.

It was very important to Bea and the hospital Executive Leadership Team to act with appropriate cultural protocol and consult the local Butchulla community and its Elders and Traditional Custodians when undertaking the project.

Displayed in stained glass and vivid colour, the beautiful artwork titled 'Ancestors continue to



watch over Country' was created by Butchulla Elder Aunty Karen Hall and symbolises the land, water, sky and ancestral spirits that watch over them.

"We hope the art will become a talking point that will prompt people to sit down and talk about all the things that matter in bringing a community together and making it stronger," Bea said. "But most importantly, our hope is that this artwork will help to make all First Nations peoples who come into our hospital feel extremely welcomed," she said.

The stained glass display of the artwork is a visual reconciliation commitment and visible as soon as you walk into the front doors of the hospital, which provides a beautiful feeling of calm and connection. A special inclusion is the encapsulation of sands of K'gari (Fraser Island) at the base of the display. These were carefully gathered and gifted to the hospital by Butchulla Traditional Owners.

The launch was also attended by Wide Bay HHS Aboriginal Health Workers including Butchulla Traditional Custodian Terrence Appo and Jillianne Weyman whom St Stephen's Hospital are committed to walking alongside in deep respectful relationship as cultural health experts within the local Hervey Bay and Maryborough communities.

PREVIOUS PAGE: 'ANCESTORS CONTINUE TO WATCH OVER COUNTRY' BY BUTCHULLA ELDER AUNTY KAREN HALL

RIGHT: THE WESLEY HOSPITAL AND BUDERIM PRIVATE HOSPITAL BABIES ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR BIRTH COUNTRY

Newborns connecting to Country

UnitingCare's maternity hospitals Buderim Private Hospital and The Wesley Hospital celebrate deep connection to Country in a very special way with their newborns thanks to the introduction of baby milestone card additions paying respect to Traditional Custodianship.

With Buderim Private's 'Born on Kabi Kabi Country' and The Wesley's 'Born on Turrbal and Yuggera Country', the baby milestone card was produced in consultation with local Elders and forms part of a pack of other cards which are gifted to new parents. Parents are encouraged

to use the cards to mark milestones throughout their baby's first year of life and share photos of their baby's growth and development with family and friends.

Connecting to Country is an integral part of First Nations culture and gives identity and connection to First Nations peoples in relation to our place on the lands, waters and seas. For a child or jarjum, knowing the lands on which they entered the world is powerful and begins their walk with First Nations peoples and culture with small but significant steps of reconciliation and learning.

As part of UnitingCare's reconciliation story we are proud to invite parents of newborn jarjums to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and connect with the lands on which the most significant and sacred event of childbirth occurs.



First Peoples Bachelor of Nursing Scholarships

The UnitingCare First Peoples Bachelor of Nursing Scholarship Program was developed with Griffith University in 2022 to support a call to action for higher levels of engagement, recruitment and retention of UnitingCare's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, especially clinical health professionals within our Hospitals.

After gaining Executive Sponsorship with Group Executive Hospitals, UnitingCare entered a donorship agreement with Griffith University where three scholarships are to be awarded to successful First Nations Undergraduate Nursing applicants each year for a period of three years, with the value of each scholarship as \$5,000.

With RAP Partner Hospitals on the annual selection panel alongside Griffith University's Head of School Nursing and Midwifery and a representative of GUMURRII Indigenous Success Unit, it has been important for the scholarship recipients to hold personal commitment not only to their studies but also to be engaged in community.

Scholarship Recipient Lexie Mitchell is an Awabakal woman and was in her third and final year of her Bachelor of Nursing degree when being awarded the scholarship in 2023.

Lexie says: "The benefit of this scholarship for me is immense as I've moved away from my home and family in Central West Queensland to study on the Gold Coast. The scholarship has supported my studies by relieving the hours I would have spent working to allow me to focus more on my education."

While Lexie hasn't yet decided on a specific area to work in, she is interested in rural and remote nursing after holding placements there, and originating from a remote region of Queensland has shown her how vital quality nursing care is in these areas. She also experienced working

in the emergency department on one of her placements and this has interested her to further study an Acute Complex Care Course.

UnitingCare has also welcomed the opportunity and encouraged remunerated internship and employment opportunities to each successful recipient at our hospitals to continue our commitment to fostering a strong First Nations workforce and their career pathways.

UNITINGCARE FIRST PEOPLES BACHELOR OF NURSING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT LEXIE MITCHELL GRADUATING FROM GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY IN 2023



Governance and Leadership

For thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have organised themselves in governance frameworks that leverage the individual skills and leadership capacity of those within their communities. Elders watch for signs of leadership and capability and walk alongside peoples in cultural mentorship to develop emerging leaders. UnitingCare Queensland is working to grow the capacity of First Nations leaders within our organisation with a focus on two-way governance and self-determination.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Continued governance by the Advisory Group on Reconciliation (AGR)	1.01	Governance and Leadership	Oversee the implementation of RAP 2024-2027 and embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2024 - December 2024	Self-Determination and Cultural Governance	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	1.02		Continue Director of Mission sponsorship throughout the life of the RAP.	July 2024 - July 2027			Advisory Group on Reconciliation
	1.03		Review and update the Advisory Group on Reconciliation membership and terms of reference. Maximum 16 members. Meetings held quarterly.	August 2024, 2025, 2026 November 2024, 2025, 2026 February 2025, 2026, 2027 May 2025, 2026, 2027			
	1.04		Establish a First Nations Advisory Panel which is an AGR co-committee. Terms of reference will need to include provision for four external members of the maximum 16 members. Meetings held quarterly.	August 2024, 2025, 2026 November 2024, 2025, 2026 February 2025, 2026, 2027 May 2025, 2026, 2027			
	1.05		Publish Advisory Group on Reconciliation and First Nations Advisory Panel terms of reference on UnitingCare Reconciliation webpage.	March 2025 March 2026 March 2027			
	1.06		The ELT commit to continue their practice of coming together on a monthly basis to undertake culturally informed yarning circles as an executive group.	Ongoing*		Chief Executive Officer	Executive Leadership Team
	1.07		Report to the Governance People and Cultural Committee, ELT and Board on the milestone achievements within the life of the RAP.	As per the UCQ Governance calendar dates		Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team

*The ELT will report to the AGR annually in November, through the Director of Mission, on how the Yarning Circle method of meeting is contributing to their way of doing strategic business.

Our Interrelated Governance of Reconciliation

The Advisory Group on Reconciliation plays a vital role in guiding UnitingCare's RAP and reconciliation journey. Comprised of Group Executives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from across the organisation, it serves as the main advisory body that ensures the perspectives and input of the interrelated groups and committees are reflected and considered within the UnitingCare reconciliation process.



“Embracing Law. Remain mindful of the values of balance, respect, responsibility and personal betterment that Indigenous legal systems have carried over countless generations; and how alien Indigenous tenets of relationality and inclusivity are to Western notions of race and rivalry. Do not assume things about people and circumstances based on their outward appearances. Instead, go slowly and take the time to respect and understand the nuances and complexities in all people, all things and all situations.”

First Knowledges LAW The Way of Ancestors by Marcia Langton and Aaron Corn, page 189



Governance and Leadership

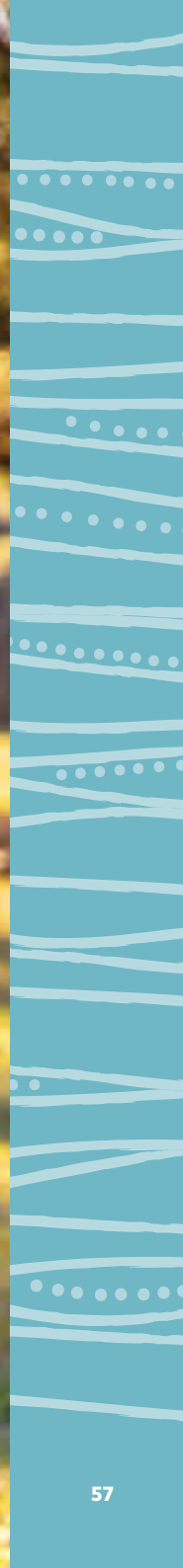
Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Ensure strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and cultural clinical practice capacity building at all levels of the organisation	2.01	Governance and Leadership	Establish a Director of Mission Reconciliation and Covenanting yarning circle to promote friendship and informed thought leadership.	March 2024	Self-Determination and Cultural Governance	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	2.02		Establish fundraising program to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Iterative development of the Dreamline Leaders program, + Establishment of two First Nations Leaders professional development awards Selection criteria to be determined by the Advisory Group on Reconciliation and the First Nations Advisory Panel.	March 2025 March 2026 March 2027			Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	2.03		Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of Hospitals Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare data to ensure meeting the requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) six specific actions for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Action 2.13: Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities + Action 1.2: Addressing health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples + Action 1.4: Implementing and monitoring targeted strategies to meet safety and quality priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples + Action 1.21: Improving cultural competency of the workforce to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients + Action 1.33: Creating a welcoming environment + Action 5.8: Identifying people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin 	Reporting to be provided to AGR and Hospitals Quality Council as per meeting schedules	Equality and Equity	Group Executive, Hospitals	Hospitals General Managers and Clinical Governance Units

Governance and Leadership

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Implement a best practice governance model that incorporates Indigenous governance practices and systems across the organisation	3.01	Governance and Leadership	Continue to have UCQ First Nations staff representation on the Uniting First Peoples Network and Uniting Community of Practice.	July 2024 to July 2027	Equality and Equity	Executive Leadership Team	Director of Mission
	3.02		<p>Ensure there are opportunities to establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the below Senior Leadership Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Family and Disability Services + Hospitals + BlueCare + People and Culture + Governance + People and Culture + Business, Finance and Strategy + Digital and Technology <p>We aim to have 30% of the Senior Leadership Teams with First Nations representation by March 2025, 50% by March 2026 and 100% by March 2027.</p>	<p>March 2025 - First Nations representation on 2 Senior Leadership Teams</p> <p>March 2026 - First Nations representation on 4 Senior Leadership Teams</p> <p>March 2027 - First Nations representation on all 7 Senior Leadership Teams</p>		Director of Mission	Executive Leadership Team
Continue to support and lead national reconciliation works, informing respectful relationships and friendships, truth-telling, Sovereignty, spiritual connections to Country and a shared cultural identity	4.01	Governance and Leadership	Develop platforms that responsibly and appropriately recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 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 quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Equality and Equity	Chief Executive Officer	Group Executive, People and Culture
	4.02		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.		Respect and Relationships	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	4.03		Continue to work in partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia Qld Synod and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Regional Council Queensland (Muth arrak) to support First Nations voices on public advocacy matters relating to the UNDRIP, Closing the Gap outcomes and justice reform.				

Governance and Leadership

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Support the reconciliation agenda publicly and within our services	5.01	Governance and Leadership	Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with RAP organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Peak Bodies who share common strategic aspirations – minimum three per year for the life of the RAP.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships	Executive Leadership Team	Director of Mission and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	5.02		Host quarterly public advocacy webinars on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, either at a local or national level.			Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team
	5.03		Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders across the organisation to attend 3 RAP learning circles or leadership forums per year for the life of the RAP.	Reportable through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation July 2025 July 2026 July 2027		Executive Leadership Team	Director of Mission and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team





Dreamline Leaders

Dreamline Leaders is an Executive Sponsored mentorship program designed to offer aspirational First Nations employees the opportunity to be part of a cohort of learners. Together, they will develop confidence, knowledge and behaviours which will assist in elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership voices across UnitingCare services.

The 10 month program launched in February 2024 with a Walk on Country by Nyanda Cultural Tours and an address by Professor Marcia Langton. Thirteen First Nations participants have been partnered with senior leaders from across UnitingCare services to offer professional mentorship.

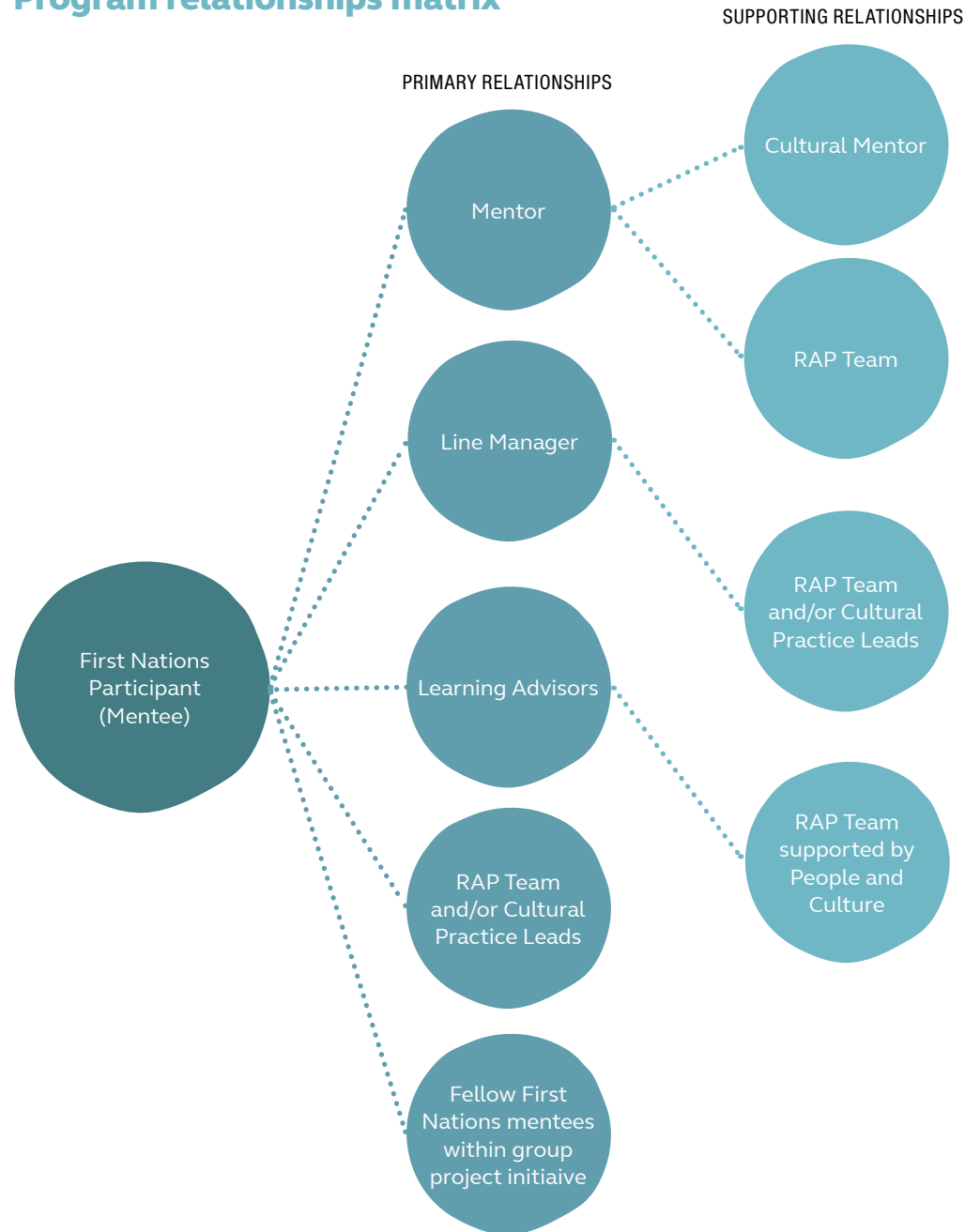
All senior leader mentors will be;

- Guided by the EMCC Global Competence Framework V2 September 2015 and
- Expected to complete an in-house delivered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid course.

It is broadly recognised that high level mentorship is built upon a trusted conversational relationship between the mentor and mentee; this relationship is based upon mutual respect, accountability and agreed ways of engagement.

Dreamline Leaders requires active allyship and has the potential to increase the number of First Nations senior leaders across the organisation; as well as develop the leadership attributes of front-line managers who wish to more capably and confidently exercise their powers of self-determination.

Program relationships matrix



Program outcomes

- Develop a connected cohort of First Nations aspirational leaders who possess high levels of trust between each other as well as senior leaders across the organisation, which will translate into higher levels of individual confidence in their ability to demonstrate leadership attributes.
- Develop an interconnected network between frontline staff and senior leadership across the organisation, whilst assisting senior leaders to better understand how they can directly and personally contribute to the action items of the UCQ Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Assist line managers in understanding the unique culturally informed success indicators of First Nations staff within their teams, as well as equip them with a deeper appreciation of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culturally informed practice.
- Development and execution of a First Nations specific leadership program which will improve wellbeing at work levels for participants. The program will also contribute to the “*Optimising the occupational wellbeing of UCQ Workers*” Griffith University/UCQ research project.
- A demonstrated commitment to understanding and respecting the specific learning and relational needs of First Nations staff.
- Creates the opportunity to learn directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentees who may choose to share components of their cultural knowledge. (This is not an expectation of the program and will be a self-determined decision made by each mentee.)

Cultural Appreciation and Allyship

Respect begins with an appreciation of the cultural pillars which support First Nations ways of being as peoples in our world around us. Historical acceptance of the pains of the past is part of the appreciation journey, however it is our future aspirations underpinned by a living culture that peoples must respect in our journey together.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
We will build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	6.01	Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	Celebrate the annual theme and honour the spirit of National Reconciliation Week at organisational, service and local level, ensuring broad community and Traditional Owner engagement. + Encourage and support all to participate in two external events to recognise and celebrate NRW, each year. + Organise three internal NRW events, including at least one organisation-wide NRW event, each year. + Promote Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	27 May - 3 June 2025 27 May - 3 June 2026 27 May - 3 June 2027	Respect and Relationships	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	6.02		Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.				
We will create spaces of cultural safety where First Nations staff and those seeking to demonstrate allyship feel supported to honour and celebrate First Nations knowledge, wisdom and practice	7.01	Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	Honour the historical context of National Sorry Day and mark this annual day of recognition by deepening appreciation of the impacts of intergenerational trauma alongside the resilience demonstrated by First Peoples.	26 May 2025 26 May 2026 26 May 2027			
	7.02		Celebrate the annual theme and honour the spirit of NAIDOC Week at organisational, service and local level, ensuring broad community and Traditional Owner engagement.	7 July - 14 July 2024 6 July - 13 July 2025 5 July - 12 July 2026 4 July - 11 July 2027			
	7.03		Honour the culturally significant calendar days and use this time to continue knowledge sharing across internal and external media platforms.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation			

Cultural Appreciation and Allyship

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
We will create spaces of cultural safety where First Nations staff and those seeking to demonstrate allyship feel supported to honour and celebrate First Nations knowledge, wisdom and practice	7.04	Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	Review and update GROW Cultural Appreciation online learning program incorporating current First Nations national conversation and political developments.	July 2026	Respect and Relationships	Group Executive, People and Culture	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network and the UCQ Learning and Development team
	7.05		Co-create alongside Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors, a 12-15 minute Reconciliation Priorities video to complement the full GROW Cultural Appreciation online learning program.	Co-Create - November 2024 Review - November 2026			
	7.06		Host the GROW Cultural Appreciation online learning program on a national subscription based learning platform, with proceeds of the sale of the program being used to; + fund organisational-wide First Nations scholarships, and + fund further collaborative learning and development opportunities.	August 2024			The UCQ Learning and Development Team supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team
	7.07		Offer a minimum of twelve annual Traditional Owner Walk on Country cultural immersion experiences across the state. These experiences will be inclusive of all services and functions across the organisation.	Reportable annually in August in line with the RAP Impact Survey		Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team
	7.08		Facilitate two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA) courses quarterly across all service areas to increase the cultural capacity and knowledge of UnitingCare staff serving First Nations clients and communities.	Minimum of eight AMHFA workshops facilitated each year			
	7.09		Continue to strengthen the capability of reconciliation allies and enable them to act as cultural champions within a UnitingCare First Nations Allyship Network, equipped with the base knowledge and bravery to lead aspects of the works of Reconciliation within their spheres of influence.	Ongoing quarterly review			

Cultural Appreciation and Allyship

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
We will acknowledge and demonstrate adherence to the cultural practices of Knowing, Being and Doing and incorporating these ways into our daily works	8.01	Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	Continue to demonstrate clear cultural leadership by honouring in meaningful ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols. These include, but are not limited to Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, culturally informed engagement with Eldership and communities; and tools such as the Cultural Protocols document, Acknowledgement cards, meeting and presentation templates and the Cultural Language Terminology guide.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	8.02		Review and update the aforementioned Cultural Protocol documents in relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Cultural Advisors.	September 2026			
We will champion historical acceptance by honouring the spirit of the invitation within the Uluru Statement from the Heart	9.01	Cultural Appreciation and Allyship	Promote local and state government led truth-telling sessions held throughout community and create quarterly truth-telling forums across our services, designed to help employees appreciate localised First Nations history.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	9.02		Continue to promote the telling of truth and sharing of story associated with the history of the Uniting Church in Australia Qld Synod, through the Voices of our Covenant project.				



Culture in the Workforce

For our First Nations workforce to thrive, we must create processes designed to capture cultural perspectives and use these to create work environments which values diverse thought in practice.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Advance employment outcomes for First Nations peoples, by facilitating continuous improvement methodologies which inform culturally inclusive policy and procedures	10.01	Culture in the Workforce	Continue to review and embed culturally informed practice into existing People and Culture policy and procedures to support ongoing improvement to First Nations recruitment, retention and succession. Support ongoing improvements to First Nations recruitment, retention and succession, by embedding culturally informed practice into existing People First policies and procedures.	Complete first review by October 2024 with ongoing quarterly reporting to the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships Self-determination and Cultural Governance Equality and Equity	Group Executive, People and Culture Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	10.02		Referring to Action Item 10.01, more specifically review recruitment policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our organisation including: + Identifying barriers throughout recruitment and onboarding process and provide cultural support from application to onboarding and orientation; + Upon obtaining improved understanding of the abovementioned barriers to employment, we will explore opportunities to advocate for state and national skills and qualifications funding framework reviews; which respectfully acknowledges lived experience and cultural governance qualification equivalence.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation			

Culture in the Workforce

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Advance employment outcomes for First Nations peoples, by facilitating continuous improvement methodologies which inform culturally inclusive policy and procedures	10.03	Culture in the Workforce	Create relationship networks with specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment agencies, as well as key First Nations community organisations throughout the state: + Advertise job vacancies through First Nations employment specialists and community channels, as well as all standard recruitment platforms; + All advertised positions will include an 'encouragement to apply' statement and a contact address to the RAP Team and/or service specific cultural advisors for additional application process support.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships Self-Determination and Cultural Governance Equality and Equity	General Executive, People and Culture Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	10.04		Collaborate with external First Nations organisations and consult on professional development strategies, pathways, executive and board representation.				
	10.05		With reference to Action Item 9.02, implement regularly scheduled facilitation of yarning and storytelling opportunities for each service which can be hosted by First Nations peoples or trained cultural champions.				
	10.06		Commit to providing 10 aspirational First Nations staff with a cultural learning experience designed to elevate individual personal connections with culture, storytelling and cultural spirit.				
	10.07		Utilise external funding opportunities and developing proactive partnerships which promote training and employment opportunities; both at entry and graduate level within each service.				

Culture in the Workforce

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Advance employment outcomes for First Nations peoples, by facilitating continuous improvement methodologies which inform culturally inclusive policy and procedures	10.08	Culture in the Workforce	Utilising outsourced philanthropic funding, we will increase intern placement from 6 to 12 per year, whilst developing pathways to regular employment within our services.	Report quarterly through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation	Respect and Relationships	General Executive, People and Culture Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	10.09		Enlist the assistance of internal allyship networks, cultural advisors and cultural champions to embed cultural capability and accountability measures within the UnitingCare Queensland Leadership Capability Framework.		Self-Determination and Cultural Governance		
	10.10		Co-create culturally informed palliative care practice, whilst simultaneously building the capabilities of First Nations palliative care practitioners.	May 2025 with ongoing review	Equality and Equity		
	10.11		Co-create culturally informed dementia care practice, whilst simulations building capabilities of First Nations dementia care practitioners.				
	10.12		Identify and develop one clinical practice lead per year for the life of the RAP.				
	10.13		Finalise the implementation of a nursing and/or allied health scholarship.				
	10.14		Work towards developing and implementing a workplace and organisational anti-racism framework.				

Culture in the Workforce

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Representation matters; and we commit to increasing the number of First Nations employees and leaders across our services	11.01	Culture in the Workforce	The Executive Leadership Team commit to working within the framework of this RAP to achieve the below First Nations workforce targets across our services: 5% - Family and Disability Services 2% - Hospitals 4% - Support Services 50% - Pinangba Services 3% - Aged Care and Community Services excl. Pinangba Services	June 2027	Respect and Relationships Self-Determination and Cultural Governance Equality and Equity	General Executive, People and Culture Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network
	11.02		With reference to Action Item 3.02, we will invest in self-determined leadership and governance development opportunities for aspirational First Nations employees and target a minimum of 20 First Nations members of the organisation-wide Senior Leadership Team.	June 2027			

Message from Shannon Richards, Group Executive People and Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in all facets of our operation, including how we serve, how we support and how we lead, is crucial to embedding First Nations perspectives into policy and practice. During the next three years of UnitingCare Queensland's reconciliation journey, we will be active in supporting First Nations leadership development and inclusion in senior leadership teams, which will more effectively embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience as well as cultural and clinical

knowledge into decision making processes across the organisation.

We are also committed to develop and implement an anti-racism framework which will sit alongside our Treating People Fairly policy and procedures. All of Our People need to feel safe to bring their whole self to work and it is everyone's responsibility to create safe work environments free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Creating safe spaces where employees experience high levels of wellbeing will be supported by the Wellbeing at UnitingCare joint research project with Griffith University. This research

project includes six monthly staff feedback and relationship building initiatives and we will encourage and support high levels of First Nations team participation in the project.

We are committed to listening, learning, including, activating and celebrating as we continue appreciating the richness of individual contributions, partnership and teamwork.



Environmental and Personal Connections

Building authentic connections between peoples and place, which are built on our Reconciliation values are essential to supporting all of the pillars of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible	
We will deepen our connection to Country and connection to each other as peoples of this nation, as this is the basis for developing greater flourishing of our lands, sea, waters, skies and peoples. We will create opportunities for connection and learning on and from Country as we seek to improve our culturally informed care practices	12.01	Environmental and Personal Connections	Practicing the cultural ethic or protocol which is Custodianship of Country, we will create cultural gardens across our services filled with species of bush tucker and medicine.	For the duration of the RAP create a minimum of six bush tucker and bush medicine gardens within our facilities	Connecting to Country and Wellbeing	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with service Property teams and local Traditional Owner groups	
	12.02		Host in collaboration with the Environmental Sustainability team, a minimum of two initiatives or events each year which advocate for how to provide better Custodianship of Country.	Twice yearly for the life of the RAP	Connecting to Country and Wellbeing Respect and Relationships		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the Environmental Sustainability team	
	12.03		Create opportunities for staff to deepen connection with Traditional Owners and Custodians walking on and listening to Country.	Ongoing business as usual - embedded into Business Planned methodologies			Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network	
	12.04		Continue to work with the Kabi Kabi Aboriginal Peoples Corporation and other Traditional Owner groups to provide two horticulture traineeships per year across Aged Care and Community services for members of their community.	Ongoing business as usual engagement practices				
	12.05		Create Volunteer experiences through partnership with Traditional Owners across the state to support the environmental works programs of their associated community controlled organisation.	Two experiences per year				

We will encourage the incorporation of narrative

We will encourage the incorporation of narrative therapy into therapeutic care and well being practice across our organisation.

Environmental and Personal Connections

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
We will deepen our connection to Country and connection to each other as peoples of this nation, as this is the basis for developing greater flourishing of our lands, sea, waters, skies and peoples. We will create opportunities for connection and learning on and from Country as we seek to improve our culturally informed care practices	12.06	Environmental and Personal Connections	Trained facilitators within the RAP team will offer a minimum of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid training courses for staff from across all services to complete throughout the year.	Ongoing	Connecting to Country and Wellbeing	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team
	12.07		The RAP team will work with Mission Wellbeing Specialists to create a series of First Nations specific wellbeing experiences or learning initiatives throughout the year.				
	12.08		Create and activate new culturally appropriate trauma informed care and grief and loss support initiatives that will be developed, implemented and assessed throughout the life of this RAP.	July 2025 and ongoing			
	12.09		Culturally informed care and wellbeing compassionate carers will be promoted in relationship with the works of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to support our services and initiatives such as First Peoples Prison Ministry.		Connecting to Country and Wellbeing Respect and Relationships		
	12.10		Ongoing support of local First Nations community groups in using spiritual narratives to develop cohorts of compassionate carers, who can lead self-determined community healing initiatives.		Connecting to Country and Wellbeing Self-Determination and Cultural Governance		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with the service specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisor network

First Nations Economy

Supporting the First Nations Economy brings direct tangible benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners, their employees and the communities who are connected to them. UnitingCare Queensland seeks to support corporate and individual self-determination and Closing the Gap on financial disparity that comes from a thriving First Nations economy.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Support First Nations-owned businesses to become prosperous, vibrant and sustainable contributors not only to First Nations communities but the broader Australian economy.	13.01	First Nations Economy	Support the growth aspirations of First Nations enterprise through deliberate connection, listening, engagement and collaborative initiatives.	Collaborate on two initiatives with Procurement Team per year in line with existing practices	Equality and Equity Respect and Relationships	Chief Financial Officer Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with appropriate Procurement Leads
	13.02		Create opportunities to promote First Nations enterprise across our organisation by the development of a localised trade fair to be facilitated during NRW 2025.	27 May - 3 June 2025	Equality and Equity Respect and Relationships		
	13.03		UnitingCare commits to the below procurement spend targets for Supply Nation certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises: FY 2024 - 2025: \$900k FY 2025 - 2026: \$1.2ml FY 2026 - 2027: \$1.5ml	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Self-Determination and Cultural Governance		
	13.04		Create learning platforms for Senior Leaders across the organisation to encourage inclusion of First Nations enterprise objectives within the business planning development process.	From September 2024 annually	Equality and Equity Respect and Relationships		
	13.05		The above deliverables will be incorporated into an organisational-wide Procurement Strategy.	November 2024	Equality and Equity Respect and Relationships Self-Determination and Cultural Governance		

The social return on investment (SROI) averaged \$4.41 for every dollar of revenue for a Supply Nation Certified Supplier. This means that for every dollar of revenue they generate, in addition to goods and services, Certified Suppliers create an average \$3.41 social value. Higher SROI ratios were associated with smaller businesses and those producing cultural products.

Source: <https://supplynation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Sleeping-Giant-Report.pdf>

Reporting and Storytelling

UnitingCare commits to capturing crucial data and providing transparent reporting on Reconciliation Action Plan deliverables. We will use this data to create compelling narratives for positive change.

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Promote the sharing of First Nations stories and highlight the use of storytelling as a legitimate and much valued form of business interaction. Continue to increase the level of Reconciliation engagement across the organisation through weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports which honour storytelling in all its forms	14.01	Reporting and Storytelling	Encourage authentic reconciliation engagement through regular online forums and face to face yarning circles.	Minimum four per year	Respect and Relationships	Director of Mission in relationship with the Chief Executive Officer	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team in relationship with First Nations Leaders across the organisation
	14.02		Support the implementation of RAP action items through regular and supportive engagement with Leaders, Allies and Cultural Champions throughout the organisation.	Minimum two engagements per year	Respect and Relationships Equality and Equity		
	14.03		Actively support Statewide and National Truth-Telling initiatives as we walk towards Treaty.	Minimum two initiatives per year	Respect and Relationships Self-Determination and Cultural Governance		
	14.04		Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2024, 2025, 2026	Respect and Relationships		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships team
	14.05		Participate as an organisation in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	September 2025			
	14.06		Share stories and achievements through monthly whole of organisation and service level reporting dashboards and newsletters.	Ongoing			
	14.07		Communicate quarterly updates on RAP action item commitments through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation, to all employees.	As per AGR meeting schedule			
	14.08		Report to the Board twice-yearly on all RAP action item commitments outlining achievements, challenges, partnerships and learnings.	As per Board meeting schedule			
	14.09		Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings. RAP 2024-2027 Annual Report to be published on UnitingCare's website.	December 2024, December 2025, December 2026			

Reporting and Storytelling

Action	Item	Business discipline	Deliverable	Timeline	Value Alignment	Accountable	Responsible
Review and complete an appraisal of learnings, challenges and achievements during the life of the current RAP, which inform the development options for UnitingCare’s ongoing strategic Reconciliation works	15.01	Reporting and Storytelling	Complete Fish Trap Consultations across services and communities.	September and October 2026	Self-Determination and Cultural Governance	Director of Mission	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Partnerships Team in relationship with First Nations Leaders across the organisation
	15.02		Formulate and disseminate consultation findings.	November 2026		Director of Mission in relationship with the Chief Executive Officer	
	15.03		Using interrelated governance networks, discern ongoing Reconciliation strategy.	December 2026			



As part of our storytelling and reporting, we will use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols of Knowing, Being and Doing to inform how we best shape our stories.

Our storytelling will include the oral traditions through yarning as well as dance, song and art. Taking time to share stories helps build places of trust for giving and receiving or caring and healing to occur.

Partnering to Build Culturally-Informed Care Capability



Zoe Wildman, a dedicated 19-year-old nursing student and Koa, Kuku Yalanji (Wakka Wakka) woman is taking part in a UnitingCare and CareerTrackers internship program.

While at the Wesley Hospital, Zoe has been able to shadow and learn from staff in the maternity, paediatrics, orderly services and ward reception departments, enriching her understanding of nursing and overall healthcare delivery.

“Here at the hospital I am able to observe, learn and grow at my own pace and not worry about being assessed at the same time, I feel like a sponge absorbing all the knowledge,” Zoe said.

“The highlight for me was being able to witness a caesarean birth, making me interested in paediatric nursing, however I am also interested in cardiology or theatre nursing. But I ultimately want to keep studying to become a Nurse Practitioner.”

As a First Nations woman, Zoe advocates for greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the nursing profession, emphasising the importance of culturally sensitive care and advocating for equitable healthcare access for all.

Expressing gratitude for the opportunities afforded by the CareerTrackers program, Zoe envisions a future where she can leverage

her nursing career to support First Nations communities in achieving optimal health outcomes.

“I would love the opportunity to give back to community and give back to mob, that’s very important to me to show how much I appreciate my community and their value,” she said.

UnitingCare’s RAP Team collaborates closely with CareerTrackers, offering internship opportunities across various UnitingCare services.

CareerTrackers™

It has been inspiring to see and hear about the unique experiences our CareerTrackers interns have enjoyed within UnitingCare. The opportunity to learn from experts in their fields, within teams of people passionate about paving the way for our future generation of leaders, sets our students up for success as they begin their careers.

Kevin Kelly
Student Advisor, CareerTrackers





The Future is First Nations

Kaya Ware is a Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Atambaya and Torres Strait Islander woman who has successfully completed five CareerTrackers placements across various services of UnitingCare in Cairns and Brisbane.

Kaya commenced her journey with CareerTrackers and UnitingCare at the end of 2021 following her high school graduation. In Cairns, Kaya interned with Family Intervention Services, Birch Street Community Hub and the Family and Kinship Care team. Upon relocating to Brisbane for her studies, Kaya worked with the UnitingCare Community Talent Acquisition team collaborating with People and Culture, the Pinangba Strategy Team and the RAP Team.

Reflecting on her time with CareerTrackers and UnitingCare, Kaya has cherished the opportunity to intern in a large organisation where she has built relationships with remarkable staff and clients, allowing her to

engage in inspirational experiences and equip her with a diverse skillset with the chance to learn from and be mentored by industry leaders.

Currently completing a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) with the anticipated graduation in 2025, Kaya's ultimate objective is to become a Trauma-Informed Therapist. Kaya aims to work with and within First Nations communities, offering support to families navigating deep intergenerational trauma while promoting cultural safety and incorporating traditional practices.

Participating in the CareerTrackers program has provided Kaya with the invaluable cultural benefit of establishing connections and bonds with fellow interns and UnitingCare staff members. It has also provided Kaya an opportunity of meeting and yarning with other First Nations identified employees about their impactful work within communities, which she feels has been a significant highlight and provided an opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives that will enhance her practice moving forward.

My Walk of Allyship

Simone Elias, Manager Environmental Sustainability at UnitingCare, shares her story.

I grew up in Gimuy/Cairns, living and playing on the lands of the Yidinji, Djabugay and Yirrigayndji peoples.

The lush landscapes of Far North Queensland shaped my connection with, and sense of responsibility to the natural world, and no doubt influenced my career path into environmental sustainability. However, my intentional walk of allyship started much later and has been

enriched by my six years at UnitingCare and the relationships I have developed with First Peoples.

I have come to know that my desire to help heal historic injustices had to begin by learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Some of the gifts I've received from this learning are a deeper connectedness to the landscapes, and ecosystems of this beautiful country, and appreciation for the practice of deep listening and yarning.

Sometimes allyship might mean taking what feels like a risk. Meaning you might think "what if I use the wrong term and upset someone?". Leaning into moments of discomfort and doing some of your own research, or asking brave questions with humility can be so impactful or even transformative!

Some of the practical actions I've found valuable in deepening my walk of allyship are:

Learn by listening to First Nations voices and experiences, for example through:

- Books, audiobooks and music by First Nations authors and songwriters;
- Arts and storytelling events like dance, theatre, music and stand-up comedy;
- Participating in the many vibrant local events in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural calendar; and of course

- Walking on Country with traditional custodians who proudly share their knowledge.

Elevate First Nations perspectives in key decision-making forums, event programs, and policy submissions.

Respect and participate in First Nations cultural protocols and practices by;

- Practice giving a heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country, which incorporates what the land on which you are gathering means to you and your relationship with First Peoples.
- Caring for Country by reducing waste, pollution, emissions, and use of precious resources.

I love these words by Wiradjuri man and river guide, Richard Swain: *"There's 3,000 generations of people who consider themselves custodians of this Country. You've got to include yourself in that; you're part of that."*

Much like playing a part in environmental sustainability, everyone will be at a different place in their own allyship journey. Reconciliation relies on us continuing to the next steps.



Eucalyptus are a vital and much loved feature of Country and landscape. They sink deep roots and can grow strong in harsh conditions, but can cause damage when they shed parts of themselves in order to survive.

They bravely face all weather to provide healing and cleansing, food, shade, shelter, timber for cultural tools, canoes and building materials. They take many shapes and forms and are part of dreaming and spirit stories, folktales and modern chronicle and, you can see part of their story in the scars left upon them.

They live as part of us - as part of our shared story as First and Second Peoples.

We may look to see things for unique understandings, but to see the fullness of something is to seek the whole story from many perspectives. What is absolute truth, is the land holds the living memory of our full story and can teach us the power of reconciliation for greater purpose than self.



Proudly representing

BlueCare | Lifeline | ARRCs | The Wesley Hospital | Buderim Private Hospital
St Stephen's Hospital | St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

For more information about our RAP:
reconciliation@ucareqld.com.au