

the royal victorian
eye and ear
hospital

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2019 – February 2020

Message from our Chair

Message from our CEO

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REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
FEBRUARY 2019 – FEBRUARY 2020

I am pleased to present the inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital – our Reflect RAP. This plan aims to clearly articulate the practical, positive steps the Eye and Ear will take on our reconciliation journey. Through the development and implementation of this plan we hope to continue to engage in the national reconciliation movement.

As an indication of our commitment at the highest levels, a subcommittee of the Board – the Primary Care & Population Health Advisory Committee – will dedicate all meetings during 2018 and 2019 to working towards implementing strategies and programs to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This RAP is also an important pledge by our organisation to continue the work which has commenced to further embed cultural awareness amongst our staff and ensure this commitment is embedded across the organisation. We want to be a service that is inclusive and welcoming to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they are a staff member, volunteer, patient or visitor. In creating an accessible environment, we aim to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Sherene Devanesen
Chair



At The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital we have been working for a number of years to close the healthcare gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We know that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples experience higher levels of vision impairment and blindness and that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are more prone to ear conditions such as ear infections and holes in the ear drum. Our vision of improving quality of life through caring for the senses applies to all patients and we know there is more to be done to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We will continue working collaboratively with our external partners to close the healthcare gap for vision and hearing for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients. Our work with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) Healthy Ears Clinic has been a very successful collaboration and we are planning to increase the reach of this program. We also look forward to further developing our Ophthalmology Outreach Clinic at VAHS which was established in late 2018.

This RAP is another important step in the Eye and Ear's commitment to reconciliation and has the support and endorsement of Board, Executive, staff and volunteers.

Mark Petty
CEO



Our business

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The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (the Eye and Ear) is a world leading facility, and Australia's only specialist stand-alone eye, ear, nose and throat (ENT) hospital. The Eye and Ear is the largest public provider of ophthalmology and ENT services in Victoria and delivers more than half of Victoria's public eye surgery and all of Victoria's public cochlear implants. The organisation has a geographic reach which is statewide across Victoria however we do care for a small number of patients from outside of Victoria.

Our vision of improving quality of life through caring for the senses is underpinned by our four values: Integrity, Care, Teamwork, and Excellence. This is supported by our mission of aspiring to be the world's leading eye and ENT health service by:

- **excelling in specialist services**
- **integrating teaching and research with clinical services**
- **leading workforce capability**
- **partnering with consumers and communities**
- **building a sustainable future**

A 'Healthy Ears Clinic' has been run very successfully, every four weeks, in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) for the past four years. Up to sixteen Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are seen in each clinic and approximately four of these are directly referred for ENT surgery at the Eye and Ear Hospital.

In July 2017, a unique Cataract Surgery pathway was established enabling Aboriginal patients' quicker access to cataract surgery. In November 2018



we established an Ophthalmology Outreach Clinic at VAHS. This clinic is the first Ophthalmology Clinic to be run in an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) in Victoria.

Our organisation employs approximately 900 staff. Four staff identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples at our last People Matter Survey in May 2018 including our two Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers.

Our RAP and reconciliation journey

Our organisation is developing a RAP because we are committed to closing the healthcare gap for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients.

A commitment has been made by our Primary Care & Population Health Advisory Committee (a subcommittee of the Board) to focus all meetings during 2018 and 2019 on closing the gap for eye and ear health care for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities. Part of this commitment includes developing a RAP.

This is the first RAP developed by the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. This RAP is an important commitment by our organisation to continue the work which has commenced to further embed cultural awareness amongst our staff, and to continue working collaboratively with our external partners to close the healthcare gap for vision and hearing for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients. Our reconciliation journey to date has included events such as:

- Inviting an Aboriginal Elder from the Wurundjeri Council to provide a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony when we moved some of our services into our temporary second campus
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week in 2018 with a stall in our foyer to raise awareness of this event and to celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women
- Our AHLOs participating in the annual NAIDOC Week march
- Re-establishing our Primary Care & Population Health Advisory Committee, a Board Subcommittee, with the key agenda to focus on improving access to care and closing the vision and hearing healthcare gap for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients
- Providing education to our staff on the importance of “Asking the Question” to enable us to identify our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients so they can be supported through their healthcare journey by our Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers
- Updating our website referral forms to include an option for patients to be identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples so they can be better connected with our Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers when they receive care in our organisation
- Running a Healthy Ears Outreach Clinic at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Services (VAHS) for young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples under 21 years of age who have ear, nose and throat (ENT) issues.
- Establishing an Ophthalmology Outreach Clinic at VAHS for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander adults and children who have vision issues
- Purchasing and displaying Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork in our public spaces to demonstrate our commitment to providing a culturally safe place for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients to attend and receive their care
- Displaying Acknowledgement of Country plaques at the entrance to our buildings
- Displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the reception desks on both of our campuses
- Providing an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of all events and meetings held at the Board Subcommittee, Executive and Manager levels



Our RAP and reconciliation journey

Our RAP is championed in our health service by our CEO, our Board, and our Executive team. Many staff have been involved in the development of our RAP including internal champions as well as our Primary Care & Population Health Advisory Committee (PCPHAC), Manager Planning & Patient Experience and our two Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers (AHLOs).

Our RAP working group will be established as part of the work required to meet the actions of our RAP and this will consist of:

- **Executive Director Redevelopment, Strategy and Infrastructure**
- **Manager Planning & Patient Experience**
- **Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers x 2**
- **People & Culture representative**
- **Marketing & Communications representative**
- **Clinical managers x 2**
- **Coordinator Community Engagement & Participation**
- **Contract & Procurement Manager**
- **Consumer Representatives x 2 from our local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities**

Our partnerships/current activities

Community partnerships: The Eye and Ear has strong relationships with a number of external organisations and many of these groups are members on our PCPHAC. These groups include the organisations listed below who have contributed to our reconciliation journey and closing the eye and ear health care gap in the following ways:

- the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) – partner with us to run a Healthy Ears Outreach Clinic every four weeks and an Ophthalmology Outreach Clinic every two weeks at VAHS
- the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) – member of the State Eye Health Committee which is chaired by VACCHO and attend the Improving Care for Aboriginal Patients (ICAP) forums twice a year
- the Aboriginal Health team at the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – work collaboratively on projects and committees supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples access to eye and ear healthcare
- the Indigenous Eye Health Unit (IEH) – attended and presented at the National Eye Health conference run by IEH
- the Australian College of Optometrists (ACO) – partnered to celebrate NAIDOC Week 2018, work collaboratively to run the Ophthalmology Outreach Clinic at VAHS every two weeks
- Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) – work collaboratively to provide funding to support the running of our Outreach programs
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons – members of the College are staff at the Eye and Ear who provide clinical support to run the Outreach Clinics at VAHS

The Eye and Ear works in partnership with these organisations to close the gap for eye and ear health care to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients. Our organisation is represented on external committees and steering groups with members from each of these organisations, including on the Statewide Aboriginal Eye Health Strategy Committee which oversees the work being done in the twelve Victorian regions to improve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander eye health. We are also a member of the North West Metropolitan Aboriginal Eye Health Committee, one of the twelve regional committees, which oversees the work being done in our region to improve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander eye health.

Our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce is extremely small, so we have partnered with one of our large neighbouring health services to set up a mentoring and support program to support the cultural needs of our staff. In 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and both of our Aboriginal Health Liaison teams have a strong relationship which supports mentoring of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff at the Eye and Ear, and also provides support for other matters relating to the Aboriginal Health service as required. In February 2018, the manager of the AHLO team from St Vincent's Hospital supported the recruitment of an AHLO position at the Eye and Ear Hospital by participating on the interview panel.



Our partnerships/current activities

Internal activities/initiatives: In 2016, we developed our Aboriginal Employment Plan. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the foundations for sustainable employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are maintained and enhanced appropriately and to, in turn, increase employment participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples at the Eye and Ear. The overarching objectives of the plan are to:

- increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness of all Eye and Ear employees
- create a culturally inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees
- ensure a supportive environment for positive recruitment and on-boarding outcomes
- increase the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees at the Eye and Ear

A 100 day orientation strategy has been designed to accompany the Aboriginal Employment Plan which provides support and guidance for the manager and new staff member to ensure that the experience, for the employee, of beginning work here is positive and successful.

An Acknowledgement of Country is included as a standing agenda item at all major organisational meetings and events and a Welcome to Country ceremony is undertaken for significant events. The Acknowledgement of Country is done by the Chair at internal meetings and a Welcome to Country by a representative from the Wurundjeri Council at larger events. Aboriginal artwork is hung throughout the organisation, Acknowledgement of Country plaques are displayed at the main entrances to the buildings, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are displayed on the reception desks at both sites. A smoking ceremony was held when the organisation moved some services to Eye and Ear on the Park in August 2016, as part of our redevelopment project. When we move these services back to our main site and open our new hospital at the end of our redevelopment, a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony will be planned.

Relationships

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	Form a RAP Working Group that is operational to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff from across our organisation	February, 2019	MPPE
	Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation	February, June, October, 2019 & February, 2020	MPPE
	Establish Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group	February, 2019	MPPE
	Formally adopt and launch the RAP	February, 2019	M&C Manager
2. Build internal and external relationships	Develop a list of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	March, 2019	AHLO
	Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	April, 2019	AHLO
	Build partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, including VACCHO, VAHS, RWAV and DHHS Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Branch, to improve access to eye and ear health for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients	February, 2019	M&C Manager
	Investigate opportunities to support Reconciliation Victoria	June, 2019	AHLO

Relationships

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Encourage our staff to attend our NRW event	June, 2019	AHLO
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	May, 2019	AHLO
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	June, 2019	AHLO
	Actively promote eye and ear health, including during NRW	June, 2019	M&C Manager
4. Raise internal awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments	March, 2019	M&C Manager
	Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP	April, 2019	MPPE
	Engage our senior leaders in the delivery of, and reporting on progress against, the RAP outcomes through discussions at Executive meetings and Partnering with Consumers Committee meetings	March, 2019	MPPE
	Include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander dates of significance on our annual 'Calendar of Celebration Events' and communicate these to all staff	February, 2019	M&C Manager

Relationships

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Raise internal awareness of our RAP	Explore opportunities to raise staff awareness about the treaty legislation developed by the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission	February, 2020	AHLO
	Explore opportunities to raise awareness about local reconciliation action groups supported through Reconciliation Victoria	February, 2020	AHLO
	Explore opportunities to support the recommendations outlined in the report delivered by the Referendum Council: https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report	February, 2020	AHLO
5. Raise external awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst our external partners and the public about our RAP commitments	March, 2019	M&C Manager
	Continue to advocate for other organisations to improve care for Aboriginal eye and ear health care delivery across Victoria – discuss this at the CEO meetings	February, 2020	CEO

Respect

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Investigate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion)	October, 2019	MPPE
	Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation	June, 2019	AHLO
	Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements following implementation of our cultural awareness training e-learning package	January, 2020	MPPE
	Customise 2 of the 5 module sector-wide Aboriginal Cultural Awareness online learning course, which includes education about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation, and implement this course for staff completion	June, 2019	MPPE
	Monitor completion rates of the Cultural Awareness training package and report these to the PCPHAC, Community Advisory Committee and Partnering with Consumers Committee annually	January, 2020	MPPE
7. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week and acknowledge other dates of significance	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities	July, 2019	M&C Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area	July, 2019	AHLO

Respect

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week and acknowledge other dates of significance	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event	July, 2019	AHLO
	Work collaboratively with the Australian College of Optometrists (ACO) to celebrate NAIDOC Week	July, 2019	AHLO
8. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area	March, 2019	AHLO
	Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence	March, 2019	AHLO
	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols)	April, 2019	MPPE
	Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of formal events and meetings	February, 2020	MPPE
	Continue to include a Welcome to Country and/or smoking ceremony at celebrations of significant events	February, 2020	AHLO

Opportunities

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Investigate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment	Support staff in the recruitment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples through the use of our Aboriginal Employment Plan and 100 day orientation and on-boarding support program	February, 2020	P&C Officer
	Provide a culturally inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees as outlined in our Aboriginal Employment Plan	February, 2020	P&C Officer
	Identify current Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities	February, 2020	P&C Officer
	Ensure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff are provided with future employment and development opportunities	February, 2020	P&C Officer
	Continue our Memorandum of Understanding relationship with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne to work collaboratively to provide cultural support and mentoring for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff as required	February, 2019	MPPE
10. Investigate Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	February, 2020	Supply & Procurement Manager
	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned businesses through Health Purchasing Victoria and the new Victorian Government Social Procurement Framework	February, 2020	Supply & Procurement Manager

Opportunities

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Investigate opportunities to further improve service delivery for Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander patients	Identify opportunities to streamline referral pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients to access care	February, 2020	MPPE
	Review the Cataract Surgery pathway model and investigate opportunities to expand this model to other eye and ENT diagnoses	February, 2020	MPPE
	Seek to recruit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander volunteers and consumer representatives to aid in ensuring community needs are met and to contribute to a culturally safe environment	February, 2020	CCPE
	Support staff to attend conferences which discuss Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander eye and ear health issues so they can promulgate this knowledge across our organisation to improve the support and care we provide to our patients	February, 2020	MPPE

Governance and Tracking Progress

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build support for the RAP	Define resource needs for RAP implementation	February, 2019	MPPE
	Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	March, 2019	MPPE
	Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia	September, 2019	MPPE
13. Report on the progress against our RAP actions	Monitor the progress against the actions in our RAP through six monthly reporting at the Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee (PCPHAC) – a Board Subcommittee whose membership includes representatives from our Board, Executive, and key external stakeholders	May & November, 2019	MPPE
	Monitor the progress against the actions in our RAP and report on this in the annual Quality Account (a publication for the community)	October, 2019	M&C Manager
14. Review and Refresh our RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	October, 2019	MPPE
	Submit new draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review	October, 2019	MPPE
	Submit new draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement	January, 2020	MPPE
	Report on the outcomes from the 2019 - 2020 RAP	February, 2020	MPPE

Table Terms

About the artwork

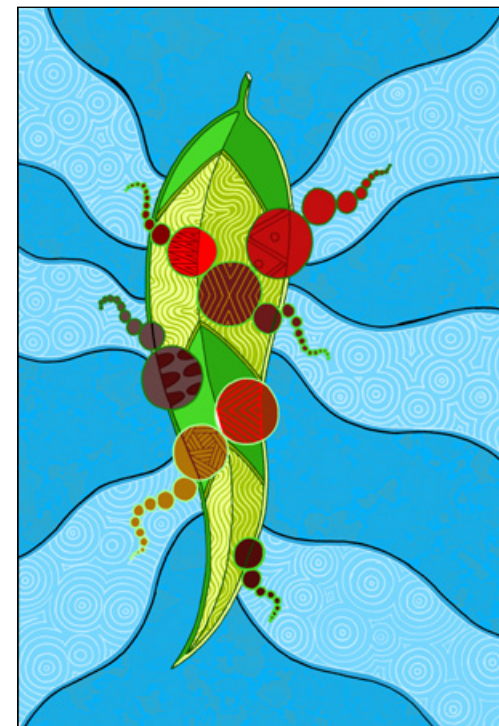
- PCPHAC = Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee (A Board Subcommittee focussed on improving care and closing the gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander eye and ear health)
- AHLO = Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer
- MPPE = Manager Planning & Patient Experience (Manager of the Aboriginal Health Team)
- CCPE = Coordinator Community Participation & Engagement
- M&C Manager = Marketing & Communications Manager
- P&C Officer = People & Culture Officer
- VACCHO = Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- VAHS = Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- RWAV = Rural Workforce Agency Victoria
- DHHS = Department of Health and Human Services

Artist:

Mandy Nicholson, Wurundjeri

The meaning:

Mannagum leaf- welcoming of visitors, used in smoking ceremony. Embedded in the leaf are circles depicting continuation of cultural practices and ceremony today and the sharing of our cultures with others. The waterways symbolise the waterways that run into the Birrarung (Yarra) and become one, so we begin our shared history of Melbourne.



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