

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

July 2024 - July 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women's Health In the North (WHIN) acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services – the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation – and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future. WHIN acknowledges that Aboriginal sovereignty was never given up and that we stand on stolen land. We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting treaty and truth-telling processes.

We recognise the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community on gender equality and the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people. As First Peoples, Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to these in their communities.



ABOUT THE COVER ART

This design represents WHIN and the connections they have through all their work with other organisations. Communities are in the centre. It shows that WHIN have built strong connections with these groups and have support, shown by the people sitting around in the semi-circle. The connections that WHIN have built are protected by being in that strong circle.

Artwork by Kiewa Austin-Rioli.

Kiewa is a proud Gunditjmara and Tiwi Islander woman.



**WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN THE NORTH**
voice • choice • power



MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Women's Health In the North to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Women's Health In the North joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Women's Health In the North to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Women's Health In the North, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE FROM WHIN Chair and CEO

Petra Beggell, Board Chair



Helen Riseborough, CEO



As Chair and CEO of Women's Health In the North, we are proud to present WHIN's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

We are proud to join with Reconciliation Australia and the extensive network of organisations across Australia in the reconciliation movement.

This work is a formal demonstration of our commitment to progressing reconciliation, justice, and health equity for First Nations people.

With support and advice from First Nations people, WHIN's Board determined that a RAP is a significant and valuable way to progress our commitment to solidarity and connection to this Australia wide movement.

We thank First Nations consultancy, NJAC, for their leadership, support and careful guidance as our organisation embarks on this important learning and development journey and developing our first RAP.

Our work has included all staff and Board members participating in Truth Telling workshops.

The workshops were confronting, as the truth often is!

As a result, we developed our goals, within the Reconciliation Australia framework, as well as the specific actions we will take over the next year to progress towards these goals.

We look forward to being held accountable for our work and to contributing to meaningful change. We will be reporting on our progress to Reconciliation Australia and in our annual reports and on our website.

We are excited about the future and hope to bring you with us.

Our best regards,

**Petra Beggell,
Board Chair**

**Helen Riseborough,
Chief Executive Officer**

OUR BUSINESS

Women's Health In the North (WHIN) is the women's health promotion and advocacy organisation for the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne (NMR). This area encompasses the local government areas of Yarra, Darebin, Banyule, Merri-bek, Nillumbik, Hume and Whittlesea.

Established over 30 years ago, WHIN is a not-for-profit member-based organisation. Our core business is eliminating gender inequalities to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people. We do this by working with organisations and communities across the NMR. Individual membership of WHIN is open to women and gender-diverse people who live, work or study in the NMR. Organisational membership is open to any health, welfare, advocacy, educational or community organisation or women's group based in the NMR. State-wide organisations who work with women in WHIN's catchment area are also eligible for membership. These organisations are entitled to nominate one female or gender-diverse person as their representative.

WHIN's strategic priorities are gendered violence prevention, family violence systems leadership, sexual and reproductive health, and gender equity, health and wellbeing. The latter includes our action on advancing economic equality, tackling climate change and disaster planning, and improving mental health.

To address our strategic priorities WHIN provides expert advice, professional development, community education, consultation services and resources.

All our work is underpinned by the principles of human rights and social justice, feminism, intersectionality, inclusivity, collaborative leadership and respect for environment and place.

The WHIN office is located at 680 High St, Thornbury, in Victoria. WHIN employs 33 people, with an EFT of 21.2. WHIN does not currently employ any staff who identify as First Nations people.



OUR RAP

WHIN acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are located and provide our services. We also recognise other First Nations peoples who call the NMR home.

We are committed to First Nations peoples self-determination and to supporting voice, treaty and truth-telling processes. We recognise the ongoing leadership role of the First Nations communities in promoting gender equality and the health, safety and wellbeing of First Nations women and gender-diverse people.

WHIN works within a social model of health to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people. In this context, WHIN works to address the underlying social conditions that create, drive, and sustain health inequalities. WHIN recognises the impact of colonisation as a key factor in determining health outcomes for women and gender-diverse First Nations peoples and thus we are committed to working to redress the impact of colonisation as fundamental to our work.

As First Peoples, First Nations Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to health and wellbeing in their communities. WHIN is committing to a RAP because we believe that development of a formal RAP is a crucial part of recognising this role and to improving the health and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse First Nations people.

WHIN is committed to contributing to reconciliation in Australia. We have determined that developing our own RAP is an important part of this process as well as an important mechanism for operationalising our principles.

WHIN began our journey to our first RAP by engaging NJAC, a specialist First Nations consultancy, who recommended we commence this organisation-wide commitment with an organisation-wide engagement. All staff and Board of Governance members were encouraged to participate in a cultural safety audit, training, workshops and to work together to write our first Reconciliation Action Plan. As a result, all of WHIN understand our individual and collective responsibilities to reconciliation and consider our RAP to be an opportunity for effective, collective action.

WHIN has reflected on utilising our inclusive and collaborative values, and our unique spheres of influence, to determine the additional deliverables that we have committed to within our inaugural RAP, and to our measures of success. These include commitments to identify ways to engage respectfully on social equity issues including the Voice to Parliament, promote reconciliation and NAIDOC information in various languages and across social media platforms, share First Nations cultures and histories in community languages and reflect on 'white feminism' and how to incorporate First Nations women's perspectives. We

OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES

have also committed to building the capacity of our Board to support the development and implementation of our RAP and to independently review our RAP's progress through a First Nations adviser, disseminating the results across WHIN.

WHIN will integrate our commitments outlined in this Reflect RAP as we progress all our strategic priority areas. For example, we will build our strategic priority in respect of economic equality by working with First Nations women to tailor our Let's Talk Money financial capability program.

Our RAP champion is the Manager of Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy. WHIN will implement our RAP with guidance from an external First Nations consultancy. We will develop a RAP Working Group with representation from each team, as well as representation from our First Nations stakeholders, as our key mechanism for prioritising our actions, monitoring the progress and measuring the success of our actions and reporting on our achievements. As identified in our RAP, responsibilities will be shared across all teams, to ensure WHIN-wide ownership of our deliverables and enable increased, collective impact. Reports from the Working Group will be a standing agenda item on the Board and staff meeting agendas.

Prior to the collective development of our RAP, we have embarked together on a learning journey about what reconciliation means, why it is important, what we are individually and collectively committing ourselves to and our responsibilities.

NJAC facilitated truth-telling training and reconciliation workshops to ensure a clear understanding of a critical pillar of reconciliation, historical acceptance.

Provided with a clearer understanding of our collective history as a nation and an organisation-wide understanding of the RAP framework, WHIN is now inspired to use the next year to deeply reflect on how we can actively and effectively contribute to reconciliation, now and into the future. WHIN acknowledges that reconciliation is everybody's business.

We will continue to involve all staff and our Board of Governance as we implement our key actions and commitments. We will shortly begin the process of appointing a RAP Working Group with representation from across the organisation to support the process and facilitate communication. The Management Team will be responsible for operational accountability of our RAP, with overall accountability for our commitments sitting with the Board.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Feb 2025	Lead: Health Promotion Manager Support: Management Team
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Nov 2024	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Review current strategies related to engaging First Nations organisations and ACCHOs.	Nov 2024	Lead: Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy Support: Management Team
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2025	Communications Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 Jun 2025	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 Jun 2025	RAP Working Group
	Feedback from reconciliation events to be communicated and shared across WHIN.	Jun 2025	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and Board.	July 2025	Management Team
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to external stakeholders.	July 2024	Board Chair
	Identify external stakeholders that WHIN can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Sept 2024	CEO
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Sept 2024	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Promote reconciliation in migrant communities – and utilise opportunities to share First Nations cultures and histories in community languages.	Jan 2025	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Identify opportunities to promote reconciliation in accessible language.	June 2025	Lead: Community Programs Coordinator Support: Communications Coordinator
	Explore opportunities to extend Let's Talk Money, in partnership with First Nations organisations/agencies.	June 2025	Lead: Community Programs Coordinator Support: Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Nov 2024	Lead: Manager Corporate Services Support: Management Team
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2024	Manager Corporate Services
	Identify ways to engage respectfully on social equity issues.	Nov 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Management Team

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within WHIN.	Oct 2024	Lead: Health Promotion Manager Support: Management Team
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within WHIN.	Aug 2024	Lead: Manager Corporate Services Support: Management Team
	Prioritise WHIN's staff cultural training needs, based on findings in baseline survey.	Nov 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Management Team
	Display items of First Nations cultural significance in office space.	July 2024	Manager Corporate Services
	Explore on Country opportunities led by Traditional Owners.	Jan 2025	Health Promotion Manager
	Reflect on 'white feminism' and how to incorporate First Nations women's perspectives.	Jan 2025	CEO
	Encourage staff participation in culturally significant First Nations events throughout the year, during working hours.	July 2024	CEO
6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within WHIN's operational area.	Nov 2024	Lead: NIFVS Manager Support: Management Team
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2024	Lead: NIFVS Manager Support: Management Team
	WHIN to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings.	July 2024	CEO
	Explore opportunities for meaningful delivery of Acknowledgement of Country based on the audience.	Aug 2024	Communications Coordinator

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2025	Lead: Communications Coordinator Support: Corporate Services Team
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2025	Communications Coordinator
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2025	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Feedback from NAIDOC events to be communicated and shared across WHIN.	Aug 2025	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Share NAIDOC information in various languages across social media platforms.	July 2025	Lead: Health Promotion Manager Support: Community Programs Coordinator

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for First Nations employment and representation within WHIN, which will include pipeline strategies.	Dec 2024	Lead: Manager Corporate Services Support: Management Team
	Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Sept 2024	Lead: Manager Corporate Services Support: Management Team
9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses.	Dec 2024	Lead: Manager Corporate Services Support: Management Team
	Investigate Supply Nation and Kinaway membership.	Dec 2024	Manager Corporate Services
	Circulate First Nations businesses and suppliers to staff and Board.	Jan 2025	Manager Corporate Services

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	July 2024	Lead: Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy Support: Management Team
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2024	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Establish First Nations representation on the RWG.	July 2024	CEO
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation including a dedicated budget towards reconciliation.	Nov 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Management Team
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Management Team
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2024	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Aug 2024	Lead: Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy Support: RWG, CEO & Management Team
	Build capacity of Board to support the development and implementation of our RAP.	Nov 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Board Chair
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Contact reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to reconciliation Australia.	30 Sept annually	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy
	Independently review our RAP progress through a First Nations adviser and disseminate results.	June 2025	Lead: Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy Support: NJAC
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2025	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Health Policy (RAP Champion) or delegate



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