



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE

phn

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

An Australian Government Initiative



Innovate

Reconciliation Action Plan

Northern Queensland PHN | September 2020 - September 2022

Cover artwork

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NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.

Message from NQPHN Board Chairperson, Nick Loukas



It is a genuine honour to introduce the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Innovate RAP enables NQPHN to make aspirational and innovative commitments to help gain a deeper understanding of our sphere of influence and establish best practice approaches to advancing reconciliation.

The NQPHN geography describes a region rich in history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures – a cultural history of which we are proud and which provides a foundation for NQPHN to develop and implement a culturally safe, aware, and responsible working environment.

NQPHN takes its responsibility to our First Nations Peoples seriously. The commitments we make through the RAP are not only requirements for approval by Reconciliation Australia, but are cornerstones of all we do and how we do it. We monitor our performance against those commitments, and we self-assess to ensure we are doing what we promised to do.

The Innovate RAP has an emphasis on relationships – building them, maintaining them, and managing them appropriately. NQPHN recognises that building partnerships with Traditional Owners requires a respectful approach, as each social structure has its own protocols for who can speak on behalf of Country. Accordingly, NQPHN staff will in the next year receive mandatory training on cultural awareness, having previously completed cultural safety training. That training provides a solid foundation of understanding, upon which to build and reinforce strong, respectful relationships.

Reconciliation is a journey. NQPHN is proud to take that journey in tandem with our First Nations People and to learn as we walk together. Our focus, like Reconciliation Australia, is for a just, equitable, and reconciled Australia. By fulfilling the commitments we make in the RAP, we are taking important steps to realising that outcome for the people of northern Queensland.

The NQPHN Board, Executive, and staff have made a pledge through the RAP to continue the journey of reconciliation and as Board Chairperson, I am proud to be among the leaders of realising that pledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Loukas'.

Nick Loukas
Chairperson

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network



Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine

Reconciliation Australia commends Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for NQPHN to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, NQPHN will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. NQPHN is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals NQPHN's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

The Indigenous Healing Mandala

by Luke Mallie





Scan the QR code to read
about the Indigenous
Healing Mandala.





Meet Frankie

Working towards a healthier and happier future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in North Queensland

A strong and proud Torres Strait Islander woman, Frankie Clive is using her passion and leadership to empower others to walk together on the journey of reconciliation.

From a young age, Frankie's family and environment shaped her passion to influence and affect human rights and social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Born and raised in Cairns in a household of five children, Frankie was heavily influenced by a strong and self-determined family, focused on making decisions as a community and a society.

"Growing up my siblings and I realised we needed to side with the minority, because we needed to enable their voice. My parents said there was nothing that we couldn't do," Frankie said.

Frankie's mother, originally from Saibai Island, migrated to Bamaga with her family as a young child living under the Act. As her mother grew up, she became aware of the disparity of her people and that influenced her to become strongly involved in civil justice activities and community organisations in Cairns.

Her father, an Englishman who emigrated from Devon to Brisbane, gravitated away from city life, working across the Cape as a long-serving primary school teacher, and consequently meeting Frankie's mother in Bamaga.

Her parents respected each other's worlds, which enabled Frankie to understand and reconcile the cultural differences between First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

"I remember seeing articles and photos of my mum in her twenties, protesting what we call 'Border Not Change' where the State Government wanted to pull the border for Queensland down to cut the Torres Strait literally in half," Frankie said.

"My dad is very much about your rights as a person. He wants people to have a voice. He will call a spade a spade.

"That is the kind of household I grew up in and that bled across into my brothers and particularly my sisters – the strong women in our family, there are so many of them."

As a young woman, Frankie lived in Darwin, where she crossed paths with many people involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil and political movements, reforms, and shaping policy. She took part in community driven events where people advocated, represented, and acknowledged the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This influenced Frankie to start studying law but instead of completing her degree, she gravitated towards a two-year course on human rights and social justice, led by the former president of East Timor, Jose Ramos-Horta.

Frankie is currently completing an Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) course and it has enabled her to reflect on her past journey, the journeys of Indigenous leaders before her, and has empowered her to work to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples in a leadership capacity.

As part of her previous role in NQPHN's Executive Team, she invested her time, cultural knowledge, and passion to empower staff and community members to become Indigenous leaders of the future, especially young adults.

Frankie influenced the development of NQPHN's Reflect and Innovate Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), formalising the organisation's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in North Queensland, helping them to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

"NQPHN's rapid journey of supporting more of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the organisation to have a voice and the mobilising of the RAP as a cornerstone strategic document, is a really positive opportunity that continues to give me an appetite to influence and affect change," Frankie said.

OUR REGION, *our people*

“It’s so good seeing staff and community members go through that journey. I hope I helped shape that, and some days, I know I helped shape that.”

“Reconciliation is just as much about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people understanding other cultures as much as it is about people from other cultures understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s culture.”

“The RAP plays a powerful part for progression – we can honour that and use it as a tool, like a template, providing a theoretical base and guide on how to progress.”

“What drives me is the need to change policy, change the direction, change the course, because as we know, change begins with us.”

“It won’t always be smooth, but nothing worthwhile ever is.”





Our vision for reconciliation

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network's (NQPHN's) vision for reconciliation is an awakened and united Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy equal health and wellbeing outcomes.

Our approach

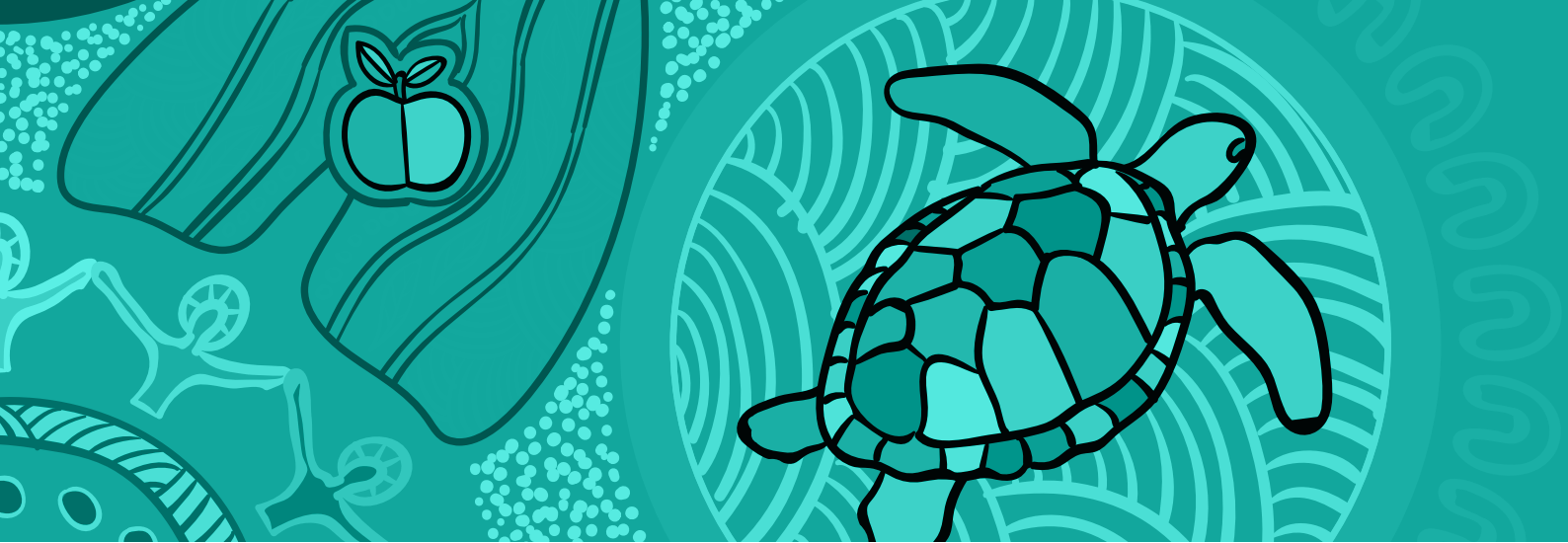
We will support the improvement of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region through positive, inclusive collaborations using a measurable and culturally appropriate approach to achieving the NQPHN vision of helping all northern Queenslanders to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

NQPHN recognises that comprehensive local primary healthcare that is delivered in an environment which is physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe, and free of racism and prejudice will contribute to better health outcomes.

NQPHN has taken positive steps to strengthen relationships with peak Indigenous health agencies and local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services as the providers of contemporary health practices grounded in localised culture.

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) reflects our commitment to collaborative empowerment through embedding a shared vision that fosters respectful, meaningful, and inclusive stakeholder relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region by implementing key actions to advance reconciliation within our workplaces and the wider primary healthcare networks.





Our business

NQPHN is an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government to commission services to meet the health needs and priorities of our region, with a vision to help northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Across northern Queensland, from Sarina in the south to the Torres Strait in the north, NQPHN co-ordinates and commissions primary and preventative healthcare—that is, the healthcare that is undertaken outside of a hospital, such as GPs, allied health, chronic disease management, aged care, mental health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Primary healthcare is recognised as the most effective way to keep communities and individuals healthy and well. NQPHN identifies where there are areas of need, such as lack of healthcare services, difficulty in accessing these services, or regions with particularly high health needs, and works closely with GPs, allied healthcare providers, hospitals, and the broader community to ensure that patients can receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

We aim to improve health outcomes for all by working with GPs, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, allied health professionals, and organisations specialising in chronic disease management, health promotion, aged care, mental health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. We also work with secondary care providers, hospitals, and the wider community.

NQPHN currently employs upwards of 60 staff, nine of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our region spans an area of 510,000km² and is home to over 730,000 residents, of whom 11 per cent are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The majority of our population is located within the regional cities of Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay, but a significant amount of the population resides outside of the cities in rural and remote communities, including Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands. Our region includes four Hospital and Health Services, 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services, and 31 local government and Aboriginal Land Council areas.

NQPHN's main office is located in Cairns, with regional offices located in Townsville and Mackay.



Our RAP

This RAP signifies our commitment to continue on the 'long, winding, rough, and rewarding' path toward a fair and just Australia by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander northern Queenslanders to live happier, healthier, longer lives through appropriate connections, effective commissioning, and equitable collaborations.

Our Innovate RAP maps out the next phase of NQPHN's journey of reconciliation. We recognise that reconciliation is an ongoing and evolving process, that formally started over a quarter of a century ago, when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians from many sectors and all walks of life, courageously embarked on a journey toward a reconciled, just, and equitable Australia. They started a new national conversation about Australia's collective sense of nationhood diminished by unresolved wounds of the past that failed to be acknowledged and addressed.

It took good intentions of a group of concerned citizens and a willingness to spark many conversations and yarn circles about past injustices that continues to play a role in the unacceptable disparity in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

In order to advance our commitment, NQPHN has established a dedicated RAP Working Group (RWG), recognising that an increase in community engagement and co-design requires greater insight into the barriers and opportunities that are impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to appropriate primary healthcare. This understanding will allow NQPHN to take steps to embed culturally appropriate foundations across all aspects of its operations.

All Australians should feel, as a nation, connected to the tens of thousands of years of human occupation of the Australian continent and surrounding Islands.
- Patrick Dodson

NQPHN acknowledges that building relationships and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both internally and within communities, builds a better understanding of the collective strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the inherent need to maintain connection to Country for improved health and wellbeing.



NQPHN joined the national conversation in 2018, and by following the road map provided by Reconciliation Australia, took its first critical steps in its reconciliation journey of understanding through its inaugural Reflect RAP as a key starting point, with the intention to:

- walk and talk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community
- self-reflect, learn, and grow on this continuous improvement pathway to support primary healthcare
- re-define how NQPHN considers the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in programs, policy, and practice.

Twelve months on and through this lens of reconciliation, NQPHN remains committed to improvement in primary healthcare delivery and improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

The Innovate RAP will be a vehicle to drive sustainable, systemic change in how NQPHN plans, acts, and behaves through the implementation of aspirational strategies and pilot initiatives.

With an organisational purpose to drive change within and support primary healthcare to improve individual and community health, we recognise the importance of an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach towards our core business activities.

Building on the achievements and learning of the Reflect RAP, NQPHN is better positioned to develop a culturally aware workforce and improve upon appropriate practices in more meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and the northern Queensland primary and secondary health networks.





Our approach

Our Innovate RAP builds on the achievements of our inaugural Reflect RAP which include:

- inclusion of Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country protocols as an embedded practise
- observation and celebration of significant cultural and historical days
- ongoing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples in our region
- establishment of a cultural framework to guide NQPHN's commissioning activities and procurement to improve accessibility to clinically and culturally safe primary health services, including championing connected and integrated service commissioning actions and resources that meet identified health needs
- raised internal and external awareness of our RAP and commitment to reconciliation
- improved opportunities for:
 - career development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with a view to position NQPHN as an employer of choice
 - further education and training opportunities via traineeships and/or funded programs, and pathways for vocational primary health education and training qualifications
 - ongoing engagement in the development of workforce cultural capacity of internal staff and external service providers.

NQPHN has a continued focus and commitment to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan and other State and National Policy Frameworks which aim to close the gap.

Unfortunately, there has been little improvement in the life expectancy gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

To effect transformational change, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need to play an integral role in changing the narrative of disadvantaged health outcomes to a strengths based, collective voice of self-determination, hope, and healing that reflects the strength and resilience of a culture deeply rooted in Australia for over 2,000 generations. This can only happen when there are mutually beneficial relationships and equal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with an investment in young people to be recognised as a major player, part of a solution to collective trauma, done in an atmosphere of trust and transparency, under the guidance of Elders and culturally competent healthcare professionals.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been in our region for thousands of years and have shown great strength and resilience to adapt and thrive in the varying harsh and often toxic environments that offered physical, mental, but mostly spiritual sustenance. We need to acknowledge this quiet strength and determination and support our proud communities to meet their aspirations for health and wellbeing.

Through the implementation of the Innovate RAP, NQPHN is ready to turn good intentions into meaningful actions that advance reconciliation and support access and equity in primary healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of northern Queensland so they can live happier, healthier, longer lives.



Our people

The NQPHN RAP Working Group (RWG) was previously established to develop the inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. The members are committed NQPHN staff from across all parts of the organisation including executive leaders and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. After 12 months of the Reflect RAP, a Senior Project Officer was employed to lead the development of the Innovate RAP in collaboration with the established RWG, endorsed by the NQPHN Board and executive leadership. The Senior Project Officer consulted with RWG members, other internal teams, and individuals to begin the Innovate RAP development process for review, endorsement, and implementation by the Board, executive, and RWG.

Cairns office

- Loretta Rigby
(Acting Executive Director)*
- Vivian Mook
(Area Manager/RAP Working Group Chair)*
- Lauriann Trevy
(COVID-19 Response Team - Aged Care)*
- Deearne Lee
(Senior Program Officer)*
- Karina Hughes
(Communications Manager)
- Emily Craze
(Finance Support Officer)
- Bernie Triggs
(Senior Program Officer)
- Kim Richardson
(Senior Organisational Development Officer)
- Charles Adams
(Senior Program Officer)*
- Kerry Hollingsworth
(Senior Project Officer RAP)*

Townsville office

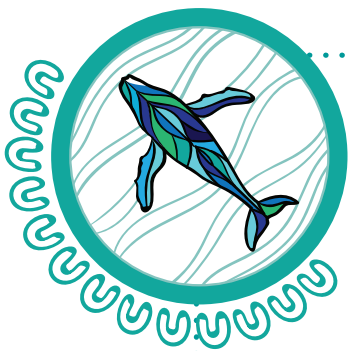
- Nicolette Mancigli
(Program Officer)
- Melanie Walsh
(Senior Program Officer)*

Mackay office

- Dana Triffett
(Senior Program Officer)
- Acasha Bright
(Administration Officer)

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff

NQPHN staff pledge their committment to reconciliation



"I commit to learning from the First People of our shared country to try to better understand my part in it. I commit to work with, and for, the communities of Cape York and the Torres Strait to support improvement to their health services."

Bernie Triggs, Senior Program Officer



"I pledge to acknowledge the intergenerational trauma the Stolen Generations faced and the pain they continue to face today. I pledge to acknowledge the incredible strength, resilience, and survival of Indigenous people, and pledge to better understand and learn from these past injustices to create a stronger, happier, healthier, and safer future for First Nation Peoples."

Melissa Freestun, Executive Director



"My pledge is to remain connected to land, sea, country, and community and to respect and share the lessons of our First Nation Peoples. If only people will stop to listen. Focus on a future that revolves around respect for our country and its people. Stop gathering things and instead, put your ear to the sand and listen to the waves. Look out your airplane window and see the stories written on the land. All I can do is keep listening!"

Megan Barrett, Executive Director



"I pledge to walk the reconciliation journey in unity with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non Indigenous peoples. I acknowledge the past history of our First Nation Peoples and commit to making a difference for our current and future generations by reconnecting and building positive relationships through respect, forgiveness, trust, and truth telling."

Melanie Walsh, Senior Program Officer



“I pledge to be genuine in recognising the adverse impact that Australian policies have had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I pledge to advocate for, and work with, First Nation Peoples to close the gap in health, wellbeing, education, and employment. I pledge to stand up, speak up, and lead a new way forward.”

Karin Barron, Executive Director



“I pledge to actively learn about the cultural history of the communities I work with from their perspective and to approach all interactions and aspects of my work with a lens of equality and equity.”

Katerina Kanakis, Senior Program Officer



“I pledge to continually acknowledge and respect the past, present, and future of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to promote reconciliation in conversation to others, as an important journey towards achieving equality and equity amongst all humans, regardless of the colour of their skin.”

Charles Adams, Senior Project Officer - ITC



“I pledge to continue advocating equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the health sector. I pledge to expand on my partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres and Strait Islander organisations and people in our community to support new opportunities to close the gap.”

Dana Triffett, Senior Program Officer

Relationships

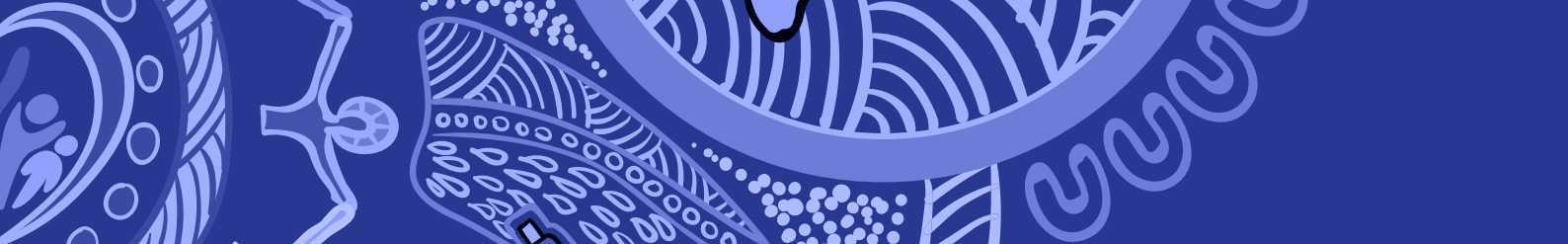


NQPHN intends to build on existing relationships and develop new partnerships by connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the RAP strategies to gain a greater awareness of the issues, barriers, strengths, and opportunities to collaborate for better life outcomes.

Focus area

To work with communities to understand local needs to design and implement solutions that improve local health and wellbeing.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement, such as Memorandums of Understanding, partnership agreements etc. 	February 2021 Review annually	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement community engagement protocols to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	February 2021 Review annually	Lead: Senior Project Officer RAP Supported by: RAP Ambassador
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add email footer to all NQPHN email accounts celebrating NRW. 	May, June 2021, 2022	Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote visual displays of posters and flyers in the office foyer of all NQPHN locations. 	April, May, June 2021, 2022	Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote NRW on social media, fortnightly newsletter, and website. 	May, June, 2021, 2022	Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure RAP Working Group members participate in at least one external NRW event each year hosted by local hospital and/or health service. 	May, June 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff and senior leaders to participate in external NRW event each year. 	May, June 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one internal event for staff to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May, June 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. 	April 2021, 2022	Senior Project Officer RAP



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and update RAP Hub on staff intranet with current and relevant reconciliation resources and links to Reconciliation Australia website. 	September 2021-2022	Senior Project Officer RAP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff to join the conversation on the RAP Hub discussion board by initiating a monthly topic for discussion. 	September 2021-2022	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly by incorporating a regular feature on reconciliation stories in the fortnightly regional newsletter. 	September 2021-2022	Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes through collaborations with like-minded organisations to promote services and actively participate at key community events. 	September 2021-2022	Program Managers
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs. 	Review annually March 2021, 2022	Senior Organisation Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. 	July 2021 Review quarterly	Senior Project Officer RAP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. 	September, December, March, June	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism. 	September 2021	RAP Ambassador

“The RAP is a great opportunity for NQPHN to gain a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s and our ways of knowing, being, and doing. This understanding is critical when engaging our peoples to make greater choices in their health journey. It’s also a fantastic way of finding a way forward together in a society that is fraught with challenges in understanding each other. The work done throughout the initial stages of the pandemic with our group showed NQPHN’s willingness to come to the table in a way that we have not seen before or from many others and is something that should be applauded and built on through your RAP. I look forward to continuing a relationship in working towards improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.”

La-Donna Ballangarry-Kearins
First People’s Alliance NQ



Respect



NQPHN has encouraged staff to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories, and experiences across the country that will enable staff and stakeholders to best contribute to improving health and life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Focus area

To build local capacity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

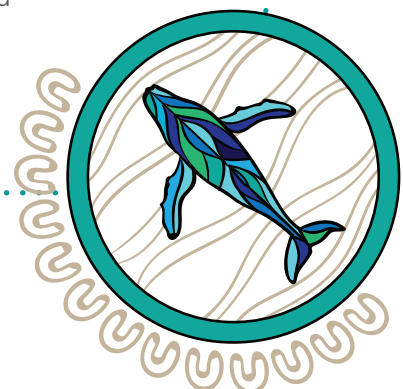
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2020	RAP Ambassador
	• Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our internal staff and external stakeholders.	November 2020	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Connect with providers of local cultural immersion experiences for staff to experience off-site through a Traditional Owner group or Aboriginal community-controlled health service.	November 2020	RAP Ambassador
	• Highlight significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historical and cultural events on the RAP Hub, including links to the Reconciliation Australia website.	September 2020, 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
	• Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	March 2021	Senior Project Officer RAP
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	• Provide opportunities for RWG members, HR managers, and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	October 2020, July 2021, 2022	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2020, 2021, 2022	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Develop and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	October 2020	Communications Officer
	• Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings as a standing agenda item.	October 2020	Executive Assistants
	• Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year .	September 2021-2022	RAP Ambassador



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG to participate in external NAIDOC Week events hosted by the local hospital and health services including ACCHOs. 	November 2020, July 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG to organise representation at an external community NAIDOC event hosted by a community organisation highlighted on the official local calendar of events. 	Completed annually on significant dates	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an internal NAIDOC celebration in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Promote calendar of events on the RAP Hub, newsletter, social media. 	November 2020, July 2021, 2022	Lead: RAP Ambassador Supported by: Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	September 2021, 2022	Senior Organisational Development Officer
8. Build a culturally proficient workforce and culturally safe work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver a reconciliation cross-cultural learning package for internal staff and external stakeholders to promote respectful relationships and anti-discriminatory practises including an organisation cultural capability action plan and resources. 	November 2020, 2021	Lead: Senior Project Officer RAP Supported by: Senior Organisational Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute materials to local GPs and mainstream primary healthcare services to promote cross-cultural learning. 	December 2020	Communications Officer

“Reconciliation instinctively reaches out to all peoples to challenge the way we think and transform the way we see ourselves. With empathetic, united, determined leadership, it brings people together to honour, value, celebrate, and nurture a collective unique identity where First Nation Peoples, truth, equity, and justice is at its very core.”

Nerelle Nicol, First People’s Alliance NQ



Opportunities



NQPHN is in a unique position to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of northern Queensland by commissioning service providers of primary healthcare. Consulting with the communities to co-design programs and services can create opportunities for training, recruitment, and development of individuals and organisations to fill specialist roles and deliver culturally appropriate services.

Focus area

To build local capacity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment opportunities, including identifying roles that would be best filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 	January 2021	Senior Organisational Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy. 	January 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy. 	January 2022	Lead: Senior Organisational Development Officer Supported by: Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure they are inclusive and remove barriers to current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace that aligns with the cultural safety framework. 	March 2021, 2022	RAP Ambassador
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set targets to increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed. 	March 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy. 	March 2021	Senior Contracts and Procurement Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update current procurement policy and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	March 2021	Finance Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	June 2021	RAP Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a data base of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	June 2021	Senior Project Officer RAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial relationships with at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business each year. 	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer	

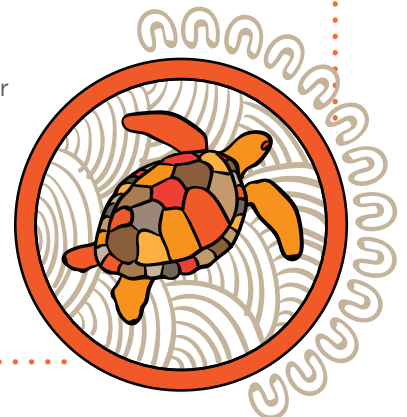


Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Build local workforce capacity to deliver culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our training and employment strategies and local capacity building of health workforce, including traineeships, professional development, innovative employment initiatives, and systems of care to support culturally safe services. 	January 2021, 2022	Lead: Executive Director - Cairns, Cape and Torres Supported by: Integrated Care Team Program Officer Senior Organisational Development Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Cultural Safety Framework to embed culturally appropriate foundations across all aspects of NQPHN's operations including the commissioning process, research and evaluation protocols, and engagement practises of primary healthcare when dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. 	Report October 2020, review quarterly	Lead: Senior Contracts and Procurement Officer Supported by: Population Health and Systems Manager

“The RAP is an opportunity to find a way to understand and learn about the broader contextual issues surrounding and impacting health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this country. As time moves on, the medical community is realising that health issues don’t exist in a vacuum and therefore we now have a holistic understanding of health and wellbeing, which is good progress. Having said that, how can anyone go through an entire education in this country and not learn about what actually happened? We don’t learn about a history of dispossession of land, destruction of culture, and the systematic discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since our country’s beginning. We have created a culture of silence on one of the biggest moral failings in our country’s history and we refuse to address it. Healing at community level starts with this acknowledgement by all our institutions and countrymen, speaking up about the past injustices and discussing how we can remedy them here and now - this is the essence of our call for social justice in order to right these past wrongs with meaningful, impactful action. How can you fix something if you’re not willing to look at it. I think this is too painful for everyone so we shy away from it. It needs to be done for the benefit of those suffering the most in our community. We should start here, at the beginning, and move from there.

Health is down river from culture, and culture is down river from politics. It’s all interconnected. Return peoples land that was stolen, don’t deny them their right to practice their culture, and don’t impede their push for justice in the form of compensation for past discrimination, theft, and abuse. If you seek to heal the deeper wounds whilst also dealing with the health issues directly in front of us, then you will get the holistic healing that is needed in our community.”

First People’s Alliance NQ representative



Governance and tracking progress



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2021-2022	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Establish and apply Terms of Reference for RWG.	September 2020	RAP Ambassador
	• Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	September, December, March, June 2020-2022	RAP Ambassador
	• Divide RWG into smaller, sub-RWGs with specific portfolios.	March 2021	RAP Ambassador
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2020	RAP Ambassador
	• Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	October 2020	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure, and report on RAP commitments.	October 2020	Lead: Senior Project Officer RAP Supported by: Communications Officer IT and Systems Manager
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings, both internally and externally	• Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	September 2020	Chief Executive Officer
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021-2022	RAP Ambassador
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings, both internally and externally	• Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	December 2020, March, June, September, December 2021-2022	Senior Project Officer RAP
	• Report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings through an annual public document.	August 2021, 2022	Communications Manager
	• Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	April 2022	RAP Ambassador
	• Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	September 2022	RAP Ambassador



Reconciliation

A poem by NQPHN Senior Project Officer Charles Adams

Broken spirits, broken minds, broken souls...in need of repair.

A divided country, a disconnected people, a time for reconciliation...to promote what is right and fair.

A time to build relationships, respect cultures, and mend the wounds of cultural and political affairs.

A time to acknowledge the past, build a future...create a vision that is united and shared.

A time for burning bridges, building ideas...and closing the gap along the way.

A time to reconcile differences, come together...and let every man, woman, and child have their say.

Trying to work together, talking strong and thinking smart,

Hoping to understand each other, be as one...and make decisions that will not keep us apart.

On the road to recovery, one giant step for mankind,

A journey of reconciliation, moving a nation forward...and leaving no one behind.





For public enquiries
about our RAP, please contact:

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