



# INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2023  
– January 2025



# Acknowledgement of Country

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we work on, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge their continued custodianship of these lands and waters.

As a statewide organisation, we also acknowledge and pay our respects to the past and present Elders of Traditional Owners of the lands and waters across Victoria.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that we are the beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 230 years ago and continues today.

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## RAP artwork

### **Yakuna Gananggurr (translates to Until Tomorrow in Yorta Yorta language)**

When you are working through life's challenges, it will not happen overnight. It takes the support of beautiful people from all around and the guidance of our Ancestors. We look to tomorrow to find the answers, however do we have these answers already? Life's lessons are not to challenge this guidance, though move towards it and through it.

The circles that are in the top centre part of the image represent diverse communities with people (the rainbow-like shape represents people) gathering around them and traveling through them sharing stories and experiences. These communities are connected by the healing waters. Water is a powerful element of this land and it provides us with healing properties. These healing waters then flow down and wash over the mountains at the base of the image and the flowers throughout.

The yellow and orange represents mountains which can be understood as the challenges faced in life. The parts of life that are not so straight forward and easy. These challenges are like mountains, we can face them alone if we choose to or we can lean on the supports around us. The connections to country are what grounds us and keeps us moving Yakuna Gananggurr (Until Tomorrow).

The flowers represent new growth and vulnerability. Growth does not happen overnight. It can take days, weeks, months, or even years. Vulnerability in the shape of flowers, these flowers need to be nurtured and cared for. They should be free to grow organically and hold the inner strength an individual needs to be their authentic self. Society should learn to embrace vulnerability and learn to feel empowered by it.

Yakuna Gananggurr continue to allow these supports into our lives, connect with those around you, share experiences and come together. You do not have to face life's challenges alone.

### **About the artist**

Madison Connors (nee' Saunders) is a proud and strong Yorta Yorta (Wolithica), Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi woman and mother to two booris (babies) Marley and Yindi.

Madison was born and raised in Shepparton, spending the majority of her life living on her grandmother's Country. She comes from a strong line of women and is following in their footsteps. Oral history has taught Madison to yarn with her Elders; to listen, to understand and acknowledge the challenges they faced, to be strong in the face of adversity and to continue teaching her children the importance of her history, their history.





# Our vision for reconciliation

Women's Health Victoria's vision for reconciliation is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their communities to live well: healthy, empowered and equal, with strong connection to culture and Country. We want a just and equitable Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated with respect and the health system has earned their trust by addressing systemic racism, promoting cultural safety and improving service provision and accountability.

We will work towards a society that understands and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, knowledge and cultures. We want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations supported and for mainstream services to be culturally safe and informed. We will strive to be a workplace free of racism, and create active bystanders to support efforts to actively challenge, intervene in and disrupt racism.

Reconciliation can only begin when the history of invasion and colonisation are openly understood and acknowledged. A long legacy of racism, dispossession, sexism and intergenerational trauma from colonisation has contributed to shorter life expectancies, inequitable health outcomes and service barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This warrants an approach to policy, advocacy, research, health promotion, and support services that seeks to affirm the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities, and redress disadvantage and discrimination. WHV will build its understanding of how, as a non-Aboriginal organisation, it can best contribute to reconciliation and it commits to making that contribution. Our advocacy will also address systemic injustice that impacts the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and mainstream systems and service providers.

Self-determination is a key factor in living a healthy and empowered life. WHV commits to better understanding how to advance First Nations self-determination as a mainstream organisation. We will work towards a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples determine policy, and design services that impact them. WHV commits to standing with and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their communities.

## Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Women's Health Victoria (WHV) 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 WHV 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, WHV 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 close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. WHV is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals WHV'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 WHV on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



## Our business

WHV is a statewide women's health promotion, policy, advocacy and support service with a proud history of nearly 30 years. We are an independent, feminist, not-for-profit organisation.

We advocate and build system capacity for a gendered approach to health that reduces inequalities and improves health outcomes for women. We collaborate with women, health professionals, researchers, policy makers, service providers and community organisations. Our health promotion, information and support programs work with and for women, to identify and respond to service gaps and health inequalities in innovative ways.

Our work is underpinned by a social model of health and a commitment to reducing poor health outcomes which arise from social, economic and environmental determinants. Our vision is: *Women living well – healthy, empowered, equal.*

We enact this vision this by:

- **Promoting women's equality through research translation, policy advice and advocacy.** We produce papers, disseminate knowledge and engage with decision-makers.
- **Supporting women living with cancer** including through **Counterpart**, a statewide peer support and information service for women with cancer. Highly trained and professional Peer Support Volunteers, who have a lived experience of cancer, give emotional and practical support, understanding, hope and comfort to the women who access the service. Counterpart provides support from diagnosis, during or after treatment, and services are confidential and free.
- **Enhancing women's sexual and reproductive health** through the **1800 My Options** information and referral service for contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health.
- **Delivering workforce capacity building training and forums** to support workplaces and professionals to apply a gendered lens to systems, policy and service delivery. This includes accredited and non-accredited gender equity training.
- **Delivering up to date data on key women's health indicators** through the **Victorian Women's Health Atlas** to support advocacy, service planning and policy making across the state.

WHV operates across two locations in Melbourne's CBD. WHV employs 33 permanent full-time, part-time and casual staff, has 23 active volunteers (including 20 peer support volunteers) and 10 Board members.

Our employee diversity data shows that we have no employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that this impacts the provision and development of our service and programs. We commit to increasing and improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes through the implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and future RAPs.

Our board members, staff and volunteers work to a values-based code of conduct, which includes a commitment to supporting the work of our RAP. It also sets expectations about our leadership and integrity, including:

- creating and proactively supporting an inclusive culture at work;
- ensuring all work produced for Women's Health Victoria takes an intersectional approach to improving women's health and wellbeing;
- our belief in empowerment of others;
- our belief in equality of opportunities and rights; and
- our feminist commitment to women's equality and to challenging gender norms, practices and structures.

We also acknowledge, however, that concepts such as gender equality, intersectionality and feminism may have different meanings for First Nations women. As outlined in [Wiyi Yani U Thangani](#), First Nations women may be more likely to relate to gender justice and equality which entails harnessing their knowledge and values to transform existing systems to become more inclusive, caring, and compassionate.

In contrast, gender equality has a greater focus on individual rights and improving access to resources within existing structures and systems. We commit to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to deepen our understanding of the differences between gender justice and equality. We will work to understand how the principles that inform our work at WHV and what these and related concepts mean to First Nations women (see Key concepts on page 9). We also commit to reflecting on the implications for WHV's work through consulting with our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) and relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

Our commitment to a RAP reflects our organisational values of respect and inclusion. To live out our organisational purpose of 'champion[ing] every Victorian woman's health and wellbeing', we know it is essential to redress discrimination and inequality faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Victoria. This includes supporting advocacy for self-determination by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, as well as advocating for culturally safe and inclusive mainstream health and community services – including WHV's services. To support that WHV is culturally safe and inclusive both as an employer and as a service provider, we acknowledge that our past, present and future journey must include ongoing review and work on our policies and procedures, work practices and workplace culture.

# Our RAP

Our RAP is a framework that guides WHV's contribution to reconciliation. It provides a practical plan to enable us to contribute to social change for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian population. Our RAP provides a whole-of-organisation plan to work towards reconciliation, as an organisation and as individuals. It means that reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's health and wellbeing is prioritised at all levels of the organisation. Across our teams there is a commitment to making our organisation more culturally safe and welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff.

As a mainstream organisation, WHV knows it is imperative to build respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) so we can better promote and contribute to advocacy that supports self-determination and other priority issues as identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and communities. This is why our Innovate RAP outlines tangible ways to strengthen relationships and collaboration with ACCOs, to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women across Victoria.

WHV's RAP demonstrates our commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in a tangible way, as part of our purpose as champions for every Victorian woman's health and wellbeing. By undertaking the RAP process, we hope to reduce barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women accessing WHV services and resources and to provide culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities where appropriate.

Our RAP is intended to assist WHV to attract and retain a more diverse workforce by supporting the development of a culturally safe and inclusive work environment, increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and, more broadly, contributing to the reduction of inequality, discrimination and injustice.

WHV understands the importance of bystander action, whether it be calling out sexism or racism. At an individual level, our RAP work will challenge conscious and unconscious bias and racism among employees and equip them with the tools to challenge racism within the workplace and in their communities.

By committing to truth-telling and anti-racism, and working to make our organisation culturally safe, we hope to develop and foster relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and ACCOs to support their work, and to establish opportunities to collaborate on systemic issues.

## Our RAP Working Group

Internally, our RAP is championed by our CEO, our Policy, Health Promotion and Advocacy (PHPA) Manager (who chairs the RAP Working Group) and the Policy and Health Promotion Officer (who is the RAP Working Group secretariat). Our RAP Working Group has representation from each team within WHV, a Board representative, and two Aboriginal women:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Manager, Policy, Health Promotion and Advocacy (Chair)
- 1800 My Options Manager
- Communications Coordinator
- Policy and Health Promotion Officer (Secretariat)
- Executive Assistant to the CEO
- Counterpart Communications Coordinator
- Senior shEqual Project Coordinator
- Board member
- Hillary Aldenhoven, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identifying RAP working group member
- Madison Connors, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identifying RAP working group member

In developing our Innovate RAP, we have consulted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including Yorta Yorta woman Sheena Watt (while she was a WHV Board member in 2020). The Innovate RAP was also reviewed by Adyamathanha woman, Marsha Uppill, Director of Arranyinha Pty Ltd, a First Nations cultural strategy company and been reviewed by Aboriginal identifying RAP working group members, Hillary Aldenhoven and Madison Connors.

## Our RAP journey

WHV's first Reflect RAP was developed over 2018 and ran from January to December 2019. During 2020, the RAP Working Group continued to meet virtually every 8 weeks and developed a Reflect RAP Extension Plan where we continued to progress and report on our reconciliation deliverables despite the disruptions associated with COVID-19. Our Reflect actions included:

- Requiring all existing staff to complete Share Our Pride and including it as part of induction for new staff
- Introducing a new policy where staff could choose to work on 26 January in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and elect to have an alternative day off in lieu
- Procuring Cultural Safety Training from VACCHO in 2019 and 2020
- Running internal events to promote staff learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, as well as about the history and ongoing impacts of colonisation and discrimination
- Working with VACCHO on culturally appropriate resources for our service, *1800 My Options*
- Working with VACCHO to improve responses to women calling the *1800 My Options* phone line so they were more culturally appropriate
- Introducing a policy of offering two free places for ACCO staff at all our training and events
- Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's voices by inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to speak at WHV's public events and workshops
- Continuing to include perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in policy, research and advocacy work
- Procuring catering and design services from Aboriginal- and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses
- Participating in the 2020 Workplace RAP Barometer



During 2020, as WHV actioned both our Reflect RAP Extension and developed our Innovate RAP, we were delighted to welcome WHV Board member and Yorta Yorta woman, Sheena Watt, to our RAP Working Group. With Sheena's departure from the Board in 2020 to pursue a new career as a Member of the Victorian Parliament, the WHV Board is actively recruiting for new Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Board member(s). WHV has also developed two paid Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-identified RAP Working Group positions which have been filled by Madison Connors and Hillary Aldenhoven.

At our 2020 Annual General Meeting, WHV was proud to launch our RAP artwork by Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi woman Madison Connors, *Yakuna Ganaggurr* ('Until Tomorrow' in Yorta Yorta). In conversation with Yorta Yorta woman and outgoing WHV Board member, Sheena Watt MP, Madison spoke about her artwork and the creation story it represents. *Yakuna Ganaggurr* was also featured on the front cover and throughout our 2019-20 Annual Report, and will continue to feature in our reports and publications, as well as forming the heart of our Innovate RAP design.

Through staff surveys and attendance records, we have identified that one of our greatest challenges is engaging all staff in our reconciliation work so that they see reconciliation as integral to both their work and their personal lives. To progress this, WHV has established a RAP Engagement Subcommittee, made up of four RAP Working Group members, to develop, implement, and review an engagement plan to maintain and grow staff engagement with the RAP and reconciliation more broadly. The Executive Assistant to the CEO is the inaugural Chair for the RAP Engagement Subcommittee.

As stated in Reconciliation Australia's 2021 State of Reconciliation in Australia Report, it is integral for our RAP work to move from 'safe to brave', including going beyond simply raising awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, to:

- Being brave in the face of racism, including challenging racism at work and in our personal lives (having uncomfortable conversations)
- Confronting and recognising our personal biases, and confronting Australia's collective racism
- Advocating on harder issues confronting First Nations communities such as child removal, incarceration and over-policing.

### Case studies from WHV's RAP journey so far

#### 1800 My Options: Learning through practice

WHV's 1800 My Options service responds to queries from across the state relating to contraception, pregnancy options including abortion, and sexual health, via a free and confidential phonenumber and website. Recognising that there is a lack of mainstream sexual and reproductive health services that are culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the service has prioritised learning about and implementing culturally safe practices.

Working with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), 1800 My Options carefully edited the script our staff use in phone calls to ensure that a caller's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity is known early, and the caller is then supported to find culturally appropriate health services. Developing the scripts involved test calls and ongoing discussions with VACCHO and other Aboriginal Health Workers.

Their feedback has been continuously incorporated into training and scripting practices at our service to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander callers feel safe and respected, and that our service meets the needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. On advice from VACCHO, we have also actively approached other Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations that provide sexual and reproductive health services to register on our health provider database.

Our work to ensure our service is culturally safe continues through participation in learning opportunities through VACCHO meetings, our membership of the VACCHO Syphilis Sector Working Group, and relationships with Aboriginal Health Workers. 1800 My Options has also developed a page on the service website to highlight sexual and reproductive health resources and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and will further develop this information through our work with VACCHO and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

#### Moving towards a culturally safe and welcoming workplace environment

Over the past three years, WHV has been implementing policies to become a culturally responsive workplace for prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

WHV values the perspectives and knowledge of First Nations peoples and is working towards becoming a workplace of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women often have important obligations to family and community, WHV introduced three days of paid cultural leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff as

part of its 2018 Enterprise Agreement (EA).

The definition of 'family' in our EA leave provisions was also expanded to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship and community relationships. Access to compassionate leave is unrestricted, recognising higher mortality rates and the frequency of Sorry Business for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2020, WHV introduced a policy allowing staff to choose to work on 26 January in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and take an alternative day off in lieu. This policy was implemented in recognition that this date marks the unlawful invasion of this continent, and the attempted genocide of the First Nations, and is not a day to celebrate.

Over the course of our Innovate RAP, WHV will develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy, with the aim of attracting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.



## Key concepts

### Cultural safety:

As noted on the VACCHO website (2022), cultural safety means being open-minded and respecting the identities and customs of all people who are culturally different from yourself and/or most of society. Embedding cultural safety into your personal and organisational practice creates safe and welcoming environments where individuals thrive and form respectful and collaborative partnerships. Culturally safe practices and environments increase accessibility to health, education, and equitable outcomes while offering quality, holistic services. Unsafe practices and environments do the opposite.

### Cultural respect:

The Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (2016-2026) (AHMAC 2016) defines cultural respect as “recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” Organisations wanting to pursue this can become involved in the following: whole-of-organisation approaches and commitment; communication, workforce development and training, consumer participation and engagement, stakeholder partnerships and collaboration; and planning, research and evaluation.

### Self-determination:

Self-determination is of profound importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and refers to recognition of their unique and distinct rights living in a colonised society to pursue their own social, cultural and economic interests, while retaining the right to participate fully in Australian society (AHRC 2020).

### Feminism:

As Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2020) has highlighted, feminism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is associated with whiteness and dominant power structures such as capitalism, colonisation and patriarchy. In contrast to white or Western feminism, Indigenous feminism focuses on empowering First Nations women within a First Nations cultural context. Decolonization, sovereignty, human rights and respect for all genders are priorities (Gearon 2021).

### Gender justice and equality:

While the Western concept of gender equality has a rights focus and is concerned with resource entitlement and redistribution, First Nations gender justice and equality aims to redesign the systems we live within to foreground First Nations women’s knowledge and values to achieve a fairer, more compassionate and inclusive society (AHRC 2020).

### Sources:

AHMAC (2016) [Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2016 – 2026: A national approach to building a culturally respectful health system](#). Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council, Sydney.

AHRC (2020) [Wiyi Yani U Thangani \(Women's Voices\): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future report](#). Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney.

Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (2022). [Cultural safety in health care for Indigenous Australians: Monitoring framework](#).

Gearon J. (2021) [Indigenous feminism is our culture](#). *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. (Feb 11)

Moreton-Robinson A. (2020) *Talkin' up to the white woman: Indigenous women and feminism*. 20th Anniversary Ed. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia.

VACCHO (n.d.) [Cultural safety services](#). Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Collingwood Vic.



## Relationships

**Building and maintaining strong, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders is integral to the success of our RAP. These relationships will enable us to work collaboratively to embed the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and cultural safety within our programs and services.**

**Focus area:** Building mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders aligns with WHV’s Strategic Priority 1: *Improve women’s health and wellbeing through strengthened voice and reach*; and Strategic Priority 3: *Influence the capacity and responsiveness of the health system to meet the needs of all women*.

Implementing a best-practice anti-discrimination policy will help us achieve Strategic Priority 4.4: *Strengthen WHV’s policies and programs so they are inclusive of the diversity of women including the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan*; and 5.1: *Build a strong organisational culture and be an employer of choice*.



## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1: Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	March 2023	CEO (PHPA Manager)
	1.2: Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May 2023	RAPWG Chair (Senior Policy & Health Promotion Officer)
	• 1.2a: Engage consultants to provide training to staff on respectful engagement with ACCOs and Aboriginal communities.	March 2023	CEO
	• 1.2b: Strengthen connections with Aboriginal Community-Controlled services to better connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with 1800 My Options	March 2023	1800 My Options Manager
	• 1.2c: Encourage Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to register with 1800 My Options' database (where appropriate), and support their engagement with the broader sexual and reproductive health system	May 2023	1800 My Options Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1: Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023 May 2024	CEO (Executive Assistant)
	2.2: RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2023; 27 May - 3 June 2024	RAPWG Chair
	2.3: Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2023; 27 May - 3 June 2024	CEO
	2.4: Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May - 3 June 2023; 27 May - 3 June 2024	RAP Engagement Subcommittee Chair
	2.5: Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">NRW website</a> .	May 2023 May 2024	PHP Officer

## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1: Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1a: Ensure RAP engagement subcommittee meets at least four times per year to produce content and evaluate success of engagement and RAPWG members update their teams regularly</li> <li>3.1b: Create a RAP induction slide deck that will set out WHV's vision for reconciliation and how all WHV teams will contribute to reconciliation in their work</li> <li>3.1c: Ensure Share Our Pride is completed by all new Board, staff and volunteers as part of induction</li> </ul>	February, April, June, September 2023; 2024	RAP Engagement Subcommittee Chair
		February 2023	RAPWG Secretariat and all Working Group members
		May 2023 May 2024	RAP Chair (Team Managers)
	3.2: Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Via establishing a RAP section in the 'About' section of the WHV website, publishing our Innovate RAP section to that page and mentioning our RAP in job advertisements.</li> <li>Develop and publish a statement of support for Wiyi Yani U Thangani on WHV website.</li> </ul>	August 2023 [Review August 2024] August 2023	Communications Coordinator
	3.3: Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in our policy and advocacy agenda</li> <li>in our sphere of influence as service providers</li> </ul>	November 2023 July 2023	CEO (All Managers) PHPA Manager
3.4: Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	July 2023	RAPWG Chair	
3.5 Launch the Innovate RAP at an all-staff event	February 2023	RAPWG Chair	
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1: Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs	April 2023	Business Manager
	4.2: Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2023	Business Manager
	4.3: Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	March 2023	Business Manager
	4.4: Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage an expert organisation to deliver anti-racism training to senior leaders</li> </ul>	June 2023	CEO



# Respect

**WHV understands that the workplace is a key setting that can foster values and respect. We will walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led advocacy in our policy work. Respect means working to ensure that WHV is a culturally safe and welcoming place, as both an employer and service provider.**

**Focus area:** Actively contributing to advocacy to support the rights and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women will support WHV to achieve Strategic Priority 2: *Influence system capacity for women's equality through research, policy, advocacy and training* and Strategic Priority 3: *Influence the capacity and responsiveness of the health system to meet the needs of all women.*

By increasing understanding of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and knowledge, demonstrating respect by observing cultural protocols and implementing ways that WHV can be a culturally safe and welcoming employer, we can achieve Strategic Priority 5.1: *Build a strong organisational culture and be an employer of choice* as well as Strategic Priority 4.4 *Strengthen WHV's policies and programs so they are inclusive of the diversity of women.*

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	5.1: Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation (see 14.3)	August 2023 [Review, August 2024]	RAP Engagement Subcommittee Chair
	5.2: Consult Wurundjeri Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	February 2023	CEO (RAP Engagement Subcommittee Chair)
	5.3: Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of literature and articles via newsletters</li> <li>Event and training schedule</li> <li>Staff survey administration and evaluation</li> </ul>	September 2023	RAP Engagement Subcommittee Chair
	5.4: Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, Board members and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a record is kept of staff and Board members' training attendance</li> <li>Identify staff and Board members who must complete training in a certain year</li> </ul>	April 2023 [Review April 2024]	CEO (Executive Assistant)
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	6.1: Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2023	PHP Officer
	6.2: Review, update and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update WHV Acknowledgement of Country and accompanying guide and make available to staff. Include recommendations to personalise the Acknowledgement for meetings and events and include reference to supporting Wiyi Yani U Thangani principles</li> <li>Develop a WHV-specific respectful language guide.</li> <li>Update websites, email signatures and training slides with revised Acknowledgement of Country as required. Acknowledgement should appear on all publications and be tailored where appropriate.</li> </ul>	August 2023	PHP Officer



## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
	<b>6.3: Invite a Wurundjeri Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.</b>	December 2023 December 2024	CEO
	<b>6.4: Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of meetings, events and training. Encourage staff to personalise their Acknowledgement.</b>	Review [August 2023]	Executive Assistant
	<b>6.5: Continue to provide a choice for staff in terms of whether they work on 26 January</b>	January 2024 January 2025	CEO (Board)
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	<b>7.1: RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</b>	July 2023 July 2024	PHP Officer
	<b>7.2: Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</b>	March 2023	Business Manager (PHP Officer)
	<b>7.3: Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.</b>	First week July 2023; 2024	CEO (PHP Officer/ Executive Assistant)
<b>8. Create an environment that is culturally safe and welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.</b>	<b>8.1 Develop a WHV Cultural Safety Policy</b>	September 2023	CEO and Business Manager
	<b>8.2: Subscribe to Koori Mail and other culturally appropriate print media</b>	July 2023, July 2024	Information & Data Officer
	<b>8.3: Investigate ways to ensure WHV's front of house is culturally safe and welcoming, including increasing visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures at WHV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display Madison Connors' artwork, <i>Yakuna Gananggurr</i>, in WHV Bourke St foyer</li> <li>• Review front of house protocol (including answering phones)</li> </ul>	June 2023	Business Manager (Executive Assistant)
	<b>8.4: Improve access to sexual and reproductive health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women via 1800 My Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8.4a: Consider and consult around how to reflect and respect the sexual and reproductive health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 1800 My Options resources and communications</li> </ul>	February 2024	1800 My Options Manager

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8.4b: Work with relevant health and community organisations to plan and develop culturally appropriate communication strategies and health promotion resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• 8.4c: Work with relevant health and community organisations to disseminate culturally appropriate messages and health promotion resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women around sexual and reproductive health</li> </ul>	April 2023  September 2023	1800 My Options Manager  1800 My Options Manager
	<b>8.5: Improve access to cancer services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women via Counterpart</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8.5a: Investigate and implement how to make Counterpart a culturally welcoming, relevant and safe service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with cancer, including through consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, other RAP organisations and, where possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women</li> </ul>	July 2024	Counterpart Manager (Counterpart Admin Officer)
<b>9. Actively contribute to advocacy to support the rights and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.</b>	<b>9.1: Promote and contribute to advocacy that supports self-determination and other priority issues as identified by our Aboriginal colleagues and communities and ACCOs across our priority areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9.1a Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and ACCOs to identify opportunities to amplify shared and ACCO priorities in our advocacy.</li> <li>• 9.1b: Include issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls (and organisations) as a core element of any policy submission or publication</li> <li>• 9.1c: Demonstrate support for policy and advocacy priorities identified by ACCOs through at least one action each year</li> </ul>	Review [May 2023 May 2024]  August 2023 [Review August 2024]  Review [October 2023]	PHPA Manager and Service Managers  Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer  PHPA Manager
	<b>9.2 Incorporate the principles in Wiyi Yani U Thangani into each WHV team's work</b>	October 2023	CEO (All Managers)

**Respect**

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
	<b>9.3: Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s perspectives in training and workshops, including in case studies and multimedia resources</b>	December 2024	Health Promotion Officer (Senior Training & Capacity Building Coordinator)
	<b>9.4: Investigate making data available on the Victorian Women’s Health Atlas useful and culturally relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.4a: Continue to identify available data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and equality and include in Victorian Women’s Health Atlas</li> <li>9.4b: Encourage incidental learning by Atlas users by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands represented on the Atlas in Atlas resources</li> </ul>	December 2023	Information & Data Officer (PHPA Manager)
	<b>9.5: Investigate opportunities to provide support to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.5a: Promote 2 free WHV training places to ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders</li> </ul>	December 2024	Health Promotion Officer (Senior Training & Capacity Building Coordinator)
	<b>9.6: Explore opportunities to support relevant activities that enhance social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, e.g.,</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fundraising for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives at staff events</li> <li>sponsoring training or event tickets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and</li> <li>promoting grassroots Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led campaigns through staff newsletters and on the intranet.</li> </ul>	February 2024	RAPWG Chair (and all the Working Group)



# Opportunities

**WHV recognises that increasing opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is important in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. We will contribute to increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women by becoming a culturally safe and welcoming workplace, as well as targeting employment and procurement opportunities to them.**

**Focus area:** Reviewing our HR and procurement policies and developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait recruitment and retention plan will help us achieve Strategic Priority 4.4: *Strengthen WHV’s policies and programs so they are inclusive of the diversity of women including the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan*; 5.1: *Build a strong organisational culture and be an employer of choice*; and 5.3: *Maintain best practice governance structures, systems and processes.*



## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	10.1: Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March 2023	CEO (Business Manager)
	10.2: Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	April 2023	Business Manager
	10.3: Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10.3a: Investigate what WHV needs to do to be a culturally safe employer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (including consulting with other RAP organisations).</li> <li>10.3b: Utilise WHV enterprise bargaining 2022 as an opportunity to advocate for best practice EA clauses to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.</li> </ul>	May 2024	CEO (Managers)
	10.4: Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	March 2023	Business Manager
	10.5: Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	May 2023	Business Manager
	10.6: Work towards increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain position for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-identified member on WHV Board</li> </ul>	December 2024	CEO
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	11.1: Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2023	Business Manager
	11.2: Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2023	Business Manager (PHP Officer)
	11.3: Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	March 2024	Business Manager (PHP Officer)
	11.4: Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	May 2024	Business Manager
	11.5: Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2024	Business Manager



## Governance

WHV understands that a strong authorising environment is key to the successful implementation of our RAP. The regular reporting required across all levels of the organisation encourages accountability in working towards reconciliation. The commitment of the Board to reconciliation, reflected in our Strategic Plan, supports staff at all levels of the organisation to fulfil their RAP deliverables.

**Focus area:** Embedding the RAP at all levels of reporting, as well as implementing accountability and transparency mechanisms, will help us achieve Strategic Priority 4.4: *Strengthen WHV's policies and programs so they are inclusive of the diversity of women*, including the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan; and 5.1: *Build a strong organisational culture and be an employer of choice*; and 5.3: *Maintain best practice governance structures, systems and processes*.

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RAPWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	12.1: Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure WHV continue to involve at least 2 paid Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representatives with the RAP WG.</li> </ul>	April 2023; April 2024	CEO (RAPWG Chair)
	12.2: Review Terms of Reference for the RAPWG yearly	May 2023 May 2024	RAPWG Secretariat
	12.3: Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, March, May, August, September, November 2023; 2024	RAPWG Secretariat
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	13.1: Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2023	CEO (Managers)
	13.2: Create an expectation that all staff are to be involved in RAP activities by incorporating 'commitment to reconciliation activities' as a requirement on position descriptions (with the appropriate HR and interview policies and procedures to support)	February 2024	CEO (Managers)
	13.3: Include specific RAP KPIs and deliverables in all staff work plans and as part of performance reviews	August 2024	CEO (Managers)
	13.4: Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2023 February 2024	CEO (Managers)
	13.5: Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2023	RAPWG Secretariat
	13.6: Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	February 2023	CEO
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	14.1: Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14.1a: Ensure our contacts are up-to-date with Reconciliation Australia so we can continue to receive key information including information on annual reporting</li> <li>14.1b: Contact Reconciliation Australia if we have not already received our information to annually report in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.</li> </ul>	September 2023 September 2024 June 2023 June 2024 August 2023 August 2024	RAPWG Secretariat

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility (and support)
	14.2: Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14.2a: RAP progress is a standing item at Board meetings and Governance sub-committee meetings</li> <li>14.2b: RAP progress is a standing item at Managers' meeting</li> <li>14.2c: RAP is a standing item at all team meetings</li> </ul>	Quarterly review [February, May, September, November 2023; 2024] Fortnightly review [February 2023]	CEO 1800 My Options Manager All Managers
	14.3 Evaluate staff engagement in RAP work and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14.3a: Monitor and improve staff engagement with reconciliation work and RAP activities by conducting 3 surveys during the Innovate RAP: first in April 2023 to develop a base-line, second in April 2024 and third Feb 2025.</li> <li>14.3b: Analyse survey data to track progress against our RAP outcomes and implement necessary changes to increase staff engagement</li> </ul>	April 2023 April 2024 February 2025	RAPWG Chair and Subcommittee Chair
	14.4: Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2023 December 2024	Communications Coordinator
	14.5: Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	RAPWG Secretariat
	15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	15.1: Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2024
15.2: Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia to support the development of our next RAP		July 2024	RAPWG Secretariat



## Contact details

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Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.