



Maryborough District Health Service

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

JULY 2021 - JULY 2022





## Painting Name *A Celebration of Culture*

Tarreena completed *a Celebration of Culture* for Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS) and surrounding communities in the Central Goldfields and Pyrenees Shire.

It brings together the health and aged care services that MDHS provides the community from campuses in Maryborough, Avoca, and Dunolly, and its support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The painting is made up of meeting places that reflect different health services at each location, and how they are connected through the streams that flow between the three towns. It displays a celebration of culture and traditional ways of healing with bush tucker, bush medicine, men, women, birthing and Dreamtime spirits.

"My painting shows the beautiful and meaningful connections between places of care and healing, and acceptance of cultural diversity in our region. It was important to me to show the acceptance of the community, how we are working together, and the cultural sensitivity MDHS has shown. There is a great willingness to understand and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and work together to improve the health of our community."

## Tarreena Atkinson, Biography

Tarreena Atkinson is a proud Yorta Yorta woman. Her family is from Echuca - Barmah country along the Murray River. Tarreena was born in Ballarat and moved to Maryborough in the Central Goldfields as a young child. She has always gone back to visit her homelands along the Murray and finds it a place of peace.

Tarreena found growing up in Maryborough challenging because of a lack of diversity of culture. She is happy to see this has changed as the town has grown, and there is a greater celebration of culture and cultural events throughout the year.

While Tarreena was at secondary school she discovered her passion for art and spent as much time as she could in the art room. She went on to complete a Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Institute of Koorie Education (IKE) at Deakin University in 2012 and returned to complete a Masters of Education in 2016.

Tarreena's artwork is inspired by her culture and contains traditional symbols to tell stories of life and Dreamtime. She likes to use acrylic paint as her main medium, in bright and earthy colours.

Tarreena is passionate about working with young people with Indigenous backgrounds and other diverse cultures. She loves her job as a case manager in Out of Home Care and the rewards that it brings.

Recently, Tarreena has begun to share her desire of painting with the community. She feels lucky to have the chance to create local art in Maryborough, including a large commissioned work for Maryborough District Health Service. Tarreena thinks she will always paint, even beyond retirement.

Original Artwork:  
*A Celebration of Culture*  
- by Tarreena Atkinson 2021



# Maryborough District Health Service

## REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

July 2021 – July 2022

CEO message	5
Our business	6
Our Reconciliation Action Plan	7
Relationships	9
Respect	11
Opportunities	13
Governance	14

## Acknowledgement of Country

Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, including the Dja Dja Wurrung people.

We pay our respect to the leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Indigenous peoples.

We express our gratitude in sharing of this land and our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of the sharing.

We hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.





## CEO message

We are very proud to bring you our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) at Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS). At MDHS we strive for success and are committed to Closing the Gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our vision is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their heritage, culture, and spirituality are valued, respected and celebrated at MDHS. We are committed to providing health services, employment and training opportunities that are culturally safe, free from racism and enriched by dignity, justice and a strong living culture.

To support this commitment our organisation has developed our first RAP to reiterate our commitment to improve the health status and achieve health equality for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We will embed this work by integrating our commitment and actions into our new strategic plan, and will continue to work in partnership with Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative, local council and key partners to improve inclusion and health outcomes in our community.

This Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed to:

- Form an essential part of our efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed at MDHS
- To promote MDHS as a health provider of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Commit us to continue to promote an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, cultures, heritage and aspirations.

Our values - Genuine, Respect, Excellence, Accountability and Togetherness - support our vision for reconciliation. This plan is for all of our people, and we encourage each of us to take action as individuals, clinicians, managers and leaders to implement it.

We won't shy away from the past, and acknowledge that we still have work to do to create an environment that promotes safety, access, inclusion and care for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Thank you to everyone who has played a role in developing our first RAP as an important step in our journey towards reconciliation. Let's continue to work together to improve health, wellbeing and opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our region.

**Nickola Allan, Chief Executive Officer  
Maryborough District Health Service**

## Our business

Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS) is a dynamic regional health service, which employs nearly 500 staff and 170 volunteers. MDHS provides a diverse range of services from acute to community and aged care. MDHS provides surgical services 6 days a week, dialysis 3 days a week, a 24/7 Urgent Care Centre, a Maternity Service with approximately 60 births per year, a full range of allied health services and 94 aged care beds.

MDHS is made up of three sites. The Maryborough site provides the broader range of acute services, and Avoca and Dunolly are focused on delivering person-centred aged and community care.

Our region sees higher than average rates of chronic disease, such as diabetes, smoking related illness, alcohol-related disease, asthma, mental illness, poor oral health and obesity.

MDHS currently has 2 staff members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

The local community that the health service provides care to is ageing, the population is growing but our people are moving out of rural towns into regional centres. The total catchment has a population of 15,000 which is made up of people from all walks of life, with diverse social and economic backgrounds.

MDHS is proud to share a part of its geographical range with the Kulin nation which is an alliance of five Indigenous Australian tribes in central Victoria, Australia, including:

- Woiwurrung (Woy-wur-rung) – the Wurundjeri People
- Boonwurrung (Bun-er-rung) – the Bunurong or Boonerwurrung People
- Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung) – the Wathaurong People
- Daungwurrung (Tung-ger-rung) – the Taungurong People
- Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar wrung) – the Dja Dja Wurrung or Jaara People.

## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

MDHS is committed to the successful realisation of our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We, as a Board, in collaboration with our staff and leadership team, will work to improve our services to ultimately achieve better health outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. Our local champion committed to supporting and driving this plan is our Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Our CEO is an active participant and chair of our working group, and is passionate about engaging with all staff to embrace and support our reconciliation works across the organisation. This plan is an important formal statement of our commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve this.

This, our first RAP, establishes a strong foundation for us to build on. It will strengthen and inform our plans for the future, as we continue to be part of and positively influence the community conversation about reconciliation.

We look forward to continuing to work with our communities, stakeholders and Reconciliation Australia to achieve the goals that are set out in our RAP. We acknowledge the hard work of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders at MDHS, past and present, who have supported this organisation to reach this important first milestone.

This plan is a collaborative effort that we hope will be informed by insights, voices and advice from a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across our communities.

As part of this RAP we have engaged with local council, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) to assist in the implementation of our RAP. Our journey to date commenced in 2020 with the formulation of a working group who have had input into this plan and its development. Organisationally we have also been working with BDAC to improve opportunities for shared service provision locally to meet the needs of our local community, and have been working with the Central Goldfields Shire in their local mobs COVID-19 recovery group.

We have also recently advertised and will be appointing an Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer, to support our local community and the health service to provide a safe environment to receive and access services. An important part of this work will be to work with local community groups in the development of our masterplan for a new building into the future.

## Our journey so far

Below are some other examples of our journey so far:

- Statement of Intent signed and displayed on health service wall.
- 2007 Apology.
- MDHS have a registration and admission process where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can choose to self-identify set up since 2006.
- RAP working group led by staff and executive across MDHS.
- NAIDOC community day events supported by MDHS during NAIDOC Week each year.
- Established relationship with BDAC to improve service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in our catchment area.
- Acknowledgment of Country embedded into all committee agendas across MDHS.
- 2011 Acknowledgement plaque to Country implemented and created in entrance on Maryborough Campus.
- In 2012 MDHS signed a Statement of Intent in regard to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region.
- Information from Community Services team regarding inclusive works for housing and counselling clients.

## Our partnerships and current activities

- Collaborative agreement with Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BDAC).
- Host an event in National Reconciliation Week, run cultural training sessions for staff.
- Recruitment of an Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO) to support organisational focus and community liaison with key stakeholders.
- Education plan in development to address cultural sensitivity needs and understanding of white privilege.
- Member of the Maryborough-Castlemaine Hub group.





## Our actions

Following are the actions that we will work on over the next 12 months to enable our journey of reflection around what reconciliation means for our staff at MDHS and our community.

### Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	July 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services, Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director Clinical and Quality Services
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	May 2022	Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June, 2022	Operations Manager Primary and Preventative Health, Operations Manager Centre of Inspired Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June, 2022	Operations Manager Centre of Inspired Learning, Chief Executive Officer



Continued..

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</li> </ul>	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director Clinical and Quality Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director Clinical and Quality Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director Clinical and Quality Services
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>	July 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	September 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer



## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	August 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.</li> </ul>	September 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Director Clinical and Quality Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director Finance and Corporate Services



## Continued..

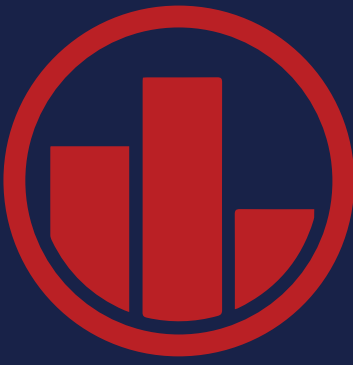
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</li></ul>	July 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</li></ul>	July 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing, Operations Manager Centre of Inspired Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li></ul>	First week in July, 2021	Chief Executive Officer, Director People Culture and Wellbeing,





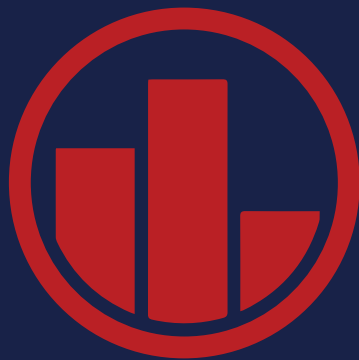
## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	August 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing - workforce plan completion
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2021	Director People Culture and Wellbeing - workforce plan completion
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2021	Director Finance and Corporate Services, Finance Team Leader
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2021	Director Finance and Corporate Services



## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Form a Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) to govern RAP implementation and ensure regular meetings are supported across MDHS enabling staff the time to engage and connect with our RAP.</li></ul>	December 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG and review on ongoing basis in line with RAP works and progress</li></ul>	December 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG and support new members</li></ul>	December 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services



## Continued..

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	August 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments, through education and transparency.</li> </ul>	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments via our RWG to Board Of Management on quarterly basis.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Director Clinical and Quality Services
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	30 September, 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG report to Board of Management on quarterly basis to support transparency and accountability.</li> </ul>	June 2022	Chief Executive Officer
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer, Operations Manager Centre of Inspired Learning



For more information about the  
Maryborough District Health Service  
Respect Reconciliation Action Plan contact:

Nickola Allan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Phone: (03) 5461 0301  
Email: [nallan@mdhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:nallan@mdhs.vic.gov.au)

**Maryborough District Health Service**

PO Box 155  
Maryborough VIC 3465

Phone: (03) 5461 0333  
Email: [mdhs@mdhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:mdhs@mdhs.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [mdhs.vic.gov.au](http://mdhs.vic.gov.au)

