



ABOUT THE ARTWORK

This artwork represents Uniting Communities’ commitment to the 2024 Reconciliation Action Plan, and symbolises the under-pinning values of Truth, Healing, Justice and Self-Determination being embedded throughout organisational policy, procedure and employee practice.

I wanted to do something Bold because Reconciliation to me means Equality, and for true equality I believe we need to break through the constraints of ‘normal’ or ‘standard’ institutionalised policy and procedure frameworks in a way that allows us to continue to create meaningful change in our approach to providing culturally sensitive community services, and culturally safe work environments.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

My name is Raquel Larkins, I am a proud Kokatha, Dieri, Arabana and Narungga woman.

I started painting a few years ago as a form of healing and self-care.

Painting allowed me to feel connected to my family and to tell my stories of being on Country while living in the city. I was born, and now live on Kurna Country with my children.

I come from a strong family and I have always been proud of my culture and my people.



Artwork by Kokatha, Dieri, Arabana and Narungga Artist Raquel Larkins

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO MESSAGE

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Uniting Communities on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The RAP program provides organisations with a framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement through the pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. This framework allows for continuous development, pushing organisations to embed and expand on their commitments, while adapting to obstacles as they arise.

Uniting Communities works with South Australians to tackle deep-seated challenges and create systemic change through its community services. Its reflection on its role in reconciliation began in 1997 when it apologised for its part in the Stolen Generations – namely in the transfer of children from Croker Island to Lantara Children's Home.

This reflection has continued into Uniting Communities' formal reconciliation journey, with its first RAP endorsed in 2018. As a service provider to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, it has come to the recognition that cultural authenticity, safety and intelligence are essential for developing its workforce and for positive outcomes. This means that culture is the starting point, rather than being one factor in service design that needs to be accommodated into a mainstream context.

Uniting Communities came to this understanding through engagement, co-design and feedback with the First Nations communities it works with. This first Stretch RAP will continue to build on these processes, expanding and embedding them further into its operations.

Initiatives include meeting with local First Nations stakeholders to improve its guiding principles for engagement, as well as maintaining 15 formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. Uniting Communities will also seek feedback from communities on its programs, which will be used to inform its continuous improvement processes. Ultimately, these commitments will increase the efficacy and safety of services offered by Uniting Communities, creating lasting benefits for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it serves.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Uniting Communities for adopting its first Stretch RAP and look forward to watching the organisation's progress on the journey to reconciliation.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia



STATEMENT FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Reconciliation is an essential and ongoing focus for Uniting Communities. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship between First Nations people and the land, sea and skies. The ancestral tie to Country has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with our wider community. We acknowledge the past and recognise its continuing impact on the present, so that we can move together in reconciliation and healing.

We have a bold and unceasing commitment to social justice, advocating for change and improvement in the lives of those who need it most. The staff and Board of directors of Uniting Communities understand that we need to listen, continually challenge limiting beliefs and be open to change if reconciliation is to occur.

On behalf of the Board, I commend to your consideration the Uniting Communities Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

I look forward to leading the Board and Uniting Communities as we embark together on developing a deeper understanding of reconciliation in South Australia and beyond.

Dr Kylie Heneker
Chair, Uniting Communities



STATEMENT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE



At Uniting Communities, we understand that reconciliation does not have an 'end point' but is an ongoing journey - a journey of learning and discovery but also, most importantly, one of action.

It involves an open and honest appreciation of the past, the impacts of colonisation and subsequent injustices inflicted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. It also requires an acknowledgment of the ongoing impacts of racism and discrimination in the Australian Community.

Reconciliation also requires all Australians to embrace the rich and diverse cultures of First Australians. To this end, Uniting Communities third Reconciliation Action Plan provides for our staff to be more engaged in deepening their understanding and relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including in

their local communities and regions. Celebrating culture in all of its dimensions is a key element of reconciliation and it forms a central plank of our new Reconciliation Action Plan. Our new Plan also incorporates a host of other practical reconciliation measures including our aim to boost our employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Uniting Communities Plan is a clear statement of intent. We will hold ourselves accountable in ensuring we deliver on our commitments and continue to strive to achieve true reconciliation with First Australians as a pathway to healing the wrongs of the past and in enriching the lives of all Australians.

Simon Schrapel AM
Chief Executive, Uniting Communities



COMMITMENT STATEMENT FROM EXECUTIVE MANAGER - PEOPLE, BRAND & ASSURANCE

The Uniting Communities Reconciliation Action Plan outlines our commitment to building employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a crucial step towards achieving meaningful reconciliation and addressing historical injustices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to face systemic barriers and discrimination when it comes to employment, and it is our intention to actively work towards building further pathways that create access to meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities. The recruitment and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is but one means by which we seek to build stronger, more resilient communities. Through more diverse workplace opportunities, we can create a more vibrant and prosperous organisation that values and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and perspectives.

Richard Laidlaw
Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance, Uniting Assurance



STATEMENT FROM THE RECONCILIATION ACTION WORKING GROUP

The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group is down in the detail of the Reconciliation Action Plan and inside the detail of our organisation's life. I know we all come across issues and complex challenges within which we struggle to find a clear way forward. And yet you have all given some of your time to this Plan so that we might encourage our staff toward a greater acknowledgement, understanding and respect of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures which is among us and from which we can learn.

On behalf of Uniting Communities, I record our thanks to Michael Turner, Kveta Vlotman, Keisha Milera, Renae Pell, Eva Pratt and Raquel Larkins. You have done some incredible work over many years as well as giving us some of your time and knowledge in the preparation of this Plan. I invite those reading this document to acknowledge your work by taking up the challenge of bringing it alive in your local workplace. If you are not sure what to do or what is next then come and talk to one of us as we encourage you on your reconciliation journey. I am confident that we are moving toward a more generous Australia where the gifts, skills and insights of First Nations peoples are properly recognised and celebrated.

Peter McDonald
RAP Champion, Uniting Communities





ENRICHING LIVES UNITING COMMUNITIES

VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision is that Uniting Communities would learn and be shaped by the self-determination of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients. Informed by their culture and history we would see the creation of a unique social service approach which addresses social and emotional wellbeing, cultural healing and community connections.

Uniting Communities recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land, acknowledging their enduring spiritual relationship with it, seeks to promote self-determination, value their cultures and histories.

Uniting Communities provides our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff the opportunity to develop their own unique social service approach which addresses social and emotional wellbeing, cultural healing and community connections.

Uniting Communities envisions a South Australian community where every individual and community is empowered to reach their full potential. For over 120 years, we have championed positive change by working with the community to tackle deep-seated challenges and create systemic change. Our commitment to creating brighter futures for all includes acknowledging the significant role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples play in our community. We recognize that their cultural knowledge and positive influence have too often been ignored, and we seek to work alongside them to overcome racism and disadvantage by listening and learning. Through our increased participation in NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week, we demonstrate our growing commitment to reconciliation. By building on our past Reconciliation Action Plan work, we aim to deepen our community's appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and history. Our vision is to move towards a more just relationship by genuinely seeking to understand and appreciate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, ultimately building a stronger and more united community for all.

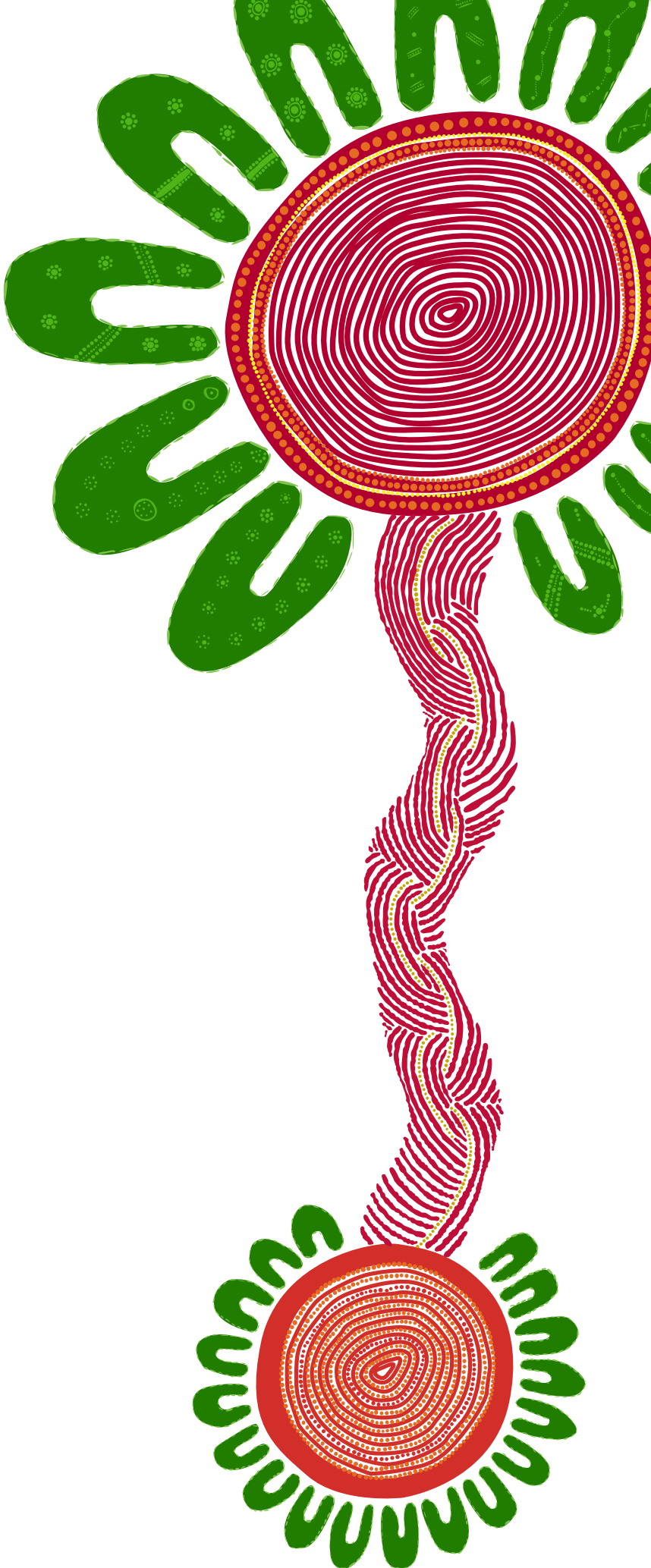
Uniting Communities recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, who occupied this land for thousands of years before colonisation. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the past, present and future are the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect the enduring spiritual relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have with the land and sea. We accept this relationship is important to the physical, psychological and spiritual health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise that the knowledge, language and customs of First Australians passed down through generations continues to be an important and central part of the Australian heritage.

At Uniting Communities, we acknowledge that past wrongful policies and practices by the Australian Government and Churches, including the Uniting Church, resulted in the disempowerment and disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It caused intergenerational trauma that continues to impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ongoing discrimination resulting in the dispossession of lands, children and kin, languages and cultural identity.

In light of this Uniting Communities believes that we can assist by;

- Promoting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to control their destinies through self-determination,
- Valuing the significance and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories,
- Ensuring the delivery of culturally appropriate community services that assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to overcome disadvantage and marginalisation,
- Achieving stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



OUR BUSINESS

Uniting Communities is a significant not-for-profit community service and social justice organisation within South Australia with over 1,000 staff and 400 volunteers.

Uniting Communities provides a wide range of social services to support the needs of individuals and families in South Australia. These services include:

- **Housing and Homelessness Support:** Uniting Communities provides support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including emergency accommodation, transitional housing, and support to access longer-term housing solutions.
- **Family and Relationship Support:** Uniting Communities offers support to individuals and families experiencing relationship issues, parenting challenges, and other family-related concerns. This includes counselling, mediation, and support for children and young people.
- **Aged Care Services:** Uniting Communities provides a range of services to support older people, including home care packages, respite care, and social activities to promote social connections and wellbeing.
- **Disability Services:** Uniting Communities offers support to people with disabilities, including accommodation, day programs, and individualised support to help people achieve their goals and live independently.
- **Mental Health Support:** Uniting Communities provides support to individuals experiencing mental health issues, including counselling, support groups, and activities that promote mental wellbeing.
- **Youth Services:** Uniting Communities offers a range of services for young people, including accommodation, counselling, employment support, and social activities to promote positive youth development.
- **Community Development and Advocacy:** Uniting Communities works with communities to address social issue, promote social justice, and advocate for policies and services that support community wellbeing.

Uniting Communities staff and volunteers are to be kind, bold and genuine as they enrich the lives and unite communities. You will see us through our quality service delivery, community work and influential advocacy.

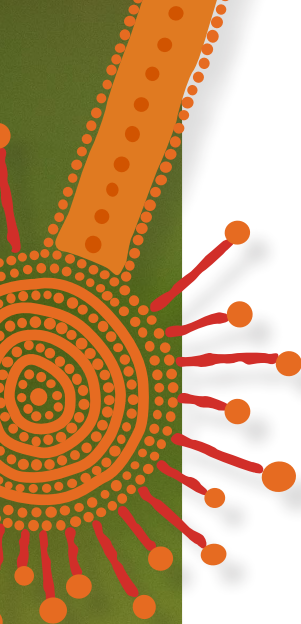
Uniting Communities provides social services from over 20 rural sites and 47 metropolitan Adelaide sites. We currently employ 19 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within our organisation.

Uniting Communities is well known for providing high quality services, with a focus on:

- Using customer voice and lived experience to inform service design,
- Peer engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- Allyship and cultural development.

Our new strategic objectives shape our organisations and includes;

- Ensuring our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are integral to our work, they feel safe, supported and empowered,
- Building Uniting Communities networks and partnerships to create positive change,
- Leading a movement to reduce chronic loneliness across the South Australian population,
- Delivering new solutions to entrenched problems through innovation, prevention and early intervention,
- Being a fierce and effective advocate for the community that we represent, in public policy discussions with government, in the media, and in the services we provide.



OUR CURRENT RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Uniting Communities' journey toward reconciliation formally began in 1997 when we recognised and apologised for our role in relation to the Stolen Generation, and in particular, for the impacts of dislocation on children from Croker Island who were placed at Lentara Children's Home. Our Board apologised "to all of the Aboriginal people impacted by this decision and for our failure to prevent the destruction of family life and dispossession of the Indigenous nations." (Adelaide Central Mission, Board minutes).

From the early 2010s, Uniting Communities had a working group which worked on addressing racism and progressing reconciliation. At that time our work was particularly framed by a racism workshop for staff facilitated by Ngarrindjeri cultural consultant Sharon Gollan. This work had a profound impact on our staff and provided an impetus that kept this group active until we moved to developing our RAP and the committees which support it.

In 2018 we drafted and presented our first RAP. We formally created our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Forum. Both these groups have grappled with keys especially the barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention as well as providing services that are relevant and useful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff using a supportive peer approach, rather than a top down professional approach. From 2018, we began gathering data on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff we have in our organisation.

Our most recent RAP was an Innovate plan from 2020-2022. In this period, we appointed our first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Manager to assist us in our reconciliation work. We saw increased numbers of staff participating in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC and we spoke publicly and positively for the need for a shared national day.





OUR GOVERNANCE

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

Uniting Communities has a well-established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee. It is comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, non-Indigenous staff, the Chief Executive and the Executive Manager of our People Brand and Assurance. The Governance Committee is the formal meeting which brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representatives together with the Chief Executive, the Executives and other leaders of Uniting Communities.

The development and monitoring of the progress of our RAP is undertaken by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee Membership of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee is:

Chief Executive:

- Simon Shrapel AM (Co-Chair)

The Executive of People and Culture OR The Executive of Community Services:

- Richard Laidlaw

Three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:

- Alec Wanganeen (Co-Chair)
- Donna Betterman
- Robert Spann

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development Manager:

- Kveta Vlotman
- Keisha Milera

Two Uniting Communities staff who are committed to bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business to the forefront at Uniting Communities:

- Abram Cuneen
- Julian Tea

Administration support is provided to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee by Project Officer Peter McDonald.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee appoints staff to the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

Those staff currently consist of Michael Turner (Co-Chair of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee), Peter McDonald (Project Officer: Reconciliation and the Uniting Church) and Kveta Vlotman (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development Manager:

- Kveta Vlotman
- Keisha Milera

Co-Chair Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee:

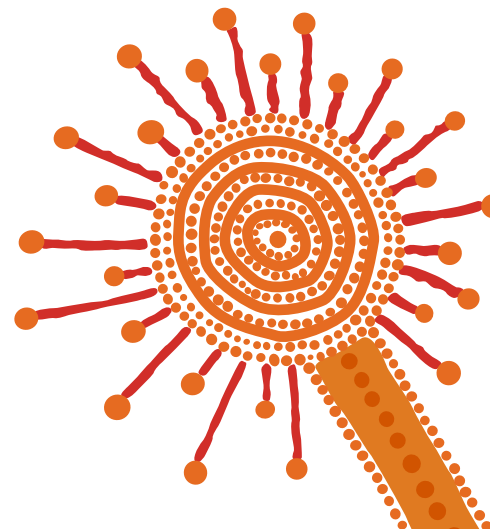
- Michael Turner

Project Officer and RAP Champion:

- Peter McDonald

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF FORUM:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff forum meets at least quarterly and is an open group for any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend if they wish. This is the space where important topics for discussion move back between the Forum and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee. The group is convened by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development Manager Kveta Vlotman.



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT FROM OUR MOST RECENT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (2020-2022)

In the most recent RAP we saw the positive impact of our communications about NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week. We have seen a significant increase in participation in these events. While there is still more to be done, we genuinely believe that we are gaining the hearts and minds of those staff who have disengaged from reconciliation in the past. We are experiencing the value of appointing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development into the life of Uniting Communities. We have seen a strong interest in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff led cultural awareness training with 54 staff participating in the course since its inception. And we have experienced the positive value of participating in wider networks e.g., UnitingCare Australia - First Nation's gathering. This is a gathering of the National Uniting where member organisations send key staff to gather in Canberra to bring together the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across the national network.

We continue to seek to improve our induction and support of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Our staff are telling us that their employment experience at Uniting Communities is not consistent. Some feel supported and understood while others feel isolated and not valued. What we have learned is that we need consistently and continually seek a positive response from our managers who are responsible for our employment practices.

Our new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development Manager, Kveta Vlotman and Keisha Milera organised a number of significant events and workshops which had our staff talking deeply with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff about the work which we need to do to deepen reconciliation. In this way we have made progress and heard the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

We are yet to make consistent process in making the actions of the RAP as a normal part of the work which Uniting Communities seeks to do. In some places we do it well with different areas of the business taking on the challenge and learning in a consistent manner. In our areas of the business there is room for improvement in the way we work our RAP goals into local areas plans.





OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN:

By seeking reconciliation and working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Uniting Communities moves toward healing, justice, self-determination and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

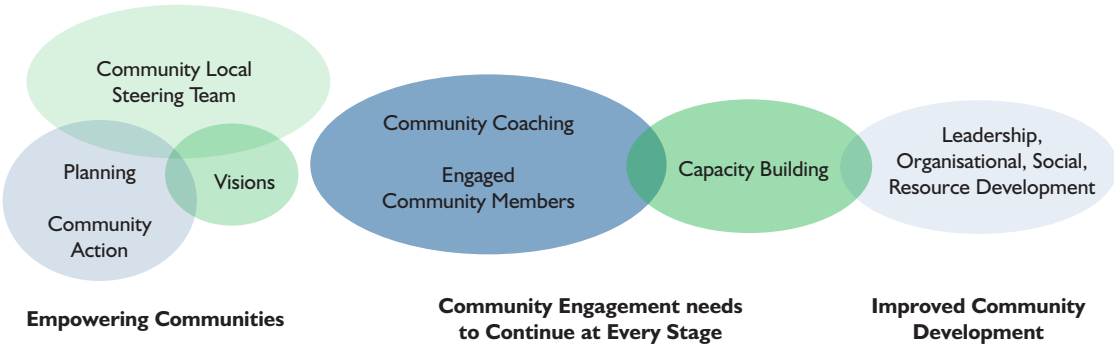
Due to the extensive range of services provided by Uniting Communities, and with our geographic coverage across the whole state, we have specific Aboriginal co-design and consultation process to ensure we are genuinely meeting the needs of Aboriginal communities. We have been continually told by the community that they want our consultation to be genuine and meaningful and to not undertake consultation unless we are prepared to listen and use the information gathered to inform the design of our programs. For those programs that have high representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, such as Homelessness, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) and Child Protection we undertake a more intensive consultation to ensure our services do not create barriers to access and are culturally safe. Three examples include:

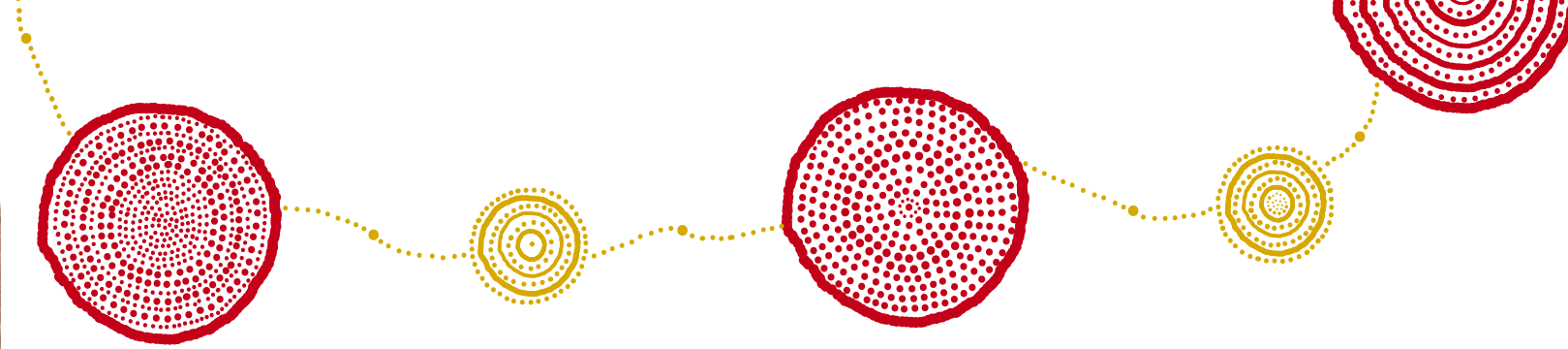
Aboriginal Community Connect:

Aboriginal Community Connect is an AOD services across metropolitan Adelaide, Murray Bridge, the Riverland and Mount Gambier. The first steps we undertook when setting up the service involved consultations with key community groups, Elders, and Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations. This included:

- Aboriginal Sobriety Group
- Burra Indigenous Corporation
- Ngarrindjeri Region Authority
- Regional Elders Authority – Murray Mallee Lands
- Riverland Community Health – Aboriginal Health Team
- Renmark Paringa Community Centre – Aboriginal Health and Counselling Services
- Pangula Mannamurna
- Kalparrin Board members
- Regional Aboriginal Elders Advisory Group – Murray Bridge
- Karparrinthe Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Centre
- Aboriginal AOD Council

From this process advisory groups were developed in each region to constantly provide advice on the ongoing operation of the service. The next step was developing our community engagement and community development model which underpins service delivery with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We learnt that, through community engagement, best practice for our staff is when culture is the starting point, rather than being one factor in service design that needs to be accommodated into a mainstream context. This means having cultural intelligence and experiencing cultural safety in the workplace and being able to sustain cultural practices, knowledge and protocols by ensuring and believing the cultural customs and practices. “Cultural authenticity” is considered essential for workforce development and positive service outcomes.





Newpin:

Newpin is a therapeutic service that restores children, six years and under, who have been removed by the child protection sector back home to their families. Data showed that nearly 50 per cent of referrals to the service would be for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Before hiring staff and opening any of our three centres we set up an Elders Steering group. The group initially started with five members but following a meeting with The Grannies Group it grew to 12 all of whom have a specific interest in the child protection system. The group meets three times per year. An example of the groups feedback includes the development of a men's worker roll at each centre. The group advised that to ensure each centre was culturally safe, men's business needed to be part of the model and that this needed to be addressed by a male worker. The service went back to the funder and requested a change of contract. One of the counselling positions was changed to a men's worker role, which has proven to be fundamental to the high degree of success the service has achieved in restoring children home to their families, particularly to single father families.

Adelaide North West Homelessness Alliance (ANWHA):

The Adelaide North West Homelessness Alliance (ANWHA) incorporates all homelessness funded organisations across metropolitan North and West Adelaide. Uniting Communities is one of seven organisations including an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) the Aboriginal Sobriety Group (ASG) who come together to improve housing and life outcomes for people experiencing and/or at risk of homelessness. ASG and Uniting Communities are the two organisations that specifically provide services for Aboriginal families and communities. In the Alliance, Uniting Communities has committed to provide ASG a high level of support to ensure their voice is heard within the Alliance. We recognise that by working together in genuine partnership based on mutual benefit and with specific, targeted actions, we have the greatest impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. To date this has included the co-development of a Cultural Safety Framework and a submission paper for culturally appropriate assessment processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Uniting Communities is developing a Stretch RAP for the 2023-2026 period. After consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group drafted and proposed the plan to the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee amended the Plan and sent it to the Executive. The Executive amended the Plan and sent it to the Board who approved the final version. This Stretch RAP has agreement from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Group, our Executive and our Board.

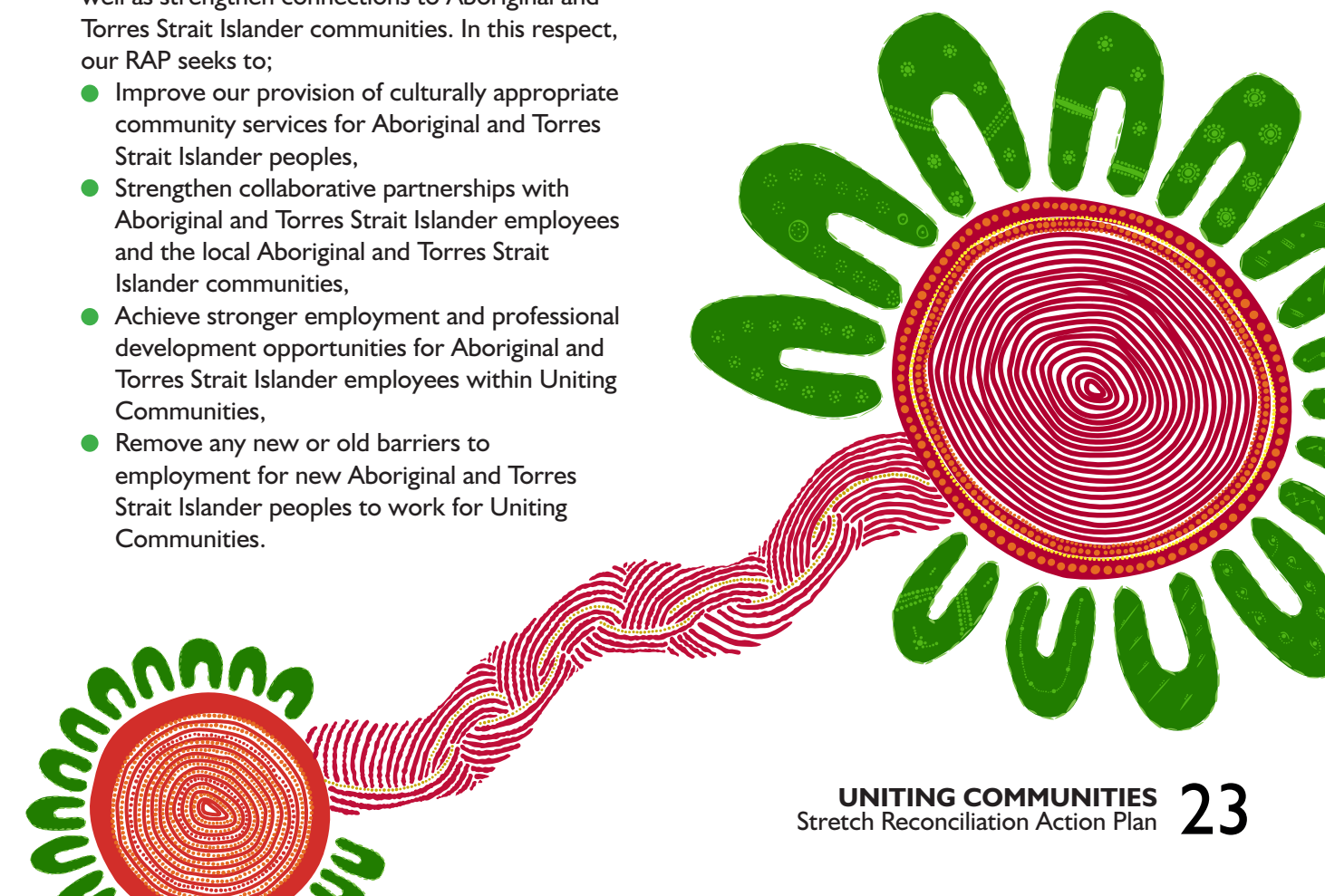
Through our RAP Uniting Communities will further improve relationships, respect and opportunities for Uniting Communities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and increase access to culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as strengthen connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In this respect, our RAP seeks to;

- Improve our provision of culturally appropriate community services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- Strengthen collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,
- Achieve stronger employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within Uniting Communities,
- Remove any new or old barriers to employment for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work for Uniting Communities.

The purpose of the Governance Committee is to strengthen collaboration between management, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure our actions are culturally informed and appropriate.

Each time the Governance Committee meets it always receives a report from the Forum. The Forum is a regular gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees where any concerns and opportunities to improve the practices of Uniting Communities are discussed. It is an important mechanism for strengthening connection and accountability to the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

Achieving our RAP goals is a shared responsibility for all our employees and volunteers and requires commitment across our entire organisation.



RELATIONSHIPS

Uniting Communities recognises that having strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is vital for the provision of services to disadvantaged and marginalised people and to ensure delivery of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee and Staff Forum play a central role in building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen 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 continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	Sept 2024	Chief Executive
	1.2 Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Apr 2024	Chief Executive
	1.3 The offices at Berri, Prospect, Murray Bridge, Mt Gambier, Pt Augusta, Pt Lincoln and city will meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and or organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement for each site. <i>This approach is different from 1.1 because each office has a local connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Item 1.3 is a local expression of item 1.1.</i>	Dec 2024	Executive Manager Community Services
	1.4 Maintain 15 formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations. Organisations may include Aboriginal Sobriety Group, ADAC/ AHC / Moogi Sumner dance group. The focus on new partnerships shall be on mainstream services.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	Chief Executive
	1.5 Seek feedback from communities on their experience of participating in the program and services provided to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Findings from the evaluation surveys and other feedback mechanisms will be used to inform our existing continuous improvement processes.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	RAP Working Group Co-Chairs

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	2.2 Ensure all Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Members participate in two external NRW events.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	2.3 Ensure two Board members attend annual National Reconciliation Week Breakfast.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Board Chairperson
	2.4 Encourage and support staff to participate in National Reconciliation Week (27 May-3 June).	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	2.5 Encourage staff to host 8 National Reconciliation Week events each year to celebrate National Reconciliation Week (27 May - 3 June).	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	2.6 Register all our National Reconciliation Week events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	Apr 2024 Apr 2025 Apr 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	2.7 Ensure all Uniting Communities Executives participate in at least one internal or external National Reconciliation Week event annually.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Chief Executive
	2.8 Promote National Reconciliation Week and share materials via our social media site and public facing website.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
3. Promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at internal staff audiences that includes at least five posts on our internal Uniting Communities staff intranet site each year and includes educating staff on the YES campaign and Uluru Statement.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive People and Culture
	3.2 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at internal staff audiences that posts on our progress on our RAP at least twice a year.	Oct 2024 Oct 2025	Executive People and Culture
	3.3 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at influencing the wider public to support reconciliation which includes at least four website posts each year.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive People and Culture
	3.4 Attend at least two quarterly RAP Leadership Gatherings per year.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Continuously improve HR People and Culture policies concerned with anti-discrimination (bullying and harassment policy).	Jul 2024	Executive People and Culture
	4.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve anti-discrimination policy.	May 2024	Executive People and Culture
	4.3 Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	Sep 2023 Sep 2024 Sep 2025	Executive Manager Community Services
	4.4 Encourage senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, or stances against racism.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	4.5 Communicate our anti-discrimination standards and policies to all employees and volunteers.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive People and Culture
	4.6 Seek opportunities to improve awareness of intersectionality and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, such as community and cultural background, sexuality, disability and age, across our internal and external communications plans.	Mar 2024 Mar 2025	Executive People and Culture

RESPECT

Uniting Communities acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We further acknowledge and respect the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise it is integral to Australian society. Acknowledging and respecting the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an essential requirement for Australian society. It is essential for reconciliation, justice, and a more inclusive and united nation. It is also vital for our collective future, as we face new challenges that require us to draw on the wisdom and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Our core business of delivering community services to disadvantaged and marginalized groups is underpinned by a commitment to embrace

and support cultural diversity. In this respect, Uniting Communities is committed to enriching lives. Accordingly, we actively encourage and support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in cultural events. We acknowledge the significance of the lived experience that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring to our organisation.

At Uniting Communities, we recognise that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and shared learning is critical to delivering culturally appropriate and safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Uniting Communities is also committed to strengthening respect for diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
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.	Jul 2024	Executive People and Culture
	5.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	Jul 2024	Executive People and Culture
	5.3 Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive People and Culture
	5.4 Ensure 100% attendance by Uniting Communities employees at the UC mandatory training workshop reintroduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This is a blended training environment which will includes on screen.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	Executive People and Culture
	5.5 Conduct formal and structured cultural learning in a face-to-face environment for Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members, HR managers, senior executive group and new staff.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	Executive People and Culture
	5.6 Ensure 5% of existing staff undertake formal and structured cultural learning in a face-to-face experience.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025 Jun 2026	Executive People and Culture
	5.7 Ensure all Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members participate in structured cultural learning.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025 Jun 2026	Co-Chair Reconciliation Action Working Group

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	6.1 Review our cultural protocol document which describes the purpose and importance of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country all formal staff and all Board meetings.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	6.2 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols through face-to-face workshops and easy to understand online video segments.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	6.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at 5 significant events each year.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Chief Executive
	6.4 Ensure staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	6.5 Display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque or other appropriate protocols in all eight of our office/s or on our buildings.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	6.6 Ensure Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols is listed as a standing agenda item for all staff meetings.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Chief Executive
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week.	7.1 Ensure Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee members participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	7.2 Review People and Culture policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	Apr 2024 Apr 2025 Apr 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	7.3 Encourage all staff to participate in external NAIDOC events in their local area, including NAIDOC week marches, and cultural awareness events by communicating opportunities.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025 Jun 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	7.4 In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support 4 external NAIDOC Week events each year.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	7.5 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at internal staff audiences that promotes NAIDOC and includes content from SBS and NITV in the lead up to NAIDOC week.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive People and Culture
	7.6 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at internal staff audiences that promotes NAIDOC and includes promotes events which staff might attend in their own time.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive People and Culture
	7.7 Reflect and review NAIDOC week activities and plan for next year's events.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance

OPPORTUNITIES

We are seeking opportunities to promote positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within and beyond Uniting Communities. Promoting positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within and beyond Uniting Communities has numerous benefits, including achieving social justice, promoting reconciliation, improving health and wellbeing, creating economic benefits, and enriching cultural diversity. Promoting positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can bring significant benefits to Uniting Communities, including improved reputation, increased cultural competence, greater staff engagement, enhanced organizational learning, and increased funding opportunities.

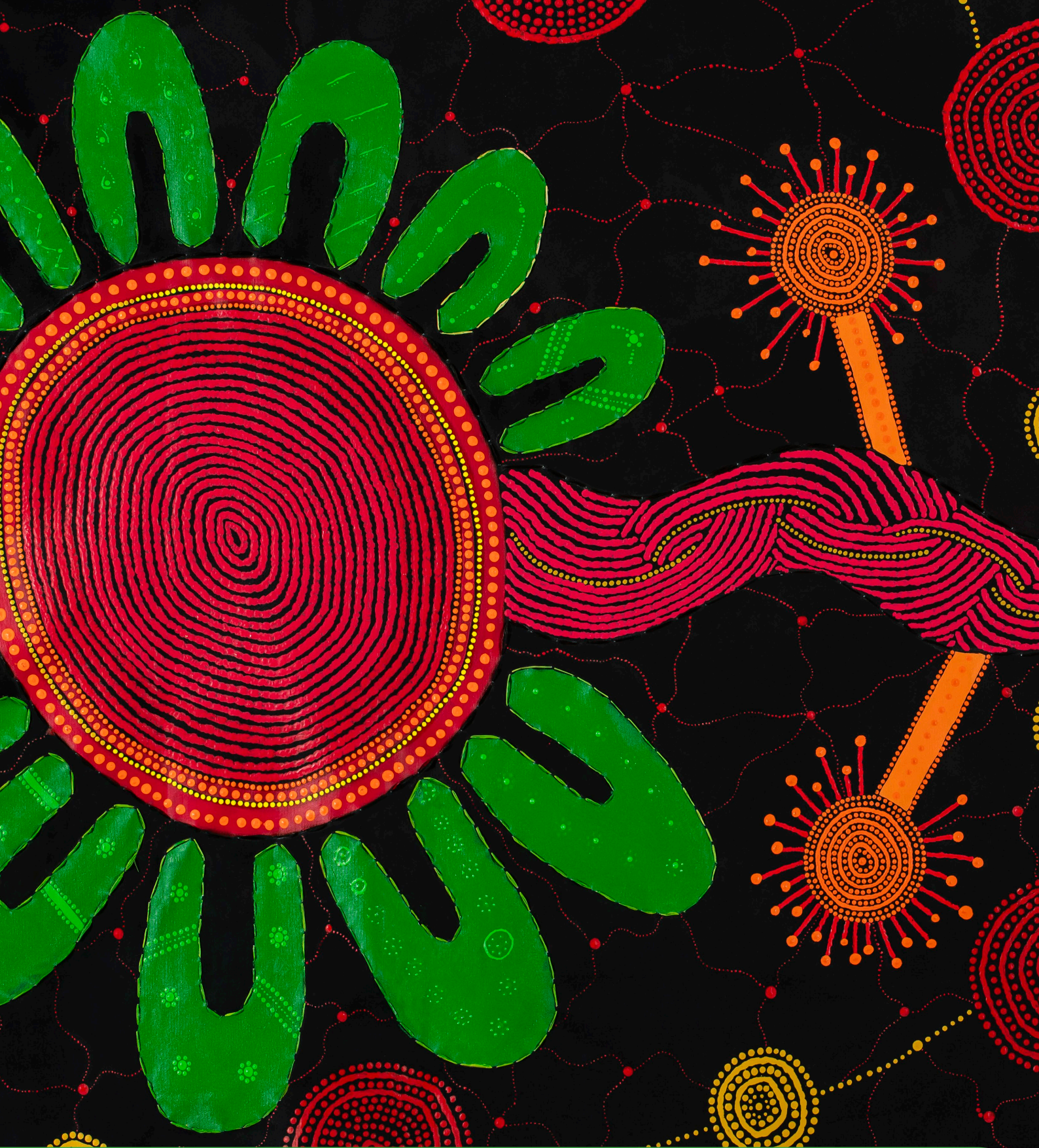
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	8.1 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention professional development strategy.	Dec 2023	Executive People and Culture
	8.2 Review and improve our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
	8.3 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
	8.4 Review People and Culture and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	July 2024	Executive People and Culture
	8.5 Support bespoke training needs as requested by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as they take on management and senior level positions.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
	8.6 Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in our workforce from 2.5% to 3.0% over the lifetime of the RAP.	Sep 2026	Executive People and Culture
	8.7 Report the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.	Feb, May, Aug, Nov annually	Executive People and Culture
	8.8 Identify and promote traineeships for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with both mainstream and specialist trainee providers.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
	8.9 Report the number of traineeships for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.	Feb, May, Aug, Nov annually	Executive People and Culture

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	9.1 Further develop and promote our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Apr 2024	Executive Corporate Services
	9.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Jan 2023	Executive Corporate Services
	9.3 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Executive Corporate Services
	9.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Feb 2024 Feb 2025 Feb 2026	Executive Corporate Services
	9.5 Maintain commercial relationships with 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Dec 2025	Executive Corporate Services
	9.6 Increase overall spend on goods and services purchased each year with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses from 0.37% to 0.5%.	Dec 2025	Executive Corporate Services
	9.7 Train all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	Oct 2024	Executive Corporate Services
10. Improve service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	10.1 Establish annual plans for all services including actions which seek to reduce barriers and improve client services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	10.2 Display a range of visual symbols, such as Acknowledgement of Country, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Indigenous Map and the Uluru Statement from the Heart in our corporate and regional offices.	Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	10.3 Seek information about communities' overall awareness of our services in order to identify gaps in promotion and in our service provision.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	RAP Working Group Co-Chairs
11. Improve partnerships with allies.	11.1 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at our likeminded allies by providing our policies and our organisational resources, learnings and guidelines.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive People and Culture
	11.2 Collaborate with two other organisations advance reconciliation activities.	Aug 2023 Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Executive People and Culture
12. Build strong external communications voice.	12.1 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at influencing the wider public to support reconciliation which includes at least five social media posts each year.	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Executive People and Culture
	12.2 Maintain a communication strategy aimed at influencing the wider public to support reconciliation which advocates for a national conversation around the date of Australia Day and encourage a respectful and informed discussion the topic.	Jan 2024 Jan 2025 Jan 2026	Executive People and Culture
	12.3 Ensure the Chief Executive publicly discusses the time for constitutional recognition and acknowledges the importance of the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> .	May 2024 May 2025 May 2026	Chief Executive
	12.4 Consult annually with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff about the future topics and content of our external communications.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025 Jun 2026	Executive People and Culture

GOVERNANCE

Well informed decisions and actions support our reconciliation efforts overall. Through good governance, reporting and staff representation, our strategy and action plan will be managed by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee. This committee oversees the strategic progress of the Reconciliation Action Plan across the whole organisation. The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group works at the detail level, ensuring the commitments made are followed through by staff at Uniting Communities. Both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance Committee and the Reconciliation Action Plan Working group have had a direct hand at the cycle designing a plan, completing its implementation and then seeking to learn from our failures and successes.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to drive governance of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	13.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	Feb 2024 Feb 2025 Feb 2026	Chief Executive
	13.2 Review the Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	Feb 2024	Chief Executive
	13.3 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group meets at least four times per year to drive and monitor Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	Nov 2023 Nov 2024 Nov 2025	Co-Chairs Reconciliation Working Group
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	14.1 Embed resource needs for Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025 Jul 2026	Chief Executive
	14.2 Embed key Reconciliation Action Plan actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Chief Executive
	14.3 Embed appropriate systems to track, measure and report on Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	14.4 Maintain an internal Reconciliation Action Plan Champion from senior management.	Dec 2023	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	14.5 Include our Reconciliation Action Plan as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	Dec 2023	Chief Executive
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	15.1 Complete and submit the annual Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Sep 2024 Sep 2025 Sep 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	15.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date.	Jun annually	Project Officer
	15.3 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	Aug annually	Project Officer
	15.4 Report Reconciliation Action Plan progress to senior leaders half yearly.	Oct 2023, Apr and Oct 2024, Apr and Oct 2025, Apr 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	15.5 Publicly report against our Reconciliation Action Plan commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	15.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer.	May 2024 May 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	15.7 Report Reconciliation Action Plan goals and achievements to the board in 6 monthly reports	Oct 2023 Apr and Oct 2024, Apr and Oct 2025, Apr 2026	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance
	15.8 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Sep 2026	Project Officer
16. Continue our Reconciliation journey by developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	16.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	Sep 2025	Executive Manager - People, Brand & Assurance



RAP Project Officer
Peter McDonald
RAP@unitingcommunities.org.au

