



**RURAL DOCTORS
ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2024 – September 2026

Message from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia congratulates Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) on continuing its reconciliation journey by formally endorsing RDAA's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Through this plan, RDAA continues to play an important role in a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Congratulations RDAA on this Reflect RAP, and I look forward to following your continuing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from the President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia



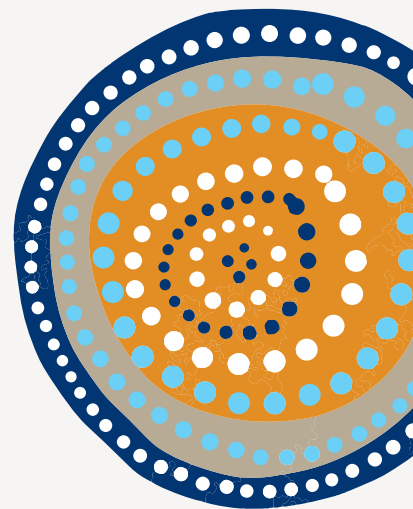
In committing to this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is taking another step on its reconciliation journey, recognising that acknowledging, understanding and respecting the traditions, cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and the whole population.

It reaffirms RDAA's commitment to supporting and working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations to redress health inequities and achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP provides an avenue for our organisation to maintain its focus on reconciliation through connection, respect and understanding as fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and the whole population. It provides a framework for taking meaningful action within its sphere of influence to advance reconciliation.

RDAA will continue to work constructively toward reconciliation through seeking greater understanding of history, furthering education, and tackling racism.

Dr RT Lewandowski
President
Rural Doctors Association of Australia



Our Vision

RDAA's vision for reconciliation is that:

- all Australians recognise that acknowledging, understanding and respecting the traditions, cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and the whole population, and is essential for a strong rural health sector and a strong healthy Australia
- meaningful, effective and sustainable relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stakeholders (including individuals, families and communities) are established and maintained within Australia's health system and society to underpin equity and social justice and improve health outcomes.

Our business

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) was formed in 1991. It is a respected national peak body representing the interests of all doctors working in rural* and remote areas and their patients and communities. It comprises the Rural Doctors Associations (RDA) of each State – with the Australian Capital Territory being included in RDA New South Wales (RDANSW) and members from the Northern Territory forming a special chapter within RDAA – representing rural doctors from across the country. State RDAs are autonomous entities that negotiate with government and other bodies in their own jurisdictions.

RDAA provides policy, advocacy and information services nationally and supports State and Territory RDA activities and members as required. RDAA consults widely to inform its activities and supports the work of other health stakeholders on common concerns and priorities. It also maintains a number of Special Interest Groups, including the Rural Specialists Group, the Female Doctors Group and the Doctors in Training Group.

RDAA believes that all Australians have the right to excellent medical care regardless of their postcode. It is essential that healthcare services be provided by doctors and other health professionals who have the necessary training and skills to meet the needs of their own communities to redress rural health inequities.

RDAA is a small organisation employing four staff (3.9 FTE) and two casual employees. The organisation does not currently employ any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

* Henceforth, the term "rural" includes areas classified as Modified Monash Model (MMM) 3-7. The MMM measures remoteness and population size on a scale of MMM1 (major cities) to MMM 7 (very remote). Classifications are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard – Remoteness Area (ASGS-RA) framework.

Our RAP

RDAA acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the RDAA office is located (Canberra) and the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia on which our members live and work, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging

RDAA recognises that health encompasses the physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and communities, and that reconciliation is critical to improving health outcomes, including life expectancy, for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The underpinning socio-economic, political and commercial determinants of health that have led to poorer health outcome must be addressed.

RDAA believes that as a national peak health body it is important to be proactive in supporting and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations to lead efforts to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The widely recognised inequities that exist with respect to access to health services and in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been a concern of RDAA, its state member organisations (and their individual members) for many years.

RDAA also believes that it is important to act as a leader and champion of efforts to redress health inequities within our own sphere of influence through our organisational policies, positions and advocacy activities. Historically, RDAs in various States have played a pivotal role in the development of the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula and in lobbying to ensure they became part of mainstream systems. Nationally, RDAA has also been involved in policy development and supporting the delivery of medical care to improve the health status of First Australians and seeks to continue and expand on this work into the future.

Through its policy and advocacy work, including media, RDAA works to address this need and the Closing the Gap targets outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>.

This Reflect RAP is RDAA's third RAP developed to provide direction to the organisation's reconciliation journey.

Since the inception of its first Reflect RAP and the establishment of a RAP Working Group (RWG), RDAA has continued to seek and maintain strong relationships with individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and key organisations within the health sector, and raise awareness of issues related to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, especially in rural areas.

RDAA has also formally endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The advent COVID-19 pandemic and its continuing impact on the health sector created a number of challenges, including maintaining relationships between individuals and organisations. Throughout this period, RDAA continued to raise awareness of the health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (including in relation to COVID-19) through its policy and advocacy work.

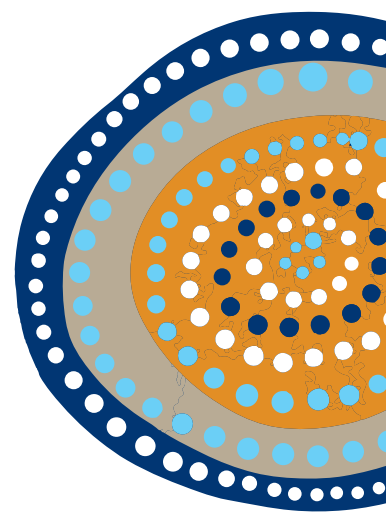
As the situation continues to stabilise, RDAA is developing this next RAP as an important step in its efforts to support reconciliation. Re-establishing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, and continuing policy and advocacy will be a key part of this.

Our partnerships/ current activities

RDAA works to raise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and equity issues in through its policy and advocacy work, and through member education and support activities. RDAA also has an ongoing relationship with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA).

Activities include:

- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to inform submissions and policy
- Utilising media channels to highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues, events, education and training opportunities and resources, including through our weekly newsletter
- Participating in meetings and forums and raising issues pertinent to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in rural communities
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences, perspectives and content are included in events and conferences, such as the National Rural Maternity Services forum and the annual Rural Medicine Australia (which RDAA co-hosts with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine)
- Working with AIDA to offer subsidised cultural education to members.





Relationships

Existing approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health have had a limited effect in improving health outcomes and life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those who live in rural areas. RDAA believes that building strong connections between individuals and organisations promotes shared understanding and purpose, and fosters the collaborative efforts necessary to redress these unacceptable health inequities is an important part of our work to improve access to health professionals and services, and health outcomes in rural Australia.

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"> Identify and seek to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders within our local area or sphere of influence (ongoing). 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders (ongoing). 	February 2025, February 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff and to our broader membership through our weekly newsletter. 	May 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May–3 June, 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May–3 June, 2025, 2026	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff including by implementing a range of strategies to engage our staff and members in reconciliation activities such as through our media and social media presence and participation in meetings and other forums (ongoing). 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through publication of our RAP on our website and by utilising our media and social media channels to raise awareness (ongoing). 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	Media and Public Affairs Manager

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence <i>(continued)</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues to seek opportunities to engage and collaborate with external organisations to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by seeking feedback on or providing input into relevant submissions (ongoing). 	<p>October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026</p>	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey (ongoing). 	<p>October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026</p>	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that during the development of RDAA policy, position statements and submissions the unique challenges and impacts on the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Close the Gap targets and outcomes, are considered and reflected as appropriate (ongoing). 	<p>October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026</p>	Senior Policy Advisor
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	February 2025, February 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures as part of the organisation's review cycle to maintain existing anti-discrimination provisions, and inform future needs. 	October 2024, 2025	CEO



Respect

RDAА believes that respecting the traditions, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and must be a key concern of health service policy, provision and delivery in rural Australia.

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"> Ensure that there is an item within the organisational budget for expenditure on increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	June 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review cultural learning needs within our organisation and broader membership annually. 	October 2024, 2025 October 2024, 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to facilitate online competency and cultural safety training for RDAА and RDA staff, Board directors, state committee members and broader membership. 	October 2024, 2025 October 2024, 2025	CEO
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff and members to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually review and continue to implement and communicate the organisation's cultural protocol document, including using Acknowledgement of Country and other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. 	February 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff, Board directors, state committees and members about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 	First week in July 2025, 2026	Media Advisor and Senior Project Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	June 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	First week in July, 2025, 2026	CEO



Opportunities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is a key part of rural health. Work to improve access to culturally appropriate health services through education and training and continuing professional development, and to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health care professions are critical aspects of this.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review words related to encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for positions, including casual positions, and implement in any future job advertisements. 	July 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing in the health professions to inform future employment and professional development opportunities (ongoing). 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work of the AIDA and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to increase the numbers of trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and other health professionals in Australia (ongoing) 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing in the health professions to inform future employment and professional development opportunities (ongoing). 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses is considered. 	March 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the meeting and event organiser/s to consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and services for meetings and events. 	March 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a link to the Supply Nation website to members annually. 	February 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor

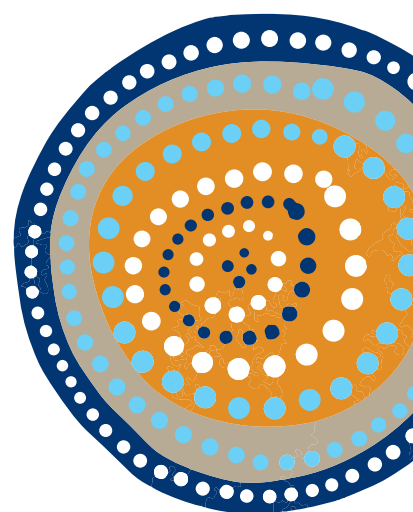


Governance

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"> Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	October 2024, 2025	Senior Policy Advisor
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	June 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain CEO on RWG as the senior leader championing our RAP internally. 	February 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	October 2024	Senior Policy Advisor
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders at least quarterly. 	October, December 2024 February, April, June, August, October, December 2025 February, April, June, August 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally (<i>continued</i>).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September 2025, 2026	Senior Policy Advisor
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	June 2026	Senior Policy Advisor





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