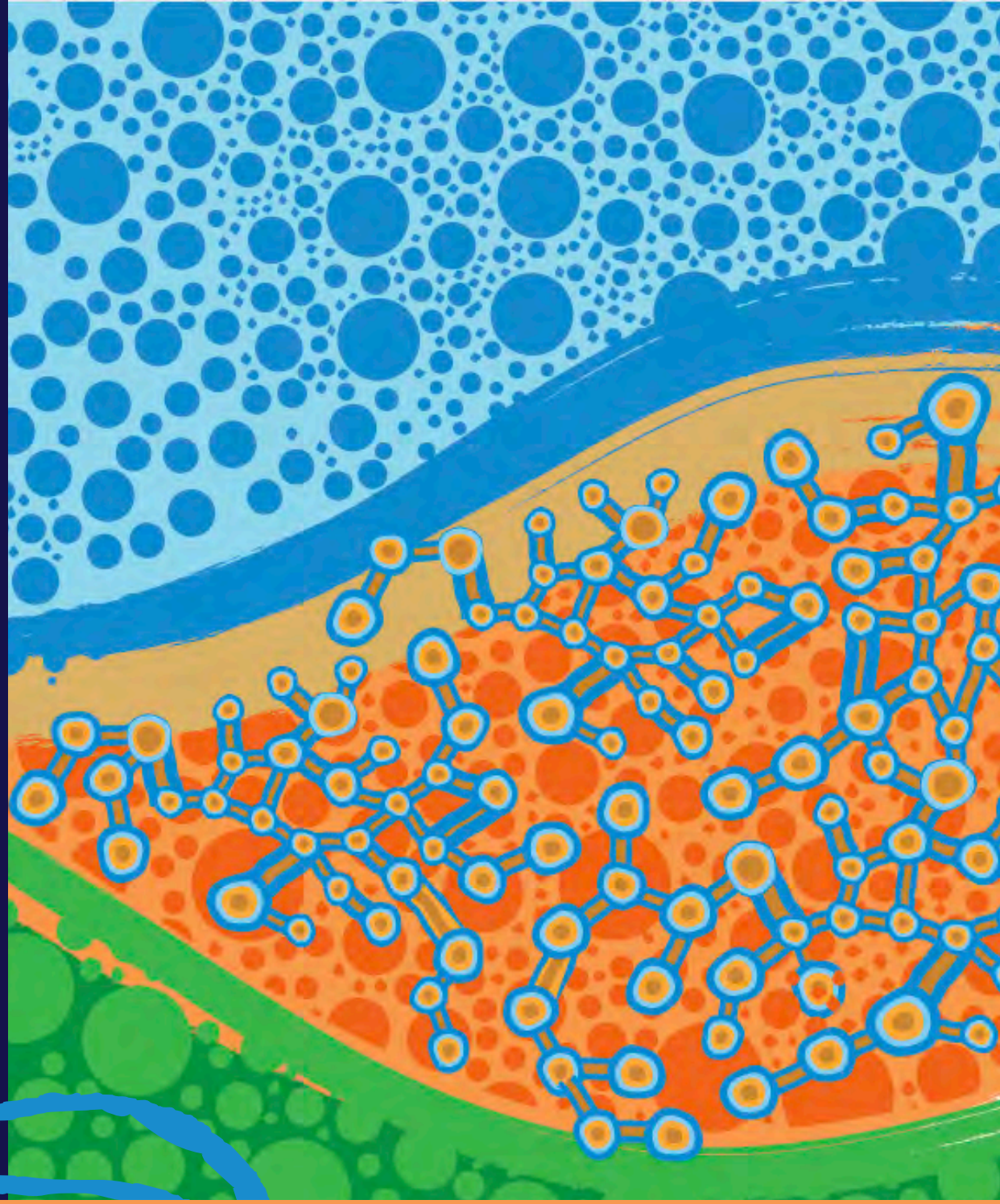
North Eastern
COMMUNITY
HOSPITAL
& AGED CARE

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2025 – June 2027

RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE



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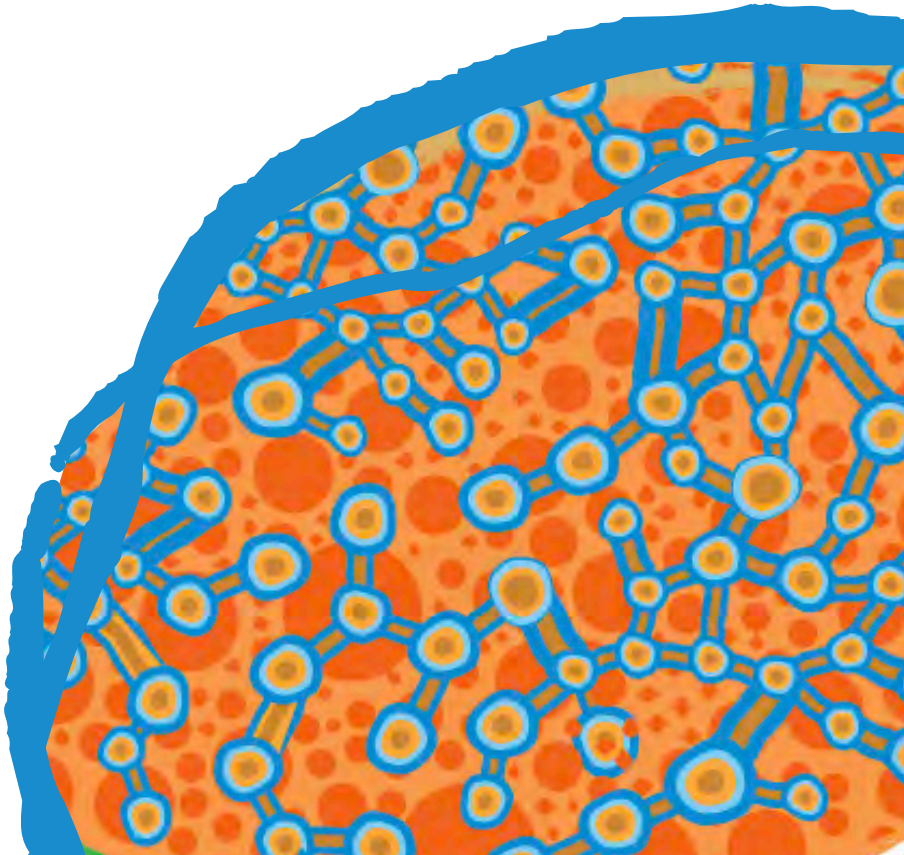
Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kaurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, learn, and work. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging and recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture, and community.

We honour the wisdom and knowledge that has been nurtured on this land for tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation and commit to the work of truth-telling, learning, and unlearning. We strive to walk alongside First Nations peoples with respect, humility, and a commitment to justice.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



OUR RECONCILIATION ARTWORK

Connection

Original artwork commissioned by Pat Caruso demonstrates the rich connection North Eastern Community Hospital interweaves to our community. Pat brought to life our NECH logo with the symbolism of hills, land and ocean.

"The overall visual illustrates the Metro landscape of Adelaide form the hills through the plain, across to the ocean. This represents the catchment areas for the hospital and the reach of it's services. The symbol of the Rosella leads this art piece as it is the most identifiable icon of the hospital, and the landscapes are falling under the shelter of the wingspan of the Rosella, further signifying the care and safety provided by NECH. Almost symbolic of a mother's care.

The circles and travel icons symbolise the people and their movements across the landscape, and the varying sizes and shapes identify various community groups within this service model, in particular the First Nations People.

The travel lines also represent the connection between families and their networks who have used NECH services and aged care."

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is that we have a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience true equity in health and aged care—supported by culturally safe services, a representative workforce, and strong partnerships with First Nations-led organisations.

Our Business

North Eastern Community Hospital (NECH) and Aged Care is a not-for-profit, community-owned organisation located in the inner north-eastern suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide. Established in September 1973 by a group of visionary general practitioners with the support of two local councils, NECH was built on a foundation of collaboration, care, and commitment to the community. Today, we proudly provide essential health and aged care services to people across Adelaide and beyond.

NECH operates a 60-bed acute hospital offering a wide range of services, including general surgery, gastroenterology, and inpatient care. Each year, we treat over 8,000 patients, with approximately 1.5% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Co-located with the hospital is our 84-bed residential aged care facility, which includes a 23-bed memory support unit dedicated to residents living with dementia.

As a community-owned entity, NECH reinvests all profits back into the organisation. This ensures we can continue improving our services, facilities, and workforce to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Our mission is underpinned by values of quality, compassion, respect, and accountability, and we are deeply committed to delivering inclusive, patient-centred care that enhances wellbeing across all life stages.

With more than 300 dedicated staff, we know that our people are central to creating a culture of safety, inclusion, and excellence. While we are proud of the cultural diversity within our workforce, we acknowledge that representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remains critically low. At present, we are aware of one team member who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

As a provider of health and aged care, we recognise that equitable access to healthcare is not just important—it is essential. We are committed to doing our part to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Developing and implementing our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is a vital step in this journey. The RAP will help us take a strategic, whole-of-organisation approach to reconciliation—informing how we build culturally safe services, strengthen our workforce, engage with Indigenous communities, and ensure our policies and practices support health equity for all.

Message from the CEO

North Eastern Community Hospital is the rich tapestry of history and time. Our community, our staff are built on the foundations of support and care. Our commitment is to acknowledge the impact of colonisation on our First Nations People. We need to actively lead the journey as South Australians, and as providers of health and aged care services, in removing racism, be respectful of their background and build a culturally safe healthcare system.

Our role is to not define the strategy, our role is to engage to understand how we can be levers for change and support the unlearning journey for allyship.

We welcome the opportunity to reflect on our achievements since the first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) from 2021 and to build on the progress with our Innovate RAP. NECH is building an active culture of learning and unlearning, understand and engaging. It will be led across the organisation to develop strategies to support our First Nations People in their workplace, in the community and in our health and aged care services.

We have ambitious plans, but no greater than the challenges our Indigenous Peoples have faced for many years.

I am proud to lead our organisation in this renewed RAP to continue our journey and our commitment to eliminate racism and create a culturally safe place for all.

Cara Miller
CEO

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends North Eastern Community Hospital on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

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

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

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

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

With over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. North Eastern Community Hospital is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

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

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

Congratulations North Eastern Community Hospital on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our Reconciliation Journey

North Eastern Community Hospital acknowledges that our reconciliation journey has been steady but modest to date. While we previously developed a Innovate RAP, we recognise that limited progress was made in advancing the commitments outlined in that plan. Despite our genuine intentions, challenges such as competing operational priorities, limited internal capacity, COVID disruption, and a need for greater cultural awareness across the organisation meant that reconciliation work did not gain the traction it deserved.

However, these early efforts laid a foundational awareness and sparked important internal conversations about the need for structural and cultural change. One of the key learnings from our earlier RAP experience was that reconciliation cannot be a standalone project—it must be embedded across all levels of leadership, strategy, and service delivery. We have come to understand that a sustained commitment requires not only formal planning but also cultural humility, strong governance, and continuous engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To date, our engagement with reconciliation has included informal partnerships with local Aboriginal health workers and participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week through internal events and reflections, which have helped build staff understanding and willingness to engage more deeply. These small but meaningful activities have shown us the power of listening and the importance of creating safe spaces for learning and dialogue.

With the development of our Innovate RAP, we are now committed to being proactive and accountable in our reconciliation journey. We aim to move beyond symbolic gestures and embed reconciliation into our policies, practices, and culture. This includes building and strengthening formal relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, increasing procurement from Indigenous businesses, improving pathways to employment and retention, and ensuring our healthcare services are culturally safe and inclusive.

This RAP marks a turning point for our organisation—a renewed commitment to reconciliation that is action-oriented, collaborative, and aligned with our mission to deliver equitable and compassionate care. This also includes the formalising of our staff-led Reconciliation Working Group where we are determined to learn from the past, act in the present, and build a better future for the communities we serve

Our RAP Our Vision for Change

North Eastern Community Hospital is committed to bridging the gap in health inequity by listening deeply, learning continuously, and unlearning where needed. Our Innovate RAP reflects our responsibility to build respectful, informed relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Reconciliation for us means creating a culturally safe and inclusive health and aged care service—one that listens to the needs of our environment, our team, and the people we care for.

We are working towards a future where proportional health outcomes are achieved through shared goals, mutual respect, and a deeper understanding of the social determinants of health. Through a team-based, person-centred approach, we aim to strengthen trust, improve access, and ensure that our services contribute meaningfully to the health, wellbeing, and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our RAP is a crucial step in this journey—guided by listening, learning, and genuine collaboration.

Our Innovate RAP was developed through a collaborative process involving managers, senior department leaders, consumers, and our staff member who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. This inclusive approach ensured that diverse perspectives were considered and that the plan reflects the values, needs, and aspirations of both the organisation and the communities it serves. By engaging a broad range of voices, the RAP is grounded in genuine consultation and shared commitment to meaningful and respectful reconciliation.

N Nurture understanding and unlearning

E Eliminate racism

C Consult with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stakeholders

H Harmonise

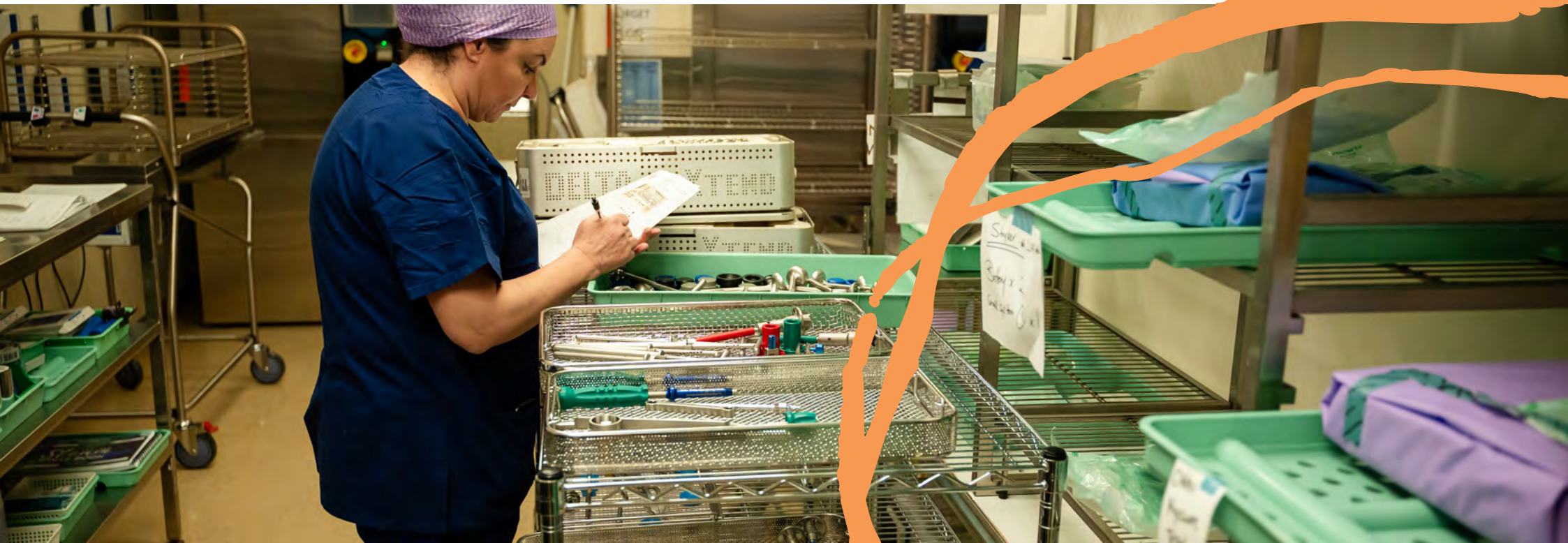
Led by the Chief Executive Officer as our RAP Champion and Executive Leadership we will ensure our RAP remains dynamic and a key focus through all we do.

- Chief Executive Officer
- Manager in Hospital
- Manager in Aged Care
- Staff member who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- Staff member who is committed to supporting reconciliation and anti-racism in our organisation
- A member of the public who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person / or has a demonstrated professional or personal interest in health equity for Indigenous peoples and reconciliation

Our RAP Working Group includes one staff member who identifies as Aboriginal and has expressed a willingness to be actively involved. Their participation brings valuable insight and lived experience to the group, helping to ensure that the development and implementation of our RAP is culturally informed, respectful, and meaningful.

Relationships

At North Eastern Community Hospital, we believe that strong, respectful, and authentic relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations are essential to achieving genuine reconciliation. Building these relationships is not only aligned with our values as a community-focused health and aged care provider, but also critical to improving health outcomes and social equity.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• To identify strategic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to assist in the development of strategies and goals for our ongoing commitment to our RAP with the mantra of 'nothing about us, without us'.	**September 2025**	**All departmental managers**
	• Meet with Campbelltown City Council's Reconciliation Advisory Committee to discuss strengthening our relationships for indigenous led events.	**July 2026**	**CEO**
	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	**July 2026**	**CEO**
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	**May 2026, 2027**	**Executive Officer**
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event to further engage with broader access to affiliated organisations.	**27 May – 3 June 2026, 2027**	**CEO**
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	**27 May – 3 June 2026, 2027**	**HR Manager**
	• Organise at least one NRW event each year.	**May, annually**	**CEO/Exec**
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	**March 2026**	**CEO**
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation through our website and report in our Annual Report.	**August 2025**	**CEO**
	• Seek to attend the Campbelltown City Council Reconciliation Advisory Committee meeting at least once a year and collaborate on initiatives to advance reconciliation	**Sept 2025**	**CEO**
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	**Sept 2025**	**CEO/Exec**
	• Develop our NECH branding that supports reconciliation and our commitment to having a 'whole of organisation' approach	**March 2026**	**CEO**
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our policies to ensure that they represent the understanding and our commitment to anti-discrimination for our First Nations Peoples'.	**Dec 2025**	**CEO/Exec**
	• Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation including our mandatory training for cultural safety.	**Sept 2025**	**HR Manager**
	• Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism through external facilitated education annually.	**Sept 2026**	**HR Manager**

Respect

Our learning and unlearning will be the foundations for eliminating racism in healthcare for our First Nations Peoples. Understanding the decades of knowledge, culture, histories and rights is necessary to support our First Nations journey to be one that is safe respectfully and culturally aware.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	· Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Dec 2025	HR Manager
	· Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy and how this can be strengthened for both our hospital and aged care services.	June 2026	CEO
	· 100% of staff to complete Cultural Safety Training by 1 July each year	March annually	HR Manager
	· Investigate cultural immersion opportunities for staff	June 2026	CEO HR Manager
	· Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	Dec 2025	CEO
	· Commission Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people/person artwork that represents the acknowledgement of culture and history	Dec 2025	CEO
Delivering accessible and equitable healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	· Seek feedback from patients who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander on whether our services provided in a culturally safe environment	Jan 2026	Director of Clinical Services
	· Build on our services being culturally safe to deliver equitable and compassionate care by identifying initiatives lead by feedback.	Jan 2026	Director of Clinical Services
	· RAP Working Group to oversee the feedback and initiatives to ensure our commitment to providing culturally safe healthcare.	Sept 2026	CEO
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	· Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols to be implemented for all meetings and gatherings.	Dec 2025	CEO
	· Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	Sept 2025 Sept 2026	CEO
	· Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	As required	CEO
	· Develop a ‘learning by un-learning day’ which hosts a range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people/person stakeholders to educate, led discussions in an interactive forum onsite for staff and management.	March 2026	CEO
	· Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of the organisations Governance Committee meetings.	Sept 2025	CEO
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	· RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2026	CEO
	· Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Dec 2025	HR Manager
	· Staff led NADOC week education and awareness – including introducing lanyards and lapel pins	Sept 2025	Management

Opportunities

North Eastern Community Hospital is committed to advancing reconciliation by creating sustainable and culturally appropriate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through our Innovate RAP, we are focused on strengthening relationships, improving access to healthcare, and embedding inclusive practices across employment, procurement, and service delivery. We aim to support long-term outcomes by building a culturally competent workforce, partnering with Indigenous businesses, and ensuring our systems are accessible and responsive to community needs. This reflects our commitment to meaningful engagement and driving positive change within our sphere of influence.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	· Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	**March 2026**	**CEO**
	· Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	**Sept 2025**	**CEO**
	· Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	**Dec 2025**	**HR Manager**
	· Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	**March 2026**	**CEO**
	· Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	**Sept 2025**	**HR Manager**
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	· Review, update and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation wide procurement strategy.	**June 2026**	**CEO / Store Manager**
	· Investigate Supply Nation membership.	**March 2026**	**CEO**
	· Complete our Indigenous Medicinal Garden Project creating a Yarning Circle and an outdoor space.	**March 2026**	**CEO**
	· Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff	**Dec 2026**	**CEO/Store Manager**
	· Measure annually our commitment to using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses in procurement of goods and services	**June annually**	**CEO/DFCS**
	· Commission our second original art for NECH that captures our need to respect the culture of yarning symbolising our need to consult and engage to build a better health service	**Sept 2025**	**CEO/Exec**

Governance

We are committed to embedding strong governance in our Innovate RAP by ensuring clear accountability and transparent decision-making in the delivery of health initiatives. Our focus is on strengthening equitable access to culturally safe services that improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will continually review and report on our progress to uphold our RAP commitments and drive lasting, positive change.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	· Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	June, Sept & Dec 2025 Quarterly in 2026	CEO
	· Draft and establish a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Sept 2025	CEO
	· Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Sept 2025	CEO
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	· Define resource needs for RAP implementation, including team champions throughout the organisation.	Sept 2025	DCO
	· Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Sept 2025	CEO
	· Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Dec 2025	EA to CEO
	· Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management	July, annually	Management
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	· 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 annually	EA to CEO
	· Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	EA / CEO
	· Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August annually	EA / CEO
	· Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly and through our annual report.	June, Sept, Dec 2025 March, June, Sept, Dec 2026	CEO
	· Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	Mar 2026	CEO
	· Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP	June 2027	EA / CEO
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Jan 2027	CEO

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