



**ST VINCENT'S**  
Better and fairer care. Always.  
UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES



# Stretch

## Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2025 – February 2028



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**STRETCH**





Better and  
fairer care.  
**Always.**

Neenan Simpson leading a traditional Smoking Ceremony at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst for National Reconciliation Week 2024.

## Statement of Acknowledgement

St Vincent's acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect historical and continuing spiritual connections to Country and community and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. As a health and aged care provider, we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.



**Cultural Disclaimer:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images or content referring to deceased persons. It may also contain words or descriptions that may be deemed culturally insensitive. We reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples respectfully, however there may be instances where we use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for example, in reference to a specific program or organisation. We also understand that there is a growing movement to reference identity to specific Traditional Nations or language groups and will accommodate this preference where possible.



# Message from our CEO

**St Vincent's has long sought to play a leading role in achieving genuine reconciliation in Australia. It's a commitment that is important to our organisation, the people and communities we serve, and the broader nation.**

We were one of the first health and aged care organisations in Australia to launch a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2010. More recently, we took a public lead in announcing our support for a 'Yes' vote in 2023's referendum to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice (The Voice) to Parliament.

Since the launch of our previous Stretch RAP five years ago, St Vincent's has almost doubled the number of team members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Importantly, this success will have a positive impact on the health of these individuals, their families and communities.

And when measured against our organisational spend during the first six months of 2020, our procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses has grown by more than 50 per cent to 0.13% of total spend. Procurement continues to be a priority for us on our path to reconciliation.

While we're proud of these achievements, we recognise that they are only signposts on a much longer journey that has a significant way to go.

After the Voice referendum in 2023, my message to our 30,000 St Vincent's team members was that St Vincent's would continue to do the work we had always done – with the same determination and inclusive spirit – to provide excellent and compassionate health and aged care to the people and communities that rely on us. I also promised that our longstanding commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would never waver.

St Vincent's third Stretch RAP, 2025-2028, is further evidence of that commitment.

Our approach is clear. We will focus on enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, clients, and residents. We will recruit more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members and improve the employment journey for those who have already joined us; and we will continue to engage in cross-organisational education for all team members, enabling culturally safe environments in our workplaces for healing and growth.

And we've made sure that the ambitions of our plan are firmly embedded within our recently refreshed organisational strategy. They are central to our future direction as Australia's largest not-for-profit health and aged care organisation and our promise to always provide better and fairer care.

Justice is a core St Vincent's value. And justice can't exist without historical truth-telling. St Vincent's recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience the ongoing consequences of almost 240 years of injustice and inequality.

As a national enterprise, we continue to move beyond good words to impactful actions. St Vincent's will do everything within its power to bring about true reconciliation and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Together we can co-create a more inclusive nation which rightfully celebrates the cultures and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and this land we call home.

**Chris Blake**  
Chief Executive Officer







# Message from National Director Reconciliation

**As Australia’s largest for-purpose provider of health and aged care services, St Vincent’s is committed to working for improved health and wellness outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We understand that this focus in turn contributes to strong equitable representation across all strata of society, strengthens communities and underpins human flourishing. These aspirational outcomes are right and just and befitting of the enduring status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

Reconciliation benefits all Australians. We are stronger together and privileged to learn, grow and serve through our relationships with one another. In accordance with our Reconciliation Action Plan, St Vincent’s aims to implement evidence-based, practical actions to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These actions prioritise equitable access to high quality, culturally safe health care services and strategic opportunities (e.g. employment, procurement) that in turn impact individuals and communities beyond the walls of our facilities.

St Vincent’s acknowledges the diversity and sophistication of cultural practices, customs, traditions, kinship, languages and spiritual beliefs connected to the land and sea – this understanding is foundational to our work. We believe that any support we provide must be culturally appropriate and guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and leaders. Our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership demonstrates this principle with integrity.

Our commitment to action prompts us to contribute to the next chapters in the Reconciliation story of our nation with courage and hope. In this work, we bear witness to and are gifted by the resilience, leadership and knowledges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Darlene Dreise**  
National Director Reconciliation



# Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

**On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate St Vincent's on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its third Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).**

Formed around the pillars of *relationships, respect, and opportunities*, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise.

As Australia's largest for-purpose provider of health and aged care services, the scope of St Vincent's Health Australia's sphere of influence is considerable. With this Stretch RAP, the focus is on enhanced outcomes for its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the areas of health and wellbeing; recruitment, retention and professional development; and education opportunities.

This renewed commitment is underpinned by the experience St Vincent's has garnered in previous RAPs. Notably, it has linked RAP deliverables to NSQHS Standards and best-practice in caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, reflecting its commitment to the cultural safety of its health services. Similarly, its Stay'n In, Stay'n Deadly service, worked to create culturally safe emergency departments that prioritise the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

These learnings will help sustain the progress of St Vincent's commitments in this RAP. Understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing outcomes are linked to culture and community, St Vincent's maintains its focus on culturally appropriate approaches such as accessibility, consent, and understanding related health factors. This commitment will be bolstered by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in trauma-informed care for clinical cohorts.

As a health service provider, St Vincent's is well positioned to drive considerable outcomes in one of the most important areas of reconciliation, equitable health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend St Vincent's on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





# Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision is that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person, whoever and wherever they are, is served with excellent and compassionate care, and by a better and fairer health and aged care system. We will make unique contributions towards our vision in three key areas:

- **CLINICAL:** Enhanced clinical and wellness outcomes;
- **EMPLOYMENT:** Improved recruitment, retention and development for team members, and
- **EDUCATION:** A commitment to the delivery of education opportunities prioritising the importance of cultural safety and which translates to improved care outcomes.



# Our Business

St Vincent's has been a leader in Australia's health and aged care landscape for more than 165 years. Since our founders, the Sisters of Charity, opened our first hospital in 1857, our services and people have been behind some of Australia's most important medical breakthroughs.

The Sisters also gave us a mission: to provide care to members of our community experiencing health and social inequities. Their courage and compassion has been a hallmark of St Vincent's since we began and is central to some of our proudest achievements.

St Vincent's today is Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of health and aged care services. With two major public health networks, 10 private hospitals, 25 residential aged care facilities, community and virtual care, and outreach programs across the eastern seaboard, we are a microcosm of Australia's health and aged care system and are uniquely positioned to lead and respond to our rapidly changing environment.

**Our Mission:** We express God's love through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are especially committed to people who experience health inequities.

**Our Vision:** Every person, whoever and wherever they are, is served with excellent and compassionate care, by a better and fairer health and aged care system.

**Our Values:** St Vincent's four core values are Compassion, Justice, Integrity, Excellence.

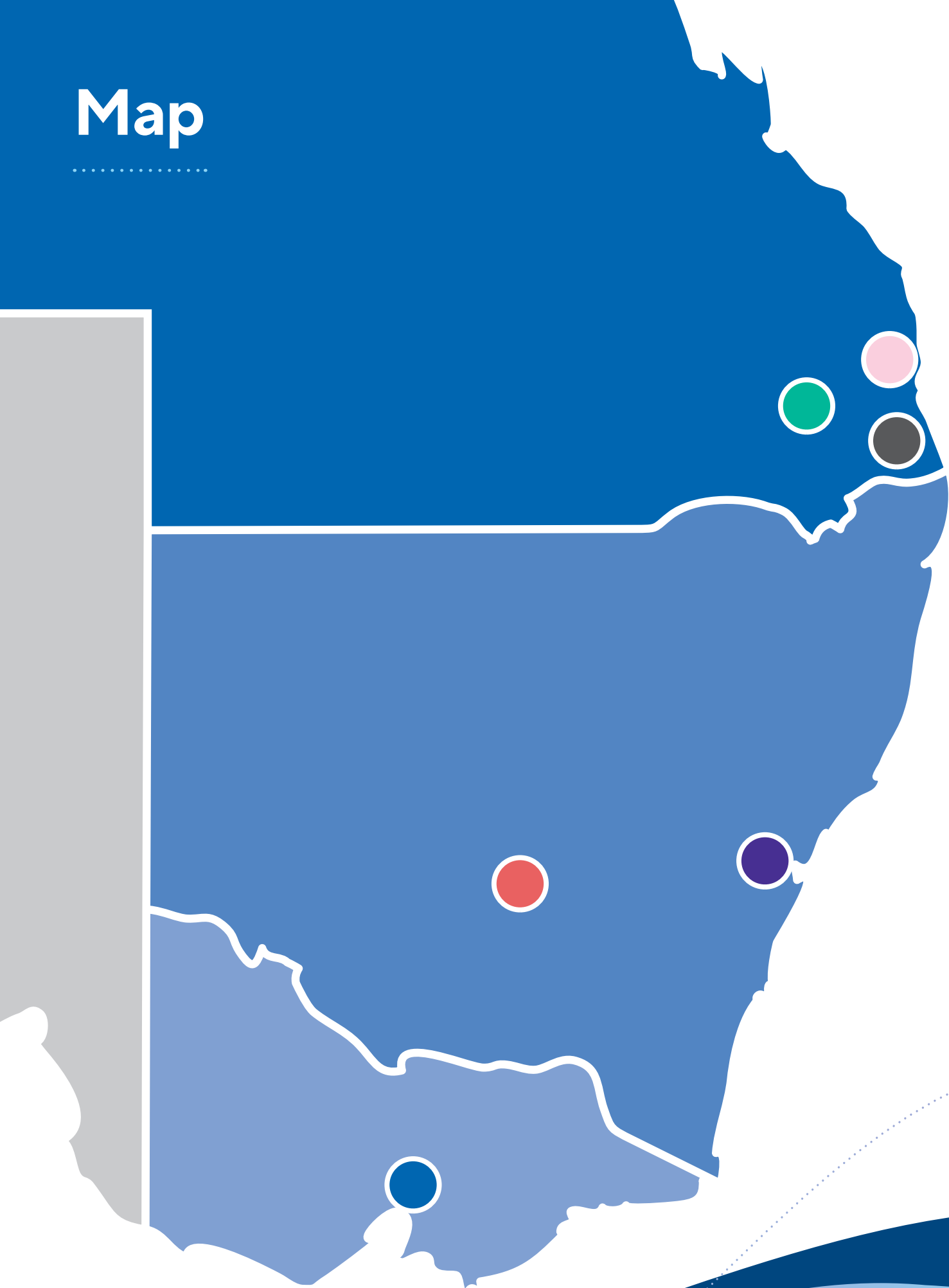
**Our Services:** We are a clinical leader in health and aged care with a national and international reputation in medical research. Our areas of expertise include heart lung transplantation; bone marrow transplantation; cardiology; neurosurgery; cancer; clinical genomics; HIV medicine; palliative care; respiratory medicine; mental health; drug and alcohol services; aged psychiatry; homeless health; and correctional health.

Our services employ over 30,000 people (over 250 of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, including roughly 90 healthcare clinicians). Each year our health services provide more than a million occasions of service through inpatient and day-only admissions, while an additional one million episodes of care are delivered through our outpatient services.



# Map

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## Victoria

### Wurundjeri

St Vincent's Aged Care, Eltham

### Wurundjeri, Kulin

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, Charitas Christi

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Kew

St Vincent's on the Park, Kew

St Vincent's Melbourne, St George Hospice

SVHM Aged Care, Auburn House

SVHM Aged Care, Prague House

SVHM Aged Care, Berengarra

St Vincent's Aged Care, Kew

St Vincent's Aged Care, Hawthorn

### Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Kulin

St Vincent's Health Australia

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Melbourne

St Vincent's Private Hospital, East Melbourne

### Bunurong

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Werribee

St Vincent's Aged Care, Werribee

## New South Wales

### Gadigal, Bidjigal, Eora

St Vincent's Health Australia

St Vincent's Health Network, Darlinghurst Campus

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney

St Vincent's Aged Care, Bronte

### Gadigal, Birrabirragal, Eora

St Vincent's Aged Care, Edgecliff

### Cammeraygal, Guringai

Mater Hospital

### Darug

St Vincent's Clinic, Parklea

### Cabrogal, Darug

St Vincent's Aged Care, Yennora

### Wangal, Wategoro, Darug

St Vincent's Aged Care, Auburn

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Auburn

### Wangal, Darug, Gadigal

St Vincent's Aged Care, Haberfield

### Dharawal

St Vincent's Aged Care, Heathcote

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Heathcote

### Wiradjuri

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Griffith

## Queensland

### Turrbal, Yuggera

St Vincent's Health Australia

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Brisbane

Holy Spirit North Side Private Hospital

St Vincent's Aged Care, Bardon

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Bardon

St Vincent's Aged Care, Boondall

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Boondall

St Vincent's Aged Care, Carseldine

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Carseldine

St Vincent's Aged Care, Enoggera

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Enoggera

St Vincent's Aged Care, Kangaroo Point

St Vincent's Aged Care, Mitchelton

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Mitchelton

St Vincent's Aged Care, Carina

St Vincent's Aged Care, Corinda

### Gubbi Gubbi

St Vincent's Aged Care, Maroochydore

St Vincent's Aged Care, Gympie

### Yugambeh

St Vincent's Aged Care, Southport

St Vincent's Retirement Living, Southport

St Vincent's Aged Care, Arundel

### Giabal, Jarowair

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Toowoomba

St Vincent's Aged Care, Toowoomba

We have consulted widely in the development of this list/representation of Traditional Custodians. Nevertheless, it is challenging to identify Traditional Custodians and Owners with complete accuracy because of the enduring impact of colonisation.





Isaac Bamblett leading a traditional Smoking Ceremony at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst for NAIDOC Week 2024.

# Our RAP

**In 2025, we embark on our third Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP guides us in identifying and delivering enhanced, sustainable, and just health and wellness outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To know where we are going with our new RAP, it is important to understand where we have come from.**

Much is written about our founders – Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity – who were the first religious women to arrive in ‘the colonies’ in 1838. They travelled from Ireland to provide pastoral support to women prisoners. Less well known is the inclusion of a black crucifix within the luggage of these intrepid women as they set sail on their long voyage.

Many believe that Mary Aikenhead understood that the Sisters of her fledgling congregation were moving to lands settled and cared for prior to colonisation. The powerful symbol of the crucifix demonstrated the intent of the congregation to build respectful relationships with Aboriginal peoples from the outset of the Sisters’ ministry.

From our earliest days at St Vincent’s, we have sought to work with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and are privileged to have ongoing support, guidance and partnerships in our endeavours.

We acknowledge that many faith institutions in this land participated in practices contributing to the decimation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and cultures. St Vincent’s wishes to establish respectful, supportive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strongly rejects racially prejudiced actions that impede authentic, culturally inclusive relationships.

Our 2025-2028 Stretch RAP demonstrates our leadership within the RAP network. We understand that we play a critical role in working alongside allies to tackle the ongoing business of reconciliation for the benefit of all who call these lands home. Together, we are stronger.

We seek to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in our decision-making and overarching enterprise strategy. We have discerned: ‘What will leadership look like in a post-referendum world?’, ‘How will the principles, actions and strengthening of reconciliation be enshrined in caring across the lifespan?’.

An important part of designing this RAP involved hosting eight team roadshow events nationally in Q4 2023. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and community members, managers, senior leaders, members of the Executive Leadership Team, Board, and Trustees participated in these events. Input from over 150 attendees was collected.

Attendees named the six deliverables below as priorities in the new RAP:

1. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s recruitment, retention and professional development.
2. Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s perspectives in trauma-informed care for clinical cohorts.
3. Develop a research strategy that directly relates to the Closing the Gap targets.
4. Evaluate and address trauma triggering language in policy and programming documents as well as admission and referral documents.
5. Invest in more cultural education and training initiatives for cultural safety.
6. Increase St Vincent’s activity in anti-discrimination campaigns and initiatives against racism.

Each of these priority areas features in our RAP. External Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and organisations have also provided feedback on the content of this RAP.





## RAP Working Group (RWG)

Operational accountability RAP deliverables and evidence/data focused.

### RAP Deliverable Leads (RDL)

Submits quarterly papers on national progress. Is responsible for deliverables e.g. P&C, Mission, Advocacy, Finance, Clinical.



Our RAP Working Group (RWG) meets quarterly to plan, implement and measure RAP activities across the organisation. The RAP Working Group includes\*\*:

- National Director, Reconciliation
  - Five to seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leads (FNL)
  - Two NSW representatives
  - Two QLD representatives
  - Two VIC representatives
- Seven RAP Deliverable Leads (RDL)
  - Chief People & Culture Officer
  - Group Mission Leader
  - Head of D&T Business Partnering – VIC and QLD Hospitals
  - National Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
  - Treasurer, Group Finance
  - Chief Operating Officer, SVHNS
  - Chief Nursing Officer, SVHM
- Reconciliation Lead

\*\* Accurate as of December 2024

Key executive functions are represented by Executive Leadership Team (ELT) members, or associated delegates within the RAP Deliverable Leads (RDL) component of our RWG. These members are accountable for RAP deliverables and for ensuring that we as an organisation continue to advance our RAP journey.

Currently, we also have six smaller RAP groups which support this work within local facilities or specialty areas. Such groups align the facility objectives with national RAP imperatives, ensuring that local knowledge informs our decision making as an organisation. Local committees comprise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members and clinical and business leaders within facilities.

The Chair of the RWG meets with local area committee Chairs at least quarterly. Facility-level RAP groups operate at the following sites:

- St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba
- St Vincent's Private Hospitals Brisbane and Northside
- St Vincent's Health Network Sydney Events co-campus committee (including Sydney Private and Mater Hospital)
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne co-campus committee
- St Vincent's Health Network Sydney's Dalarinji Committee\*\*\*
- St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney's Birong Committee\*\*\*

\*\*\* Addressing broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs and promotion

At St Vincent's, we continue to prioritise the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, residents, clients and team members. Approaches for achieving this include incident/event reporting, national dashboard data development, patient feedback and advisory body membership of committees. St Vincent's Health Equity research projects include a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus with particular emphasis on Closing the Gap targets to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As we embark on our third Stretch RAP, we continue the St Vincent's promise to provide 'Better and fairer care, Always.' to our people, patients, residents, partners, and the broader community. We are on this journey across our enterprise to enable truth telling, the calling out of racism and the building of respectful relationships.

The National Director, Reconciliation and Reconciliation Lead will ensure impact and progress on RAP deliverables.



# Our Rap Journey Highlights

- 2009: Development of first RAP
- 2010: Launch of Reflect RAP (2010 – 2011)
- 2011: Partnership formed with Redfern Aboriginal Health Service; Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formed between SVHM and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)
- 2012: Extension of commitment to principles and targets of Reflect RAP
- 2014: St Vincent's establishes partnership with Western Desert Dialysis Service
- 2015: Launch of Stretch RAP 1 (2015 – 2018); Partnership formed with Nareeba Moopi Moopi Pa Aged Care Facility
- 2016: Creation of RAP Collaborative Artwork; EPI signed and launch of Indigenous Employment Strategy; Inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum held
- 2017: Launch of St Vincent's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Training Package
- 2018: Appointment of Chair, St Vincent's Reconciliation Action Plan; Launch of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocol
- 2020: Launch of Stretch 2 RAP (2020 – 2023); Launch of award-winning service Stay'n In, Stay'n Deadly to reduce waiting, testing and diagnosis times within St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's Emergency Department
- 2021: Commencement of cultural safety audit with Karabena Consulting
- 2022: Launch of National Cultural Leave Policy; St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne awarded The AI Spilman Award for Culturally Safe Emergency Departments
- 2023: St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne re-signed MoU with VAHS
- 2024: 'We Are Here' research project – Improving the healthcare experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients in Australian private hospitals
- 2025: Launch of Stretch 3 RAP (2025 – 2028)







Uncle Ringo Terrick with Nicole Tweddle at NAIDOC celebrations in 2024.

## Our Achievements

**We are proud of our work in reconciliation. Since the development of our first RAP in 2009, we have:**

- Worked to strengthen the understanding across the organisation that reconciliation benefits all Australians. Our services are grounded in social justice and the co-design of models of care that enhance health and wellness outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for whom concepts of health and wellness are integrated, not separate. St Vincent's embraces this understanding in the co-design of its programs and initiatives.
- Developed proud public displays – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, plaques and Statements of Commitment to Reconciliation – to symbolise our commitment to this work. We want to create welcoming, inclusive environments as well as education opportunities that foster a real sense of belonging in our facilities.
- Embedded reconciliation perspectives in our formation and education programs for all employees, elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- Honoured the specific experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by prioritising the creation of safe contexts for yarning. Importantly, we understand that many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander team members want to learn more about their cultural identity/ies and we support these journeys wherever possible.
- Shared the ownership of RAP deliverables. Leaders in Clinical Care, People and Culture, Digital and Technology, Mission and Finance collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across our organisation to ensure accountability, shared decision making and effective implementation of our RAP.

- Linked RAP deliverables to National Safety and Quality Health Standards, key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategic plans and best-practice in caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The 10 private hospitals located in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria are contributing to seminal research identifying the perceptions of these services held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and community members.

**Our RAP journey to this point has also identified areas that we must strengthen:**

- We need to get better at celebrating stories of RAP progress to key stakeholders.
- We need better reporting dashboards and data collection in key areas pertaining to clinical, employment and educational outcomes.
- We must provide more cultural education opportunities for all employees.
- We must strengthen governance structures at operational and strategic levels of the organisation. For example, the expansion of accountabilities across business function portfolios (including advocacy, finance, clinical governance etc) increases capacity and ownership of this work, and
- We need stronger advocacy and greater inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives for this work to progress.



# Our Stories



## Lauren

Just months into her first job as a registered nurse at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne (SVPHM), Lauren, was impressed by her colleagues' consistent acts of kindness.

"I noticed all the time that the nurses were very kind to the patients. They showed empathy to every patient and always checked back to ensure no one was worried or alone or afraid," Lauren said.

Lauren was a recipient of the annual scholarship awarded by SVPHM to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander undergraduate nursing or midwifery student at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). Lauren studied at ACU Ballarat, where she grew up, and is a descendant of the Palawa people of Tasmania.

The scholarship has been awarded for the past 14 years, with many recipients being the first in their family to go on to tertiary education. It provides funding for three years of university study and direct entry into SVPHM's Graduate Nurse Program.

For Lauren the scholarship covered the costs of expensive textbooks, a study desk, and travel and accommodation for student placements. "I highly recommend ACU students to apply for this scholarship. It gave me great support and a very good start to my nursing career," Lauren said.

"It alleviated a lot of stress and made it easier for me to relocate to Melbourne and start a new chapter of my life."

SVPHM's supportive environment eased Lauren's nerves during her first few months and helped her learn and grow in confidence and independence. "The hospital community is like family," Lauren said.

Today, Lauren works as a Grade 2 nurse in correctional health at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.



## Annette Stevenson

Annette is a Murri woman of the Iman Nation (Central-Western Queensland). Annette has worked for 24 years as a registered surgical nurse in private hospitals in regional and metropolitan Queensland. However, three years ago, Annette transitioned from the operating theatre to enjoy working as St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane's Quality and Risk Manager. She supports her local Meanjin RAP Committee and her team won the Deadly Award at the St Vincent's 2022 Quality Awards. As a professional nurse, Annette is a member of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives association (CATSINaM). She loves study and recently completed a post graduate certificate in Health Service Management (Quality and Safety).



## Tim Gray

Tim Gray, a Gumbayngirr/Wiradjuri/Bidjigal man, is the first Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer attached to St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's Gambling Treatment Program.

Tim provides support and advice to problem gamblers across south-eastern Sydney and works closely with similarly located Aboriginal health and community organisations and services provided by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

Problem gambling is connected with a range of serious health and social issues, from financial stress to estranged relationships, substance dependence, domestic violence, and suicide. And with an estimated 20 per cent of people in Aboriginal communities identified as having a gambling problem – compared to 2 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians – Tim's role couldn't be more vital.

"The stigma of gambling is often worse than drugs and alcohol. There is so much shame," Tim says.

"I want people to know they don't have to be afraid to have a yarn if they've got issues with gambling. There is plenty of support around and you just need to get over that initial hurdle of the shame."

As someone with lived experience of problem gambling, Tim can support people to overcome any shame they might be feeling, and to accept the help they need.

"I started gambling when I was 14, and I gambled for 31 years. I know what the challenges are," Tim said.

At the height of his gambling addiction, Tim was having suicidal thoughts, but it was his cat, Crystal, who became his lifeline: he knew someone had to feed and care for her.

"The whole time when I was broke, I made sure she had food and litter, even if I didn't have anything," he said.

Tim stopped gambling with counselling support and is now determined to help others do the same.

"I just sit down with people and have a yarn. I develop an ongoing relationship, and then I'll refer them to a counselling service, whether that's Gambling Anonymous or the St Vincent's Gambling Treatment Program. Whatever service a person wants to try, I'll support them through the process."

The most rewarding aspect of Tim's role is making a difference.

"There are a couple of people in Redfern that I've already made an impact on. It's rewarding to see, it's the best part of a job like this. I want to help as many people as I can."



## Lily Mercer

Registered psychiatric nurse, Lily Mercer, a proud Gadigal woman is the inaugural First Nations Mental Health Nurse at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne (SVHM). Here she provides cultural and clinical care across the Acute Inpatient Service (AIS) (psychiatric), Emergency Department and the Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Hub.



Lily's passion to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing outcomes comes from "my mother [who] was a nurse and she always taught me about the importance of equitable healthcare and that we should be at the table when it comes to healthcare."

Her role ensures clinical care and assessments are completed within a social emotional wellbeing model to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers accessing a Koori Bed located within AIS. She collaborates with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers in making decisions about their own care, identifies appropriate referral pathways, and supports community engagement. Her responsibilities also include involving family and community in assessments as appropriate, identifying care plan goals, and engaging with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

Lily's critical work also helps to build capacity to better provide culturally safe care across SVHM.

Project Lead and Manager of the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service, Nicole Watt said, "this pilot program was designed in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service who were pivotal in the consultation and support of this role. We are so thankful to be given the opportunity to complete our vision to improve the lives of First Nations youth. It wouldn't have been possible without the incredibly generous support we've received from The William Buckland Foundation."

- Prior to her current role, Lily worked as the Aboriginal Clinic Liaison Nurse with SVHM's Wilam Ngarrang Aboriginal Health Unit, which saw her "supporting Mob coming through specialist clinics or the outpatient department and helping them navigate the health system." Lily reports routinely working with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who were at risk of discharge by supporting them to attend their appointments.

## Special Words from Bush Poet, Grant Mitchell, to our 'Hospital Angels', the Nurses at St Vincent's

After a return stay at St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy, Mutthi Mutthi bush poet, Grant Mitchell, wrote the following heartfelt tribute to the nurses who cared for him.

*To the nurses at St Vincent's  
Who keep the place alive  
Supporting patients and busy doctors  
Without you we'd not survive  
Working long hours doing shift work  
Tramping corridors to and fro  
Always with a friendly smile  
Always glad to say 'Hello'  
I thank you for your service  
And taking real good care of me  
So many acts of kindness  
True angels I did see  
It's a special gift you share  
Taking care of one and all  
With varied cultures and religions  
No request too big or small  
When you find yourself in hospital  
It can be a scary place  
Uncertain what awaits you  
It's good to see a friendly face  
This is the role you play  
And I thank you one and all  
You made my stay a memory  
I will forever gladly now recall.*

## Cardiac Care

St Vincent's is working with community and health partners in southern NSW to improve heart health outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Through its longstanding partnership with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District – and with the support of St Vincent's Private Community Hospital Griffith, Collaborative Health Murrumbidgee, local GPs, and local Aboriginal Medical Services – St Vincent's has helped establish a new Outreach Heart Failure Diagnostic Clinic in the region.

Led by St Vincent's Cardiologist, A/Prof Andrew Roy, the monthly clinic travels around the region and supports the early screening and diagnosis of patients at risk of heart conditions, with a particular focus on people who experience inequities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

With thanks to funding from the St Vincent's Curran Foundation, the clinic uses state-of-the-art, cloud-based echocardiography technology that allows the team to review ultrasound images in real-time from anywhere in the world, dramatically enhancing telehealth capabilities, and alleviating the stress, time and costs associated with patients having to travel to Sydney to receive specialist care.

The initiative includes clinician support and training and has helped train the region's first Heart Failure Transitional Nurse Practitioner.

"This has been a very positive heart health service development for an under-resourced region," said A/Prof Roy. "Anecdotally, we've seen increased awareness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members of the importance of lifestyle factors when it comes to preventing heart disease along with other known risk factors such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure."

"We've been very proud and grateful at what we have been able to achieve."





## Intergenerational BBQ and Activities Day with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students from Heatley Secondary College

In May 2024, 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Heatley Secondary College in Townsville hosted a BBQ and activities day for the residents of St Vincent's Care Douglas. This wonderful intergenerational initiative fostered connections and learning opportunities for both the students and the residents.

The students began their visit by learning essential skills such as basic manual handling and food preparation under the guidance of the Douglas site's chef. This hands-on experience provided them with valuable insights into the workings of the residential aged care homes and potential opportunities for future employment.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the interactive activities. The students and residents engaged in various activities, creating meaningful interactions and fostering a sense of community.

The visit was a great success, showcasing the positive impact of bringing together different generations to share experiences and learn from one another.



The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SVCS and Moopi Moopi highlights the self-determination of the Moopi Moopi community. This MOU, which will be extended, includes SVCS providing clinical governance support, with Moopi Moopi's senior team participating in national monthly meetings to assist with compliance and clinical outcomes. Moopi Moopi has also adopted SVCS's AutumnCare Clinical Care Management system, supported through the provision of desktop and laptop computers, as well as other resources.

This enduring partnership underscores the collaborative efforts to improve aged care services and demonstrates a shared commitment to supporting the Moopi Moopi community in achieving their goals.

## Nginda, Ngayi, Ngali: Celebrating Reconciliation Together through Art

St Vincent's Care partnered with Evangelisation Brisbane, a ministry of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, to host the 2023 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Art Exhibition. Coordinated with Aboriginal artists Jennifer Kent and Gloria Le brocq-Butler, the exhibition was held in Brisbane in June 2023.

The commissioned artwork, Nginda, Ngayi, Ngali, translates as 'you', 'me' and 'us' and is a contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Project promoting reconciliation, peace, and a positive community experience. Jennifer Kent was commissioned by St Vincent's Care to create an artwork embodying their values and mission, focusing on the legacy of the first five Sisters of Charity sent from Ireland. Their care for women, the poor, the imprisoned, and the sick developed into the national health and aged care organisation, St Vincent's, more than 165 years ago.

This interactive artwork at the RAP Art Exhibition invited visitors to add their thumbprints, contributing to its design. Displayed across four 2.4-meter panels, the artwork represents justice, integrity, compassion, and love. These panels have been gifted to four ministries: The Episcopal Office Archdiocese of Brisbane, Evangelisation Brisbane, St Vincent's Group Brisbane, and the organisation's aged care arm, St Vincent's Care. The project aimed to celebrate individuality while the thumbprints symbolise the unique impact of every individual. Differences are beautiful and essential, highlighting the value of diversity in building a thriving community.

By celebrating our differences and working together, we can achieve genuine reconciliation and create a better world for all.



## Strengthening Community Care: Partnership with Moopi Moopi Residential Aged Care

St Vincent's Care Services (SVCS) and Moopi Moopi Residential Aged Care in Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) have long maintained a meaningful partnership that exemplifies community support and collaboration. This partnership began approximately 15 years ago when the Moopi Moopi team sought assistance from SVCS to meet accreditation requirements. Over time, this relationship has grown and evolved, reflecting the two organisations' shared commitment to quality care and support for the Moopi Moopi community.

Over the years, SVCS has provided in-kind support in various forms, such as quality and regulatory assistance, educational sharing, and on-site visits by our team. This collaboration has expanded to include significant contributions, such as donating vehicles to support community outreach. Additionally, SVCS has helped enhance the technological capabilities of Moopi Moopi by upgrading programs and providing necessary equipment.



## Priority Care Initiatives in Emergency

Both St Vincent's public hospitals in Sydney and Melbourne have been acknowledged for their efforts to create culturally safe emergency departments that prioritise the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and deliver better health outcomes.

St Vincent's Hospital Sydney won the 2021 NSW Health Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare Award for its efforts creating the Stay'n Deadly & Stay'n In service.

Also known as the Flexi-clinic, Stay'n Deadly & Stay'n In operates by rapidly determining if someone identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander soon after their arrival in the Emergency Department (ED) and then rapidly making sure they are seen by a specialist, or 'flexi-doctor', significantly reducing waiting, testing, and diagnosis times.

At the same time, one of the hospital's Aboriginal Health team members is on hand to support the patient throughout their treatment and follow-up care. The service is flexible in both name and nature, allowing patients to come back to the ED at any other time to complete their treatment without delay, should their condition be stable enough to do so.

In Melbourne, the St Vincent's ED team was recognised by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine with the Al Spilman award for Culturally Safe Emergency Departments in 2022, acknowledging similarly positive work.

The teams in both EDs recognised the challenges in consistently and quickly identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients – a key factor in the delivery of culturally safe care.

"Accurate identification ensures that we are able to appropriately support our First Nations community throughout their entire hospital experience," said Nicole Watt, Manager of St Vincent's Melbourne's Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service."

"As a group, we identified that we needed to build knowledge and competency to make the ED a safer and more welcoming place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Dr Georgina Phillips, an Emergency Physician at St Vincent's Melbourne who helped start the initiative. "

"We had an ethical imperative to do this" said Prof Paul Preisz, St Vincent's Sydney's Director of Emergency. "The biggest measure of success we have here is that we've changed the culture of this place. We don't think of Flexi-clinic as a project anymore because it has become our normal process. It's a permanent change in how we work, and the results are consistently good".







## 'We Are Here' St Vincent's Private Hospitals Research Project

In partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research, St Vincent's recently completed a study to better understand and improve the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in its private hospitals.

The project incorporated an iterative 'yarning' approach – a conversational process synonymous with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that involves the telling of stories as a way of passing on cultural knowledge. In this way, the involvement and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the survey and its data analysis was strengthened, making the results more comprehensive.

The study's results revealed a number of areas where St Vincent's could improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander private patients.

For example, around 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who participated in the study were not asked in-person about if they identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person when receiving their treatment. It also identified room for improvement among employees towards developing a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural beliefs.

In light of the study's results, St Vincent's has committed itself to exploring a number of improvements in its private hospitals, including: reviewing and improving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identification procedures across all sites; the inclusion of the titles of 'Elder / Aunty / Uncle' as options in the electronic patient file;

- adopting minimum standards for the display of cultural information and artwork;
- enhancing connectivity to enable better contact with family and friends;
- liaising with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the creation of 'welcome' videos; embedding culturally safe feedback options into routine patient experience monitoring; and
- having locally tailored yarning sessions as a routinely offered patient experience measurement option for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients and their families.

## Partnership with VAHS

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) re-signed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during National Reconciliation Week in 2023. The agreement takes forward a formal partnership that has been in place since 2011 but which is based on decades of working closely together.



The MoU has been the framework for many key St Vincent's health initiatives to promote culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in the community.

For example, St Vincent's Melbourne's Mental Health Adult Inpatient Services Koori Unit was established in 1994 and is located in the St Vincent's Mental Health Adult Inpatient Service. The integrated Koori Unit supports a state-wide, five-bed inpatient service that liaises with VAHS and its family counselling and mental health teams.

Another initiative is the St Vincent's Wilam Ngarrang Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service. This service works with health professionals, including VAHS, to provide culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families. The team offers advocacy and cultural support to patients and their families as they navigate the health and social services they require.

With the support of VAHS, St Vincent's also led a project to ensure the accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island patients who access the hospital's services. Accurate identification is essential to providing culturally safe and clinically appropriate care. Under the project, a working group was established, which then amended the relevant policies and produced educational resources to support employees in their efforts. Audits show that the necessary questions to help identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are now being asked 100 per cent of the time.

These, and other, initiatives actively address the health disparities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people. They demonstrate how the St Vincent's commitment to reconciliation and to Closing the Gap in health outcomes is based on meaningful action, expanded services, and enhanced cultural safety.





## The Yarning Circle

The Yarning Circle at St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba has been an important expression of the hospital's commitment to reconciliation since it was established over 10 years ago. It consists of a bench and an open space that is regularly used by team members for social catch ups.

However, in 2023 the site needed to be moved because of reconstruction work.

Because of its value to the hospital and team members, St Vincent's Toowoomba made the decision to move the Yarning Circle, finally finding it a home adjacent to Entrance One on the hospital's campus.

The new Yarning Circle location was launched with a smoking ceremony to acknowledge its importance for employees and the hospital's broader community. Daphne Jackson, wife of long-serving St Vincent's Toowoomba team member Wade, painted the table that sits close by and contributes to the spot being so welcoming for employees to meet and have a yarn during their breaks. Both Daphne and Wade are proud of their Aboriginal heritage and inspire younger generations within the hospital and more broadly.

Daphne's table artwork depicts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with three large yarning circles connected by story lines, as well as a turtle, snake and goanna. Different communities are depicted by the black, yellow and red colours along the length of the table.



# Relationships

Achieving our goal of equitable healthcare is not possible without consideration of the pivotal role of our stakeholders: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations, and our allies in this important work. As such, building, and maintaining strong two-way relationships is a priority for St Vincent's. To be effective and meaningful in our actions, we recognise that connections must be built with trust, respect, cultural-humility and anti-racism at heart. We acknowledge that differences may arise in partnerships but are committed to learning more and doing better. We strive for collaboration, appropriate consultation and to use our platform to amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, now more than ever. Underpinned by self-determination, we value the principle of 'nothing for Mob, without Mob' and aspire to build a better and fairer health and aged care system.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>01</b>  Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Facility CEOs and Reconciliation Lead
	Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2025	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Facility CEOs and Reconciliation Lead
	Establish and maintain formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations, including local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations/Aboriginal Medical Services, Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, Lowitja Institute, Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association and Indigenous Allied Health Australia.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Facility CEOs and National Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
<b>02</b>  Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Continue to circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all employees.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: Formation and Purpose Leads
	RAP Working Group members to participate in at least one external NRW event.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Continue to encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in minimum one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: Group Mission Leader
	Continue to conduct six internal NRW events each year, including at least one organisation-wide event.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation; Reconciliation Lead Support: Group Mission Leader
	Continue to register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: Group Mission Leader

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>03</b>  Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop a national communications plan to engage and inform all employees of reconciliation initiatives.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	August 2025 August 2026 August 2027	Lead: National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Attend at least two quarterly RAP Leadership Gatherings per year.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead and RDLs
	Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members/representatives to events throughout the year e.g. opening of new buildings and Mass for special occasions.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Formation and Purpose Leads Support: Reconciliation Lead; National Director Reconciliation
	Consult and share knowledge within Catholic Health sphere to help commence/progress their RAP journey.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation; Reconciliation Lead Support: RAP Working Group
	Pioneer RAP Health RING throughout the RAP Network to formalise partnerships in this space.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation; Reconciliation Lead Support: RAP Working Group
<b>04</b>  Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Audit current vendors' reconciliation status and where possible preference those demonstrating established commitment.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Group Procurement Specialist - ESG Support: RAP Working Group
	Continuously improve P&C policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination through regular review.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Chief People and Cultural Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation; Reconciliation Lead
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and/or advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Develop and implement St Vincent's processes in responding to advocacy campaigns and communicate an anti-discrimination stance.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications Support: Reconciliation Lead; Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
	Provide ongoing education to employees on the effects of racism.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Head of Capability and Learning Support: National Director Reconciliation; Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
	Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, and stances against racism.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Corporate Affairs and Public Policy; National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications Support: National Director Reconciliation; Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
	Evaluate and address trauma triggering language in policy, admission and referral documents.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: National Director Reconciliation



At St Vincent's, we understand that enduring relationships are built on a foundation of respect. These genuine connections acknowledge and treasure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (team members, patients, residents), organisations and communities. Their wisdom, cultures, histories and rights are core to our vision.

Our RAP Roadshow consultation sessions identified a need for greater cultural safety educational resources. As such, professional development opportunities for all team members will be a key focus for the next three years and beyond, with an emphasis on truth-telling.

We acknowledge the impact of governmental policies (past and present) on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including through intergenerational means. As an organisation, we are aware of the longstanding effects such policies continue to have and are mindful that healthcare settings may not traditionally be thought of as culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are determined to shift our intent far beyond awareness, into system transforming action where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel welcome and respected, and experience equitable health outcomes.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>05</b>  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 and formal requirements within our organisation.	December 2025 December 2026	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Head of Capability and Learning
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of a Cultural Learning Strategy.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Head of Capability and Learning
	Implement and communicate a Cultural Learning Strategy for our people.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation; National Manager of Formation and Purpose
	Ninety per cent of all new employees to undertake introductory cultural learning within first six months of employment, through online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning.	September 2025 September 2026 September 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer; Head of Capability and Learning Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Deliver face-to-face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning to at least 300 key leaders within the term of the RAP.	September 2025 September 2026 September 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer; Head of Capability and Learning Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Embed training that prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives of trauma-informed care for clinical cohorts and other teams as appropriate.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer; National Director Reconciliation Support: Head of Capability and Learning
	Enable opportunities for at least three bespoke training sessions with senior leaders and clinicians per year with a view to scaling.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer; National Director Reconciliation Support: Head of Capability and Learning
	St Vincent's Board members to participate in a minimum of two formative educational connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team and/or community members/leaders per year.	April 2025, 2026, 2027 October 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: Group General Manager Public Affairs and General Counsel

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>06</b>  Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase employee understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols.	June 2025, 2026, 2027 December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Review the St Vincent's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocol to ensure employees have access to up-to-date cultural protocol information that is tailored to the communities we operate in.	August 2026	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Invite local recognised Traditional Owners and/or Custodians to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols at significant events each year, including major award ceremonies, NRW and NAIDOC events, opening of new buildings and Mass celebrations etc.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Manager of Formation and Purpose Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of minuted meetings.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: National Manager of Formation and Purpose
	Team members and senior leaders to continue to provide an Acknowledgement of Country and other appropriate protocols at all public events.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: National Manager of Formation and Purpose
	Display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque at each of our facilities.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Increase visual representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across all facilities including hospitality, artwork, uniforms and flags.	April 2025 April 2026 April 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
	RAP Working Group members participate in at least one external NAIDOC event annually in QLD, NSW and VIC.	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
<b>07</b>  Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to employees participating in NAIDOC Week and educate team members and managers on the Cultural Leave Policy.	April 2025 April 2026 April 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Encourage all employees to participate in at least one NAIDOC Week event in local community.	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: National Manager of Formation and Purpose Support: Reconciliation Lead
	In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support at least one external NAIDOC Week event each year.	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: National Manager of Formation and Purpose Support: Reconciliation Lead; Local RAP committees



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>08</b>  Embed culturally-appropriate approaches to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and residents within our facilities.	Prioritise accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, clients and residents.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Chief Medical Officer Support: Quality and Risk Managers
	Monitor cultural safety aspects of mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and residents.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS, CEO SVCS Support: Chief Medical Officer; Public Hospital Quality and Safety teams; SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
	Collaborate with key stakeholders to improve cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and residents within mental health settings.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: National Chief Medical Officer; Quality and Risk Managers
	Monitor mortality review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, clients and residents.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Risk Managers
	Review Root Cause Analysis findings relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, clients and residents sentinel events.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Risk Managers
	Collaborate with stakeholders to improve care outcomes and minimise/prevent further sentinel events.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Risk Managers
	Monitor attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients at outpatient clinic appointments.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Safety teams; SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
	Collaborate with stakeholders to improve care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients at outpatient clinic appointments.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Safety teams; SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
<b>09</b>  Embed culturally-appropriate approaches to improve health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within communities we serve.	Monitor how people are accessing our health and aged care services.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: Quality and Risk Managers; Reconciliation Lead
	Monitor the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients within our clinics in correctional facilities.	October 2025 October 2026 October 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: National Director of Health Equity Research; Quality and Risk Managers; SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
	Collaborate with stakeholders to improve care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients within our clinics in correctional facilities.	October 2025 October 2026 October 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: National Director of Health Equity Research; Quality and Risk Managers; SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10</b>  Increase research and projects that impact and improve the care outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, residents and clients.	Establish systems to monitor the screening and referral of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients presenting with a history of domestic and family violence.	October 2025	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
	Collaborate with stakeholders to improve care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients presenting with a history of domestic and family violence.	December 2026 December 2027	Lead: CEO SVHM, CEO SVHNS Support: SVHNS Executive Director, Aboriginal Health; SVHM Senior Aboriginal Health representative
	Monitor the utilisation of services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Virtual and Home Healthcare landscape.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director St Vincent's Virtual and Home Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Ensure all research grant applications include consideration of Closing the Gap principles.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director of Health Equity Research; National Director Reconciliation Support: Group Mission Leader, Facility CEOs
	Prioritise projects focused on improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director of Health Equity Research; National Director Reconciliation Support: Group Mission Leader, Facility CEOs
	Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander team members to be involved in research consultation and co-design.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director of Health Equity Research; National Director Reconciliation Support: Group Mission Leader, Facility CEOs



# Opportunities

At St Vincent's, we care about health and wellness across the lifespan. The Social Determinants of Health Model demonstrates that health is multi-factorial and that to achieve greater health and wellness outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we must address both the inequities within and intersection between social, education and economic realities.

We have identified two key priority areas in aligning our Mission and imperative to address Close the Gap targets relating to health inequities – recruitment (including retention) and procurement.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment objectives strive to build and nourish a rich, diverse workforce where individuals and team members are empowered to find meaning and satisfaction in their work.

A commitment to strategic procurement processes provides us with another important approach by which we can advance lasting reconciliation outcomes. Through the prioritisation of building, maintaining and strengthening ongoing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses we play an important role in fostering long-term economic stability for their owners, families and communities.

These commitments are a lived expression of our values in practice today. We are proud to support team members and businesses, knowing that our efforts contribute to positive, lasting impacts on the wellness of families and communities beyond facility walls.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>11</b>  Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	December 2025	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: First Nations Recruitment Specialists
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to consult on the effectiveness of our Recruitment, Retention and professional development strategy.	December 2026	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: First Nations Recruitment Specialists
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: First Nations Recruitment Specialists
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in our workplaces.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in management and leadership positions.	June 2025, 2026, 2027 and December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment to minimum 2% in every facility/enterprise level across SVHA.	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: First Nations Recruitment Specialists
	Monitor employee satisfaction and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation, Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>12</b>  Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Facilitate at least one connection opportunity annually for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Group Mission Leader; Reconciliation Lead
	Develop a pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board representation in the next three years.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Group General Manager Public Affairs and General Counsel Support: Group Mission Leader
	Implement our First Nations procurement strategy.	March 2025	Lead: Group Procurement Specialist – ESG; Group Procurement Specialists – Indirects Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Create directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preferred suppliers and support their inclusion into Link Safe system.	June 2025	Lead: Group Procurement Specialist – ESG Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to employees e.g. advocate for October as Indigenous Business Month.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Group Procurement Specialist – ESG Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2025 March 2026 March 2027	Lead: Group Manager Procurement Support: Group Procurement Specialists;
	Maintain commercial relationships with at least 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses annually.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Group Manager Procurement Support: Group Procurement Specialists; Finance RDL; Group Buyers
	Increase overall addressable St Vincent's spend annually with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses from 0.13% to at least 0.25% in 2025 0.50% in 2026 0.75% in 2027	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: Group Manager Procurement Support: Group Procurement Specialists; Finance RDL; Group Buyers



Reconciliation is everyone's business, and to achieve all that we have set out, we require respectful relationships between St Vincent's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous team members. We also seek guidance from external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. These connections are pivotal to establishing and strengthening successful governance structures. We have recently reshaped the layout of our RAP Working Group to better share accountabilities and reporting requirements, whilst also providing greater support to emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within our organisation. Together, we are excited about the significant strides that our refreshed RAP governance structure will make towards reconciliation, through our Stretch RAP and future transformative reconciliation commitments.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>13</b>  Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain our RAP Working Group (First Nations Leads and RAP Deliverable Leads) to be made up of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous employees.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Review the Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	July 2025 July 2026 July 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March 2025, 2026, 2027 June 2025, 2026, 2027 September 2025, 2026, 2027 December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
<b>14</b>  Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Embed resource needs for RAP implementation	May 2025, 2026, 2027 November 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Ensure representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on regional committees, facility advisory committees, consultative groups and/or human research ethics committees across enterprise business functions.	June 2025, 2026, 2027, and December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: CEO SVHNS, CEO SVHM, CEO SVPH, CEO SVCS Support: Quality and Risk Managers
	Embed key RAP actions and accountabilities in performance expectations and annual reviews of ELT and CEOs.	June 2025	Lead: Chief People & Culture Officer Support: National Director Reconciliation; Group Mission Leader
	Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2025 December 2026 December 2027	Lead: Chief Digital Officer Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Group Mission Leader

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>15</b>  Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	June 2025 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Ensure RAP activities are discussed in every budget cycle.	May 2025, 2026, 2027 November 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: Group Chief Financial Officer
	Continue to 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 June 2026 June 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2025 August 2026 August 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2025 September 2026 September 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Report RAP progress to all employee and senior leaders.	March 2025, 2026, 2027 June 2025, 2026, 2027 September 2025, 2026, 2027 December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: National Director Corporate Affairs and Public Policy Support: National Director Reconciliation; National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications
	Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually – outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	October 2025 October 2026 October 2027	Lead: National Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications Support: National Director Reconciliation
<b>16</b>  Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Confirm our participation in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer survey.	May 2026	Lead: National Director Reconciliation
	Engage in and embed learnings from Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer survey.	January 2027	Lead: National Director Reconciliation Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	February 2028	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	August 2027	Lead: Reconciliation Lead Support: National Director Reconciliation
	Secure finance for transformational project to begin in 2028.	March 2027	Lead: Group Mission Leader Support: Group Chief Financial Officer; Finance RDL

#### Contact details

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# Artwork Story

**The 2016 Reconciliation Action Plan Collaborative Art Project has been both an action and a symbol of what reconciliation means to us all at SVHA. The artwork represents the breadth of our vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our care as well as in the wider community, thus the final artwork is a reflection of reconciliation on an individual, state and national level.**

Three leading contemporary Aboriginal artists were asked to conduct a workshop in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland with 48 staff members across our health service. The artists invited staff members to create a small circular artwork that was symbolic of what reconciliation means to them. With the assistance of a master print maker each participant was able to create an individual artwork with up to six layers of colour.

Following the state workshops, the three Aboriginal artists collaborated to bring the 48 small artworks into one cohesive design. Their aim was to arrange the individual circles into a single united artwork as a symbol of people coming together to focus on our shared vision for reconciliation. Once the circles were arranged into the final layout, the three artists painted around the circles with bands of black, red, yellow, blue and purple. Each artist then added their own “mark” to one panel by scratching into the red lines their own symbols, signs

or words associated with reconciliation. Vicki Couzens represents Victoria in the left panel, Jeffrey Samuels represents New South Wales in the centre panel and Bianca Beetson represents Queensland and Torres Strait Islands in the right hand panel.

The resulting three part panels have now been silk screened and an edition of 55 triptychs have been printed.

One complete artwork is on display at each facility across St Vincent’s Health Australia. It is a vibrant symbol of our RAP document, our own reflections and of our collective experience of the reconciliation journey we are all on.

**Artists:** Bianca Beetson, Vicki Couzens and Jeffrey Samuels in collaboration with 48 SVHA staff members.

**Title:** Reconciliation: Towards excellent health, happiness and equality, 2016.

**Medium:** Silkscreen on magnani paper, 3 panels, edition of 55, 100cm x 73cm each.

**Project Curator:** Monique Silk

**Collaborator and screen work:** Basil Hall

**Printer:** Clinton Barker, Basil Hall Editions

**Photography:** Mirri Mirri Productions

Special thanks to Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Co-operative for the use of their premises for the making of part of this collaborative artwork.





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fairer care.  
**Always.**



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