

Brisbane North PHN

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

December 2021 – December 2023



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Brisbane North PHN acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia and we pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians on whose land we walk, we work and we live.



Glossary

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
CQ	Contracts and Quality
EP	Engagement and Planning
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HHS	Health and Hospital Service
HR	Human Relations
HSI	Health Services Improvement
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KPP	Knowledge, Planning and Performance
ODG	Organisational Development Group
IUIH	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
PHN	Primary Health Network
RGG	Reconciliation Governance Group
RWG	RAP working group
SEQ	South East Queensland
SoR	Spirit of Reconciliation



MESSAGE FROM

KAREN MUNDINE

CEO, Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Brisbane North PHN 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 Brisbane North PHN 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, Brisbane North PHN 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 close to three million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Brisbane North PHN is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not for profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Brisbane North PHN'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 Brisbane North PHN on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

MESSAGE FROM

LIBBY DUNSTAN

CEO, Brisbane North PHN

To say that Brisbane North PHN has grown since our initial foray into reconciliation would be something of an understatement.

It really has been so rewarding to observe the learning and progression in our staff over the course of our reconciliation journey.

A culture of reconciliation is now evolving naturally within our workplace, thanks largely to this foundational work and an unwavering commitment from our staff and Board of Directors.

Adding to our momentum, we engaged acclaimed First Nations artist Riki Salam to design new artwork that would inspire our continuing reconciliation journey.

Sharing stories with Riki, which he then drew upon to create his artwork, was an experience that helped us to see our 'place' within our community. It was foundational work for the organisation in that it also prepared us for the development of our Innovate RAP.

Over 100 staff and our entire Board participated in a comprehensive engagement process, led by our Spirit of Reconciliation working group, through a 'whole of organisation' dialogue.

This allowed everyone time to think through their contributions in greater depth. I congratulate all involved for offering their ideas freely and owning them.

Given the success of this approach, we have resolved to maintain this inclusivity throughout the implementation and evaluation of our Innovate RAP actions and deliverables.

In turn, perhaps predictably, the Innovate RAP engagement process has influenced our broader organisational values, which we reviewed concurrently.

As an organisation, our values are collaboration, diversity, integrity, courage and impact.

Reflecting upon these values should provide all the impetus we need to continue creating opportunities, building respect and strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

It is with great pride that I commend our Innovate RAP to you, as confirmation of Brisbane North PHN's ongoing commitment to reconciliation.



Our vision for reconciliation

The RAP Artwork: 'FLOWING KNOWLEDGE, HEALING COUNTRY'

By Riki Salam

Crystal clear waters spring forth from rock formation, brittle and scorched bush, smoke cleanses Country. Messenger bird calls, people gather; knowledge is traded, our journey begins.

Creation Spirit cuts deep within rich red earth, lines are drawn and abundance flows. Blossoms bloom, Country is renewed, songs meander across the landscape, we travel along pathways that guide and connect us all, stars light our way.

Our stories are heard, our stories are shared, networks are formed. Through song, ceremony and dance, we are one, celebration flows. Rivers of knowledge heal this Country.



'Flowing Knowledge, Healing Country' artwork explained.

This artwork represents the PHN North's commitment to reconciliation and making their networks and places of practice culturally safe.

Through practical forms of communicating and sharing the PHN North hope to integrate and implement peoples stories and experiences into the fabric of the vision and values of the Primary Health Network North through listening, learning, sharing and caring.

Navigation by land, water and sky guide us regionally, nationally and internationally bringing our past and present together and guiding us towards a better and brighter future.

The depiction of the water represents the geographical river systems that are found throughout the South East and the PHN North network, the Brisbane River, Pines River and Maroochy River systems that continue out to Moreton Bay, the Coral Sea and the Pacific Ocean. We are all connected by water.

Metaphorically these bodies of water represent our stories and the exchange of knowledge – knowledge of the land, it's people and it's law.

Through these connections, trade routes are established, the exchange of knowledge informs us of how we look after Country and how Country looks after us – sustaining us with food and water to survive and providing us with medicine to heal.

The artwork depicts land and landscape between a body of water, water flows through the centre. On different levels the three main symbols represent, past, present and the future and the reconciliation

directives of respect, relationships and opportunities.

The central symbol represents Brisbane North PHN; it is the hub and the main meeting place of health knowledge connected to Country. The two symbols either side represent both Aboriginal (R) and Torres Strait Islander (L) cultures and knowledges – where traditional meet with contemporary, two ways of living and learning.

The smaller circular motifs above and below the body of water represent stars that guide us across Country. They also refer to the PHN North networks connections throughout the South East Queensland region.

The wavey patterned lines both top and bottom represent Creation Spirits that created the landscapes and gave the law and knowledge of – how we care for and respect one another, knowledge of foods and medicines and knowledges of healing. Healing Country and in turn healing ourselves, water gives us life and gives us knowledge.

The artist

Riki Salam was born and raised in Cairns on Yidindji land, with connections to Muralag, Kala Lagaw Ya, Meriam Mer, Kuku Yalanji peoples on his father's side and the Ngai Tahu people in the South Island of New Zealand on his mother's side.

The artwork 'Flowing Knowledge, Healing Country' was commissioned to represent the PHN's vision for reconciliation and its launch marked the first anniversary of the endorsement by Reconciliation Australia of the PHN's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Organisational

Our vision for reconciliation is where the stories of our First Nations' people are heard and shared, and networks are formed. The ambitions we have jointly set help us to build a health system that is culturally responsive and inclusive for all.

Teams within the PHN

Each PHN Team and the Organisational Development working group created a statement outlining their unique commitment towards reconciliation. This created a more nuanced, focused approach and greater ownership by the members of these groups.

TEAM	RECONCILIATION STATEMENT
Care Coordination	We contribute to reconciliation by honouring the past through understanding, recognition and acknowledgement. In the present we offer respect, willingness to listen with an open heart as we work together for a connected future.
Communications	Amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices while practicing respect and empathy, to support communication and engagement work that is inclusive, anti-racist and intersectional.
Executive	We lead by example in support of our organisation's journey towards reconciliation. We do this through bringing people together, listening, continuously learning and being open.
Finance	The Finance team continues to contribute to reconciliation by enabling the flow of funds to various community organisations. We participate in the organisation's reconciliation journey with an open mind for continuous improvement.
Health Alliance	We need to continuously be building strong relationships and be open to engaging, learning and using these lessons to drive our Health Alliance work. We are strongly committed to walking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, along a path of inclusion, equity, unity and understanding.
Healthy Ageing	The Consortium acts as a cultural bridge that naturally aligns with Spirit of Reconciliation, nurturing trust, mutual learning and growth, embracing diversity, and open and honest communication to move forward together.
HR and Office Managers	Create and maintain an environment that is welcoming and open to people of all cultures, where people feel safe, valued and respected.
Information Services	First Nations people hold a wealth of knowledge and experience, the Information Services team are enthusiastic to support our organisation to better connect and build stronger relationships supported by technology and the respectful collection, storage and sharing of information.
Integration	We bring people together to share knowledge 'two ways'. This means listening, learning and understanding. Through our health pathways we strive for excellence for the benefit of all.
Knowledge, Performance and Planning	The KPP team contributes to reconciliation by assisting and ensuring culturally responsive planning, analysis, evaluation, and reporting of data. Through data, we seek to develop collaborative, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.
Mental Health Reform	Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to lead and guide change, in the achievement of mental health service reform.
Organisational Development Group	We provide training opportunities to develop staff capability to strengthen meaningful communication and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We support the organisation to foster an organisational culture that is inclusive, respectful and enhances culturally safe practices.
Primary Care Liaison	Learning, sharing and connecting information and people across the region.

Our business

Brisbane North PHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks nationwide. Our vision is a community where good health is available for everyone. We see ourselves as part of the Brisbane North community, supporting the primary healthcare, Indigenous health, and aged and community care sectors to improve the local health system.

The origins of Brisbane North PHN extend back to 1993, when the Brisbane North Division of General Practice was formed under a Federal Government initiative to support General Practice. The organisation has undergone several name and company structure changes over the years, largely due to changes in government policy.

Our key objectives are to:

- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes
- improve coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

We achieve these outcomes by:

- understanding the health care needs of our community through analysis and planning, helping to identify and address service gaps
- providing practice support services so that GPs are better placed to provide care to patients, keeping them healthy and out of hospital
- supporting general practices to attain the highest standards in safety
- assisting general practices to understand and make meaningful use of eHealth systems
- working with other funders to purchase or commission health services for local groups most in need, including patients with complex chronic conditions or mental illness.

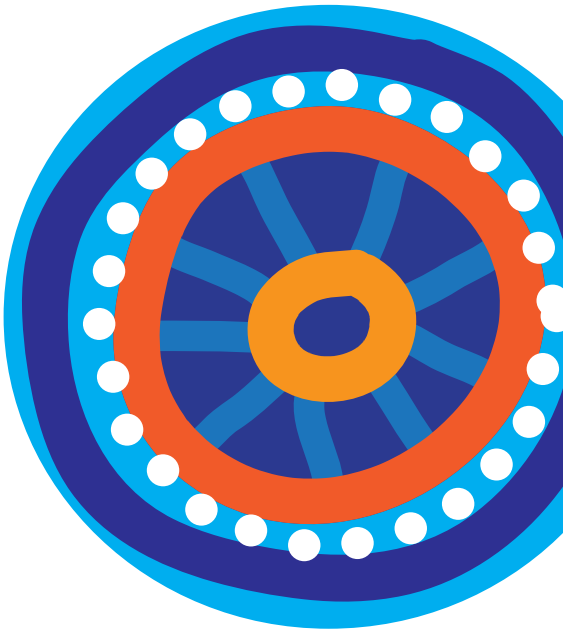
In line with the PHN vision, our strategic plan outlines three key goals:

- **Be informed and led by community voice** - as an organisation, the PHN is dedicated to listening to our community and strengthening the voice of consumers and carers. We endeavour to build the capacity of people and communities to influence and lead system design. We particularly acknowledge our responsibility to ensure self-determination for First Nations peoples.
- **Re-orient the health system toward care close to home** - Australians prefer to live healthy lives, in their own homes, as long as possible. Moving care closer to home requires a rebalanced investment into community based services including in-home care and greater power and knowledge in the hands of consumers to better manage their own care. Evidence shows that the best population health outcomes are achieved in systems with strong investment in primary healthcare. The PHN seeks to translate this evidence into practice.
- **Build capacity of providers to meet health needs of our region** - in order for care to be provided closer to home, the capacity of community based services such as general practice, allied health, pharmacy and community aged care need to be enhanced. The PHN provides a range of

complimentary services aimed at building quality and increasing integration of services. In addition, the PHN commissions a wide range of health services aimed at identified gaps in current health service delivery and promotes joint planning and collective impact approaches to align services toward common goals.

Our values inform all that we do; they include:

- **Collaboration:** we build strong and enduring relationships to achieve our shared goals
- **Diversity:** we are inclusive, fair and responsive to different needs
- **Integrity:** we are transparent, respectful and work to the highest standards
- **Courage:** we lead new approaches, learn and improve
- **Impact:** we deliver outcomes for our community



Our current identified priorities areas are:

- Culturally responsive services to enhance the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Coordinated care for older people
- Improved access to health and community care in Moreton Bay North
- Better support for those with chronic and complex conditions across the care continuum
- Mental health
- Suicide prevention
- Alcohol and other drug treatment.

We address our identified priority around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being by working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health organisations and commissioning services from these organisations in line with our needs assessment and planning processes. In this way, we can avoid duplication of services and better ensure the delivery of culturally responsive health services.



For example, we have commissioned the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) to provide a comprehensive range of health and social well-being programs. IUIH leads the planning, development and delivery of comprehensive primary health care services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of South East Queensland (SEQ). IUIH was established in 2009 by the four Community Controlled Health Services in SEQ to provide for the needs of Australia's second largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Since 2009, IUIH's regional network has since expanded to 20 multidisciplinary primary health clinics. The PHN has commissioned IUIH to deliver the following programs:

- Integrated Team Care
- Primary Mental Health Care Services
- Suicide Prevention
- Alcohol and other Drug Treatment Services
- Partners in Recovery
- National Psychosocial Support
- School Readiness
- My Aged Care Regional Assessment Services
- Commonwealth Home Support Program.

Brisbane North PHN was also one of 12 lead sites across Australia funded to implement the National Suicide Prevention Trial. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were one on three priority population groups identified under the trial. Community consultations brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the region, who made clear recommendations about the way this work needed to be implemented in the community. We opted for a collaborative, co-design process which harnessed the opportunity to

do something different and in doing so, increased the capacity of the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Implementation Team was established to provide oversight and met monthly for the previous 18 months, supporting and guiding the work. A collaborative decision-making process was established from the outset and laid solid foundations for the establishment of the Community Implementation Team, and the subsequent enacting of the National Suicide Prevention Trial activities.

Additional funding has meant that the activities conducted under the Trial, and due to end by June 2021, will be continued for an additional 12 months.

These collaborative approaches to procuring services are in contrast to more competitive tendering processes in the past. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders felt strongly about further fracturing an already vulnerable community and recommended to our PHN that we embrace a different approach.

Implementation of the National Suicide Prevention Trial activities are ongoing, but we have already seen promising changes in:

- true community co-design
- voices being heard
- truthful, open and genuine discussions
- Integration of cultural processes
- working in culturally safe ways
- building new partnerships
- growing and nurturing engagement with many organisations.

We are proud of this work and believe it provides a strong example of reconciliation in action with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our region

The land, sea and waters of the Brisbane North region are traditional countries of the Yaggera (Yugara, Jagara, Yagara and variations), Waka Waka (Wakka Wakka), Turrubul (Turrabul, Toorbal, Tarabul, Churrabool and variations), Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi), Jonndoburrie and Ningy Ningy (Ninghi Ninghi) peoples.

With a population of over 1 million residents, our work supports clinicians and communities within North Brisbane, Moreton Bay and parts of the Somerset region. The PHN covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas.

In the most recent Census data available (2016), 20,118 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent in our region¹. This represents 2.1 per cent of the region's population (close to the national population at

2.8 per cent) and 10.8 per cent of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Brisbane North region increased considerably (an increase of 37.6 per cent, compared to 18 per cent nationally)². A large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living in the most disadvantaged areas in the Brisbane North PHN region, particularly in Caboolture, Morayfield and Deception Bay³.



Our organisation

Brisbane North PHN currently employs 101 (95 FTE equivalents) staff members, and one person identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

We have two offices located at Lutwyche and North Lakes. 70 people work in the Lutwyche office and 31 work in the North Lakes office.

In November 2020 at the organisation's Annual General Meeting, Mununjahli Yugambeh

woman Jody Currie became the first Indigenous Australian elected to the Brisbane North PHN Board of Directors. Ms Currie is the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane and has held various senior executive roles in areas of early childhood education, and health and human service delivery, and is an advocate for improving service accessibility to vulnerable communities.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017
² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017
³ Brisbane North PHN Needs Assessment, 2018

Our RAP

Why develop a RAP?

Our regional Needs Assessment process continues to make clear that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and social well-being is a key priority for the Brisbane North PHN.

The data demonstrates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have significantly poorer health and social well-being outcomes, including shorter life expectancy, than the rest of the population in our region³. Consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities highlighted the need for culturally responsive services to reduce barriers and improve self-agency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In addition to what the quantitative and qualitative data tells us, the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

People's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (2017-23)⁴ emphasises the negative impact of racism.

'...Racism has a negative effect on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Racism is experienced by a significant proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in daily life.' (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2017 Report, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, 2017, p.27.)

Our PHN recognises that a proactive engagement with reconciliation will contribute towards strengthening relationships and opportunities and building respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and

other Australians. We understand from Reconciliation Australia's emerging evidence base that these contributions have the potential to reduce racism as a common lived experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As an organisation that is tasked with the goal to improve health and social well-being outcomes and funded through Closing the Gap initiatives, we are committed to progressing high quality, evidence based work to improve health and well-being outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are committed to contributing towards reconciliation and closing the gap on life and health inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our region. Progressing our Innovate RAP ensures we will do this work in a respectful, meaningful and sustainable way.

Implementing the RAP: the Spirit of Reconciliation Working Group

Membership

Membership of the Spirit of Reconciliation working group comprises staff from across the PHN's programs:

Jody Currie [Special Advisor]	Brisbane North PHN Board Director
Gai Lemon [Co-Chair]	Program Development Officer-Alcohol and Other Drugs: Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs
Michelle Costello [Co-Chair]	Coordinator, Engagement and Partnerships: Communication and Engagement
Leanne Pianeda	Primary Care Liaison Officer: Primary Care Liaison Team
Rachelle Foreman	Executive Manager: Health Systems Improvement
Michelle Kaus	Population Health Data Officer: Knowledge, Planning and Performance
Warwick Pawsey	Program Development Officer: Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs
Marg Clarke	Events and Communications Officer Communications
Sarah Anderson	Coordinator: Regional Assessment Service

⁴ National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023



With an extensive career in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and human service delivery, Jody Currie has worked nationally and internationally in relation to advocating for First nation's rights. Jody identifies as a Yugambah person with traditional ties to the country between the Logan and Tweed Rivers. In her Special Advisor capacity, Jody is providing critical cultural knowledge, wisdom and governance to the working group. Jody is also helping to co-design an additional structure that embeds broader reconciliation governance to our working group. Members identified for the Reconciliation Governance Group (RGG) include people who identify as Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people and represent a range of specialised skills that will support us to progress our Innovate RAP actions and deliverables as well as our PHN's ongoing growth and learning in reconciliation (Figure 1). Remuneration or other benefits will be offered when requesting time and energy investment.

Planned RGG members include:

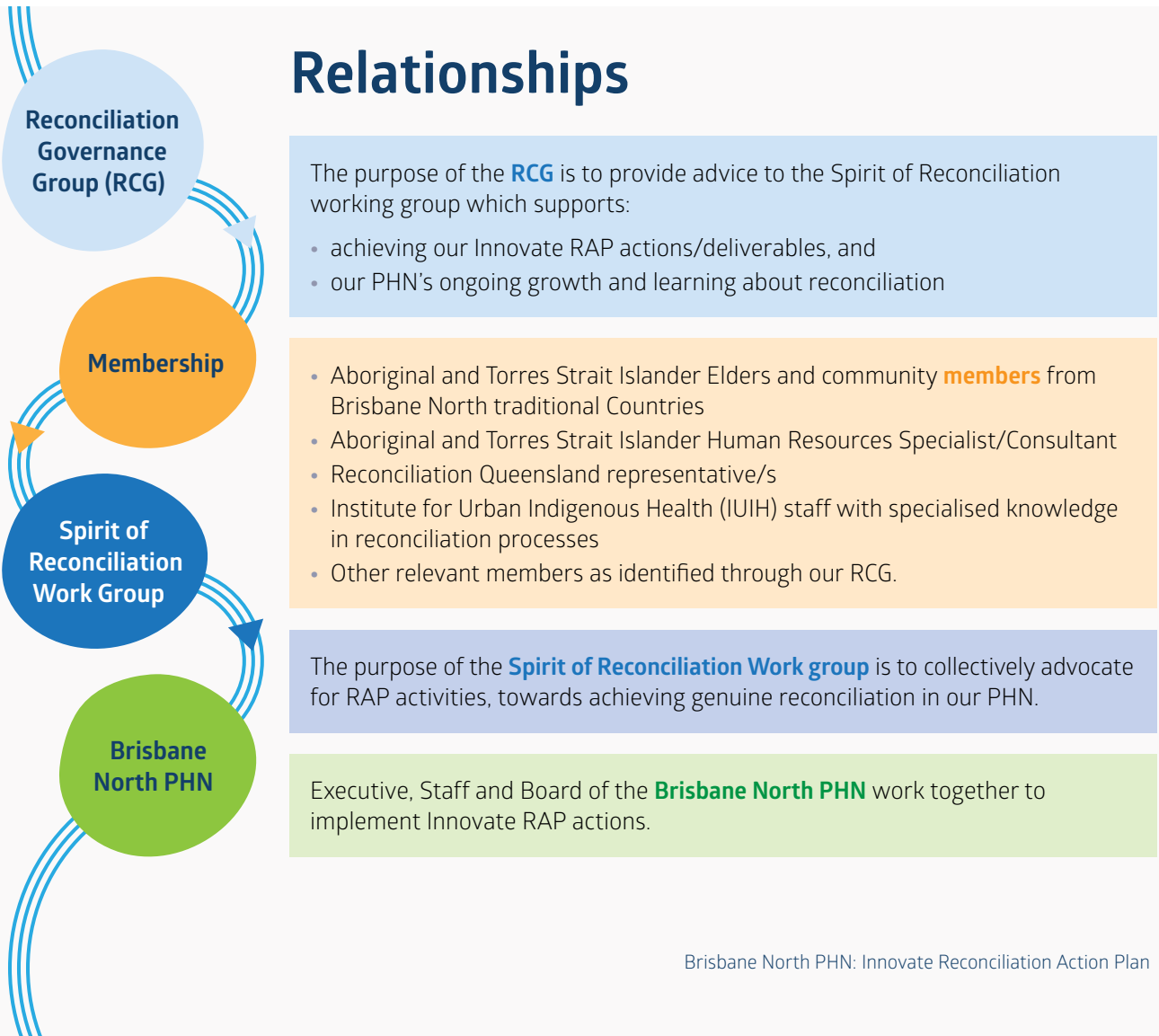
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community members from Brisbane North traditional Countries of the Yaggera (Yugara, Jagara, Yagara and variations), Waka Waka (Wakka Wakka), Turrubul (Turrabul, Toorbal, Tarabul, Churrabool and

variations), Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi), Jonndoburrie and Ningy Ningy (Ninghi Ninghi) peoples.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Resources Specialist/Consultant
- Reconciliation Queensland representative/s
- Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) staff with specialised knowledge in reconciliation processes
- Other relevant members as identified through our RGG.

Initial conversations with members about this structure design have commenced with the plan to formally meet in February 2022.

Figure 1: Relationship between the PHN's Reconciliation Governance Group and the Spirit of Reconciliation working group.



Purpose and objectives

To coordinate our commitment to reconciliation, an internal Spirit of Reconciliation working group was formed in 2011.

The purpose of the working group is to collectively advocate for activities towards reconciliation in our PHN, and to adopt Reconciliation Australia's aim to break down stereotypes and discrimination without prejudice in the true spirit of reconciliation.

The main objective of the working group is to champion reconciliation for Brisbane North PHN, which will in turn contribute towards better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the PHN region. The working group sets out to do this by engaging all PHN staff to understand and learn the value of reconciliation, as well as developing, implementing and evaluating a Brisbane North PHN Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Spirit of Reconciliation working group comprises internal PHN staff who collectively advocate for activities and initiatives that progress reconciliation. Where possible, member representation is drawn from the majority of Teams who work across the organisation. The working group devises Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and reports progress to the Executive Management Team.

For 2021, the KPIs include that the Spirit of Reconciliation working group will:

1. Meet a minimum of ten times per year
2. Ensure membership has representatives from a cross-section of PHN work areas (and where not represented engage with teams through RAP consultation processes)
3. Work with all PHN Teams and working groups to co-design and develop an Innovate RAP by July 2021.
4. Work with all PHN Teams and working groups to implement and track RAP actions and deliverables within specified timeframes.



Co-chairs of the Spirit of Reconciliation working group have watched the progress of implementing the Reflect RAP as a year of subtle yet significant changes within Brisbane North PHN.

The Spirit of Reconciliation working group has gained a position of legitimacy within the organisation; members of the group are key linkage points for driving the implementation of RAP activities, adding layers of support and accountability to those staff and teams responsible for elements of RAP completion. The Group is consulted on matters beyond the immediate progress of RAP indicators, such as the sustainable use of scholarship funding to support an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health worker in expanding their skill set.

In having representatives from a number of Teams within the PHN, change has permeated through to some that had previously been less responsive to the type of insights required to progress true reconciliation. Whilst it is still a long road, there are far fewer voices of dissent than when we first started on our RAP journey.

Through concentrated efforts of all involved with the Spirit of Reconciliation working group, it has become business as usual to offer an Acknowledgment of Country at each organisational led meeting. Volunteers are supported by a working group member to assist them in creating a heartfelt honouring where needed. Some staff have become comfortable with exploring their own understanding of the Aboriginal heritage in our region (and further afield), sharing images and stories about Country they had recently visited, and areas of particular significance they had encountered.

The working group has become embedded into the organisational structure. Whereas once it was seen more as an interest group, the Reflect RAP process of consultation and examination of internal processes has proven the Group as valid in creating the way forward for a more robust, accountable and inclusive PHN with regards to our First Nations communities of our region.

Co-Chairs - Spirit of Reconciliation working group

Activities/initiatives

Through the implementation of the RAP, the Spirit of Reconciliation working group facilitates several whole of organisation activities and initiatives.

Fortnightly staff meetings include an Acknowledgment of Country as standard procedure, and staff from the broader organisation are invited to volunteer to offer the Acknowledgment, supported by a mentor from the Spirit of Reconciliation working group. The Acknowledgment also offers an opportunity to talk about key events and milestones significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (i.e. Close the Gap Day, NAIDOC, National Reconciliation

Week, Mabo Day and more). The import of this activity now stretches more broadly across the PHN and is included in meetings with community stakeholders.

Other activities have included:

- Reconciliation Statement of Intent (2012)
- Staff Reconciliation Questionnaire (2017)
- Development of Spirit of Reconciliation Annual Work Plan (2018)
- Staff and Board engagement in development of Reflect and Innovate RAPs (2018-ongoing)
- Development of a video to facilitate cultural responsiveness and used within the induction process of new staff (2018)

- Launch of the Reflect RAP (July 2019)
- Successful completion of the Reflect RAP process (2020)
- Inclusion in Induction calendar for new staff (2021)
- Conducting activities at team meetings, staff and team development days
- Regular attendance at key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events, networks and meetings



Our Reconciliation journey

First steps towards Reconciliation

In 2012, the working group worked with our Board to formalise our commitment to reconciliation through the development of a Reconciliation Statement of Intent.

Five years on, the working group administered an anonymous, online questionnaire to ascertain a deeper understanding of staff knowledge and understanding about reconciliation; the results showed some progressive areas of work and staff with in-depth levels of understanding. However, it also highlighted inconsistent levels of understanding and awareness about the value of reconciliation and the

positive impacts it has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and social well-being.

At this juncture the working group felt it warranted the commencement of a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to facilitate bringing the whole organisation along on the journey towards genuine and sustainable approaches towards reconciliation. This would be crucial to embed reconciliation principles within our PHN's systems and organisational culture.

Reflecting – looking inward

The intent of the Reflect RAP provided us with a significant opportunity to engage all members of our PHN in a

reflective dialogue about the importance of reconciliation in all of our work (not just teams who support specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs).

Key requirements outlined in the Reflect RAP helped us to build strong 'whole of organisation' foundations to further grow our PHN's long term commitment to reconciliation. Providing staff and Board members ongoing opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue and develop our PHN's reconciliation vision was central to our working group's implementation approach.

Our process for developing the Reflect RAP was to engage staff and Board members in discussions to scope ideas about reconciliation. This included the following activities:

- Staff Development Day 2018 (attended by the entire PHN staff)

- Reconciliation Australia, a local Elder and Brisbane South PHN (further advanced in their reconciliation process) discussed their experience of reconciliation with our staff.
- The working group conducted a staff engagement activity that involved brainstorming how Brisbane North PHN could contribute to reconciliation across three levels: individual roles, teams and the entire organisation.

- Post-2018 Staff Development Day, the working group:

- consolidated staff feedback across Reflect RAP pillars (and parked several advanced ideas for our Innovate RAP)
- presented the draft Reflect RAP to our Board
- conducted a Board engagement activity that involved brainstorming additional Board contributions to the draft Reflect RAP
- conducted feedback sessions with Executive Managers, Managers and each PHN team on the draft Reflect RAP
- incorporated all feedback to finalise our Reflect RAP.
- The PHN's Reflect RAP was then signed off by our Executive Managers, CEO and Board prior to submitting to Reconciliation Australia for endorsement.

Innovating – developing and strengthening

While the Reflect RAP focused on 'scoping reconciliation', the Innovate RAP will concentrate on 'implementing reconciliation'.

An Innovate RAP outlines actions that work towards achieving our unique vision for reconciliation.

Commitments within this RAP allow us to be aspirational and innovative in order to help us gain a deeper understanding of our sphere of influence and establish the best approach to advance reconciliation. An Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our process for developing the Innovate RAP and scoping ideas about how we can shift from 'reflecting' to 'innovating' our PHN's contributions to reconciliation, was to engage staff in a range of team, working group and whole of staff discussions.

The Spirit of Reconciliation working group feels confident that our engagement process has been both comprehensive and inclusive of all staff and Board members. We are proud that we have engaged over 100 staff in a 'whole of organisation' dialogue and process to grow our Innovate RAP. This inclusive approach will be maintained throughout the implementation and evaluation of the Innovate RAP actions and deliverables.

The following steps were taken:

• Team and working group conversations

- The Spirit of Reconciliation Co-chairs facilitated 18 separate conversations with each team and working group about how they could contribute to achieving Reconciliation Australia's Innovate RAP actions and deliverables.
- Additional ideas (beyond those mandated by Reconciliation Australia) were also generated through this process.
- Each Team and working group also finalised specific reconciliation statements pertaining to their specific field of work.

• Staff Development Day workshop activity

- The Spirit of Reconciliation working group facilitated a whole of organisation Innovate RAP workshop at the April 2021 Staff Development Day.
- 170 ideas generated through the 18 team and workshop conversations were themed by Staff across the four Innovate RAP pillars (Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance).
- The Team and working group Reconciliation Statements were presented to the Manager or Chair of each, and Staff indicated their acceptance and allegiance to the Statements through placing their thumbprint on the Statement. These will be kept by each Manager and Chair and displayed. Signing on to the Statements mirrored a similar activity conducted at the Respect RAP launch; each Staff member placed a thumbprint on a larger Statement indicating support of working towards reconciliation.

• Development of Draft Innovate RAP

- Post Staff Development Day, further consolidation of the themes were made by the Spirit of Reconciliation working group across the Reconciliation Australia Innovate RAP Template.

• Executive Team consultation and review

- The Executive Team reviewed the draft Innovate RAP document and added additional leadership deliverables prior to Board review and endorsement.

• Board review and endorsement

- The PHN Board reviewed and endorsed the Innovate RAP in July 2021, once edits from the Executive Team have been approved.

Key learnings to date

The journey from reflection through to innovation within Brisbane North PHN has been heartening.

Connections have been made between the PHNs that border the north and south sides of the Brisbane River; Brisbane South PHN is further established in its reconciliation journey, and conversations with key First Nations' staff in that PHN have been invaluable in providing the Spirit of Reconciliation working groups with knowledge and insights. In particular, factors around HR processes within our organisation have been identified as central to attaining, supporting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees.

Whilst our HR Team is small, they are committed to bettering the recruitment process and ensuring a culturally respectful and supportive environment. Connection with our Reconciliation Australia contact has enhanced this aspect of the PHN too. We have not only included cultural awareness as a component of the induction process for all staff; we have introduced a welcome to the organisation by the Co-Chairs of the Spirit of Reconciliation working group, including an overview of the current RAP and how the inductee can be involved in the implementation of key aspects of the RAP throughout their work.

The Spirit of Reconciliation approach is one of inclusivity and consultation across all parts of the organisation. In bringing people along on the path to genuine reconciliation, it is imperative that all voices be heard and areas of dissent, gently yet purposefully addressed. The group incorporates education regarding key dates of importance for First Nations' people into the fortnightly

all of staff meetings. Feedback has been positive, and some staff have demonstrated how it has changed their point of view regarding celebrations held on certain dates (such as January 26), or given them a mechanism by which they can engage family and friends in recognising systemic forms of racism.

The creation of 'Flowing Knowledge, Healing Country' RAP artwork by Riki Salam is perhaps the most tangible point of connection across the organisation. Staff shared their own stories of connection to Country whilst Riki and his partner Diana listened in, took notes, and wove the stories through the artwork.

Elements of the art are embedded in the organisation's templates and email signatures, and on display in our online meetings as backdrops. Riki was consulted all the way through about how best to use and place the artwork elements, examples of which can be seen on the cover and back page of this RAP. Staff are able to see how they contributed to the overall picture, and this means a great deal of pride is enshrined within the art itself.

Riki said: "I had been invited to a workshop at which Brisbane North PHN staff came up with their vision for reconciliation and drew upon their ideas in creating my design. What struck me most profoundly was the PHN's desire to make their networks and places of practice culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The artwork depicts land and landscape between a body of water. Water flows through the centre. The depiction of the water represents the geographical river systems that are found throughout the Brisbane North PHN region. We are all connected by water. Metaphorically

these bodies of water represent our stories and the exchange of knowledge – knowledge of the land, its people and its law. Through these connections, trade routes are established, the exchange of knowledge informs us of how we look after Country and how Country looks after us – sustaining us with food and water to survive and providing us with medicine to heal."

People have become adept at sharing stories about places of significance they have visited and the connection that the First Nations' people of that Country have to those places. There is more confidence in offering an Acknowledgment of Country within meetings, and genuinely hearing the stories of Elders that offer a Welcome at one of our many external events. Each of these things may be small and inconsequential, however, combined, they amount to a significant change within the overall tenor of the organisation.

There are still many areas that we continue to improve and enhance. We need greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on our working group (and more broadly across our PHN). We are exploring options regarding the development of a Reconciliation Governance Structure to support the ongoing implementation of RAP actions, along with evaluating the impacts. As the organisation is situated on contested lands, we are looking to use a consultative approach rather than a formalised governance group, to better access broader perspectives and particular skill sets and to ensure all voices can be heard.

Our partnerships/current activities

In addition to those activities mentioned in the sections above, there has been a range of community partnerships engaged in to progress reconciliation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Community partnerships are both formal and informal in nature. Examples include:

- Memorandum of Understanding between PHN, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and Queensland Health to work collaboratively towards Closing the Gap (2013)
- Fundraising for Koobara Aboriginal and Islander Kindergarten and coordination of media opportunities at Koobara to promote early childhood health programs, such as child immunisations, with stories published in mainstream media and the Koori Mail (2013-14)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the PHN's Clinical and Community Advisory Councils (2015-ongoing)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Steering Committee established by

- Brisbane North PHN to support the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chapter in a joint PHN/Health and Hospital Service (HHS) Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs 5-year Regional Plan (2016-18)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Implementation Team established by Brisbane North PHN to support the National Suicide Prevention Trial for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (2017 – ongoing)
- Co-design and development of a cultural responsiveness induction video for PHN staff, produced by SIBW, a local First Nations-run publishing and events company (2017-18)
- Engagement with IUIH, Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services (ATSICCHS) and Kurbingui Youth Development to film the cultural responsiveness video (2017-18)
- Engagement with Reconciliation Queensland, Brisbane North Reconciliation Groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from Moreton ATSICCHS to screen the video and thank people for their contributions to the project. First Nations-run businesses catered for the event. A local Elder painted traditional artworks that were presented as gifts to people who contributed to the video (2018)
- Election of Mununjahli Yugambeh woman Jody Currie to the Brisbane North PHN Board of Directors (2020).

Current and ongoing activities include:

- Involvement in the organising committee and sponsorship of the “Wunya Baby/Child” events held in Moreton Bay each year (2018-current).
- Attendance at NAIDOC and other community events.
- Representation by the PHN on the Deception Bay “Communities for Children” committee which oversees programs centring on child development with a focus area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- Organising and supporting PHN Staff Cultural Awareness training.
- Attendance at the local Moreton Bay Council Murri Network monthly meetings.

Relationships

Through working with community and for community, we aim to close the gap in life expectancy, improve the mortality rates for children, and improve access to culturally appropriate and high-quality healthcare.

We work with community groups, other local service providers and other sectors to integrate and improve health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the region. These actions are founded on the development of solid relationships with our community members and organisations, to allow reciprocal flow of information.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 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 develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2023	• Coordinator-EP • Co-Chairs, SoR
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	June 2023	• Coordinator-EP • Manager, Communications
2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff and Board.	January 2024	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Spirit of Reconciliation working group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Encourage and support staff, senior leaders and Board to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR • CEO
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May - 3 June Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website .	April Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Implement strategies to engage our staff and Board in reconciliation.	January 2024	• CEO
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	January 2024	• Manager, Communications
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2023	• Manager, KPP
	Collaborate with RA and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	January 2024	• Co-Chairs, SoR
4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2022	• Manager, HR • Executive Manager, Corporate Services
	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2022	• Manager, HR • Manager, Communications
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	March 2022	• Manager, HR • CQ Administrator
	Educate the PHN staff and senior leaders on the effects of racism.	September 2022	• Manager, HR

Respect

A key Organisational Goal for Brisbane North PHN is to be informed and led by community voice.

As an organisation, the PHN is dedicated to listening to our community and strengthening the voice of consumers and carers. We endeavour to build the capacity of people and communities to influence and lead system design. We particularly acknowledge our responsibility to ensure self-determination for First Nations peoples.

Enhancing the capacity of the organisation and its staff to appreciate the cultural heritage and ongoing connection to Country held by local Traditional Custodians is a key factor attached to the implementation of this RAP. Genuine engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories provides a basis for respectful connection; this is imperative to progress the goal identified above.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5 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.	May 2022	• Chair - ODG working group • Co-Chairs, SoR
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	August 2022	• Chair - ODG working group
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff and Board.	October 2022	• Chair - ODG working group • Co-Chairs, SoR • Manager, HR
	Provide opportunities for Spirit of Reconciliation working group members, Managers, HR and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	February 2023	• Chair - ODG working group • Manager, HR
	Create culturally responsive and appropriate induction processes.	December 2021	• Manager, HR • Co-Chairs, SoR
6 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff and Board's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2021	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Continue to identify ways that make our office environment more welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (i.e. art work, flags).	January 2022	• Office Managers
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	August 2022	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	Monitor in August 2022/23	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	Monitor in August 2022/23	• Executive Manager – HSI (as SoR Executive representative)
7 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Spirit of Reconciliation working group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week, July Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	• Manager, HR
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff and the Board.	First week, July Annually	• Co-Chairs, SoR

Opportunities

Building capacity of providers to meet health needs of our region is a stated goal of Brisbane North PHN.

Through our commissioning role we partner with a wide range of health services aimed at addressing gaps in current health service delivery and promote joint planning and collective impact approaches to align services toward community needs and opportunities. The PHN is committed to supporting and enabling culturally responsive, partnership-centred solutions that uphold the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create the right environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate equally across identified opportunities.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8 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.	July 2022	• Manager, HR
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	April 2022	• Manager, HR
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	November 2022	• Manager, HR
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	January 2023	• Manager, HR
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	July 2022	• Manager, HR
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	December 2023	• CEO
	Enhance carer, consumer and community representation within the PHN.	June 2023	• Coordinator – EP • Manager, Communications
	Increase work placements and training within Teams	December 2023	• Executive Manager – Corporate Services



Continued on the next page

9	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	January 2022	• Executive Manager, Commissioned Services
		Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2021	• Executive Manager, Corporate Services
		Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2021	• Executive Manager, Corporate Services
		Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	April 2022	• Executive Manager, Commissioned Services
		Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2022	• Executive Manager, Corporate Services
10	Embed processes that support the PHN and other health services to deliver culturally responsive health services and systems	Conduct audit of all key PHN frameworks, policies and processes to ensure they are culturally responsive	July 2022	• Manager, HR
		Embed culturally responsive information and best practice approaches into PHN pathways and service delivery models.	September 2023	• Manager, Integration
		Promote cultural capability training to health services and professionals in the Brisbane North region	Monitor in August 2022/23	• Manager, Primary Care
		Procure and evaluate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific health and well-being services	Monitor in August 2022/23	• Executive Manager, Commissioned Services
		Encompass the principle of data sovereignty into practice by developing internal PHN data systems and processes that pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty.	November 2023	• Manager, KPP

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11	Establish and maintain processes for effective RAP governance.	Continue the co-creation of an additional structure to provide reconciliation governance (a Reconciliation Governance Group (RGG) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation to guide our RAP implementation and evaluation.	December 2021 • Executive Manager-HSI • Co-Chairs, SoR
		The Spirit of Reconciliation Working Group to meet with the Reconciliation Governance Group four times a year.	March / June / September / December 2022-2023 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Spirit of Reconciliation Working Group	Monitor in August 2022/23 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Spirit of Reconciliation Group.	December 2021 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March / June / September / December 2022-2023 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Continue to implement the internal Spirit of Reconciliation working group to support the development, implementation and evaluation of reconciliation initiatives in the PHN.	March / June / September / December 2022-2023 • Executive Manager-HSI • Co-Chairs, SoR
12	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2023 • Co-Chairs, SoR
13	Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022/23 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	30 September 2022/23 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	March / June / September / December 2022-2023 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2022 • Manager, Communications
		PHN Board to monitor implementation of the RAP through 6 monthly progress reports.	May 2022 • Co-Chairs, SoR
14	Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs to support RAP implementation	December 2021 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Engage our senior leaders (including Board members) and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2021 • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2022 • Manager, KPP • Co-Chairs, SoR
		Appoint and maintain at least one internal RAP Champion from senior management.	December 2021 • Executive Manager-HSI

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