

Reconciliation ACTION PLAN

May 2021 - May 2023



Centacare North Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

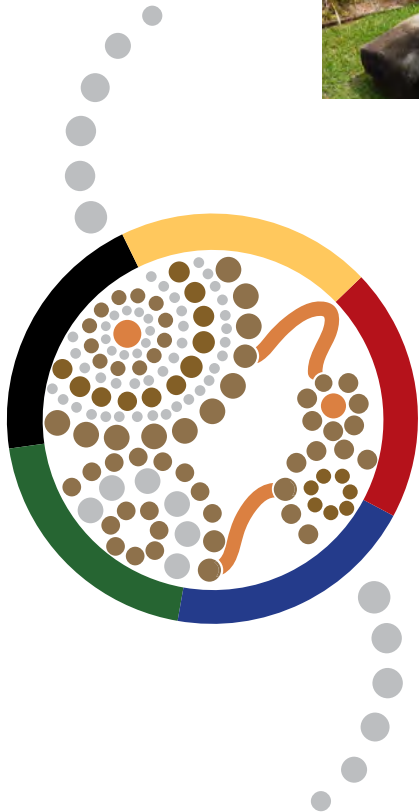


Artist
Lenora Aldridge

This symbol was originally designed by Lenora Aldridge who belongs to the Bindal traditional group of the Townsville area. Lenora is an Indigenous Advisor and staff member at Centacare North Queensland (NQ). We acknowledge Lenora's creativity and thank her for this design as our cultural symbol.

The Story of the Symbol

The large circle is Centacare NQ. The dots on the bottom of the symbol, leading into the circle, are clients seeking assistance. The dots on top of the symbol, leading out of the circle, are workers going into the community. The connected dots, in the middle of the circle, represent Centacare NQ working within the family unit; the mother, the father and the children.



Artist
Luke Duffy

The indigenous design elements throughout this RAP were designed by Kalkadoon Waanyi Aboriginal Contemporary Digital Artist Luke Duffy.

Centacare NQ first collaborated with Luke in 2019 with the creation of the Centacare NQ 40th Anniversary staff shirts and more recently with the development of Centacare NQ supporter shirts and the compensated permission to use his original designs as appropriate throughout Centacare NQ documents.



Most Rev Timothy J. Harris
Bishop of Townsville,
Catholic Diocese of Townsville



Paula Washington
Executive Director,
Centacare NQ

The Diocese of Townsville that I have the privilege to lead has had, and continues to have, a close relationship with the First Peoples of this land. Our advocacy and efforts are for them and we want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics to prosper in every possible way. I recommit our Diocese in helping our brothers and sisters to do just that.

One concrete way of embedding our commitment is to produce Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) across the Diocese. This one will guide the work of Centacare North Queensland. I commend this RAP for use by Centacare NQ.

I know that it will guide the staff and leadership of our key Social outreach agency. I know also that it will challenge ways of doing things as well as keeping Centacare on track as it responds to those in need in the name of Christ and His Church.

Catholic Social Teaching permeates everything Centacare does and with this additional RAP, I have every confidence that those who are most vulnerable in our community will be well served.

May our respect for our First Peoples never waiver.

Acknowledging the First Australians, Traditional Owners of the land on which Centacare NQ works. We offer our respect and support to Elders past, present and those emerging.

Centacare North Queensland's commitment to Reconciliation is evident in all aspects of our work in community. Being able to continue this commitment through the development of Reconciliation Action Plans has provided a transparent and accountable approach to what is already a deeply felt commitment.

The intention of our Reconciliation Action Plan is reflected in how it came to be, with staff at all levels involved, honest reflection on what our community have told us, courage to challenge ourselves and a genuine willingness to strive for the goals we have set.

Centacare NQ has grown immensely over the past 8 years of our Reconciliation journey and we now place ourselves in the Innovate stage, with our goal to progress further over the duration of this Plan.

Our RAP will guide the work of Centacare NQ as we continue working on our cultural competence, and inclusiveness more broadly. It provides us with a challenge to 'grow' as an agency and one that staff and our services willingly take on across all areas of our organisation.

Our RAP commitments will be realised in a way that reflects the principles and values of Catholic Social Teaching, specifically respect, dignity, equality, compassion, and integrity.



Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Director,
Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Centacare North Queensland on the formal endorsement of its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Centacare North Queensland continues to be part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

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

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that Centacare North Queensland will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

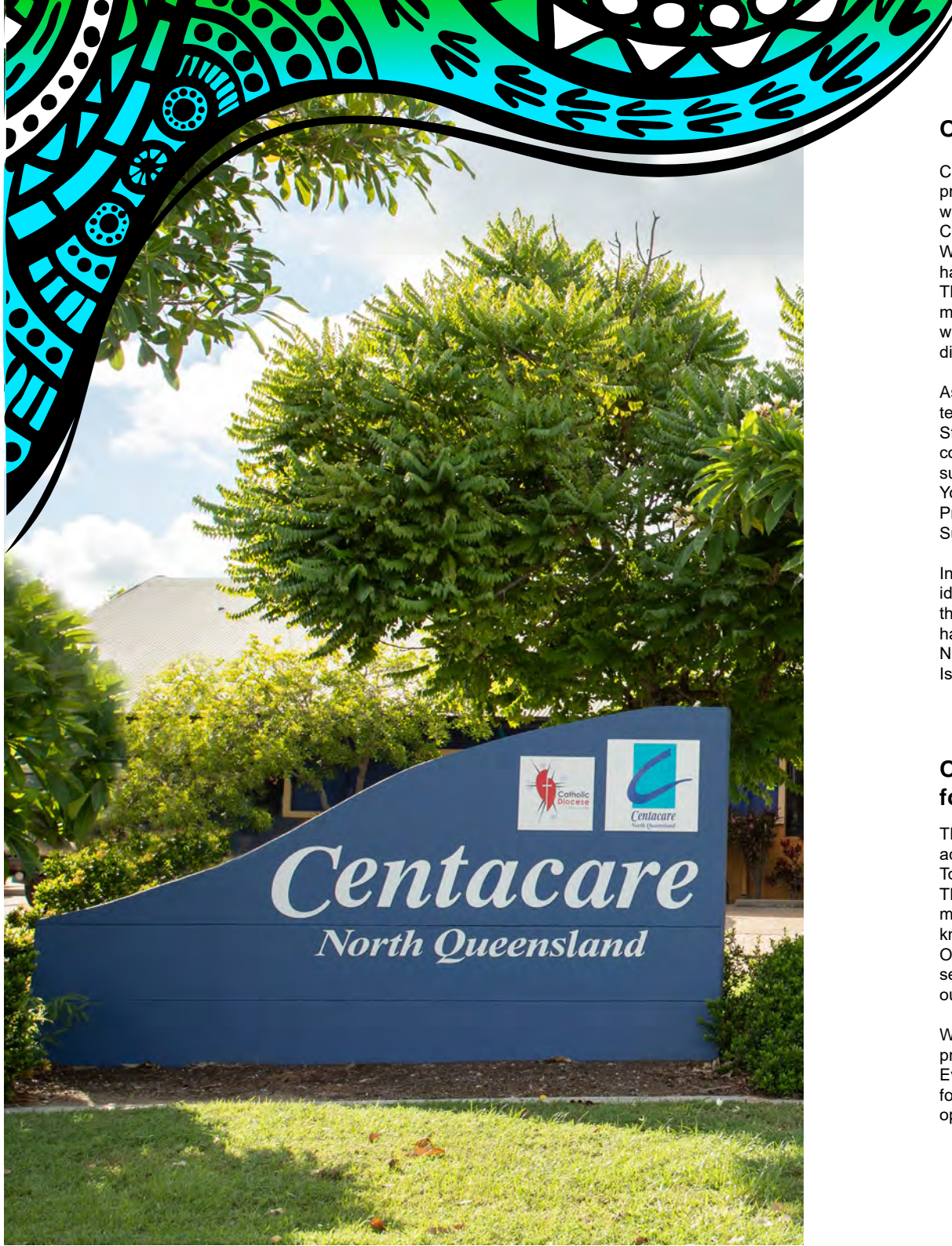
These learnings extend to Centacare North Queensland using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for Centacare North Queensland to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, Centacare North Queensland will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of Centacare North Queensland's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Centacare North Queensland on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Our Business

Centacare NQ is a social service ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville, we provide professional and respectful services to strengthen individuals, families and communities. Our work within the community is performed in accordance with four foundational principles of Catholic social teaching, being human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. We recognise the sanctity of life and that every person has inherent dignity and worth. We have responsibility for and to one another, and are called to work for the common good. The capacity and capabilities of people and communities will be respected, with decisions made by and/or inclusive of this most impacted. We seek to stand in unity prioritising those who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage and seek common ground rather than difference.

As a social services ministry of the Catholic Church we strongly anchored in the values and teachings of the Catholic Church and recognise our key partners in service delivery, both State and Commonwealth Government who provide the resources necessary for us to continue providing quality services across almost 25% of the State. We offer services supporting Family and Relationships, Disability and Aged Care, Community Development and Youth Support, Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution, Employee Assistance and Professional Development, Housing and Homelessness Support, and Child and Family Support Services.

In February 2021, 10% of our staff (15 staff members) across the North Queensland region identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Centacare NQ employs 152 staff across this region with the Diocese of Townsville encompassing 23% of the state of Queensland. We have physical office locations in Townsville, Bowen, Ayr, Mount Isa, Cloncurry and Normanton, and provide outreach services to 25% of North West Queensland including Palm Island, Ingham, Charters Towers, Collinsville, Richmond and Julia Creek.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

The Vision for Centacare North Queensland is 'Wellbeing for all'. This is our commitment to action. We believe that a reconciled nation acknowledges the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to land and water and celebrates the richness in diversity. Through our Values we strive to show Compassion and understanding for the multigenerational trauma that First Nations peoples have endured, to Respect their knowledge, truth telling and guidance on how we can be a part of progressing reconciliation. Our Mission is centred upon 'enhancing wellbeing and resilience through respect, dignity and service excellence'. We are committed to Equality, inclusion and collaboration in all areas of our work across North Queensland.

We recognise that true Reconciliation is about acknowledging the past and ensuring practices of Centacare NQ remain committed to unity across all aspects of the organisation. Everyone's voice is important, we must learn from Elders and support a bottom-up approach focused on togetherness in our community and ensuring emerging future leaders have the opportunity to thrive.



Centacare NQ's 2021-2023 Reconciliation Action Plan is our next challenge, in 2019 (18%) totalling 633 clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We are committed to ensuring our staff possess a deep appreciation and understanding of what our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members may be seeking our support for, and developing respectful, appropriate responses. An integral component of our Strategic Plan for the next 3 years is a commitment to diversity. This will be reflected in our internal policies, procedures, documentation, marketing, and reflect more evidently through our actions. This will also involve a stronger connection with the Traditional Owners and Elders across the North Queensland region and Catholic Diocese of North Queensland.

Over the last ten years Centacare NQ succeeded in attaining the goals of 2 RAPs. Reconciliation has remained a key focus area during the Agencies history. The first RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia was in 2013. At that time the agency's Strategic Plan 2013-2016 identified our goals for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their culture, families and communities as the key deliverables to strive for reconciliation. The RAP Working Party was made up of 6 Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members, including Executive Director (SLT), Director Client Services (DCS), Director Rural and Remote (D R&R), Indigenous Cultural Advisor/ Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (RAP Co-Chair), Manager for Child and Family Programs, and Indigenous Family Support Worker for Child and Family Programs. Centacare NQ's People and Culture Manager (P&C Manager) and Marketing and Communications Advisor (M&C Advisor) also hold integral roles in implementation of the RAP.

The 2021 RAP is developed with commitment to positive change and reconciliation by our Senior Leadership Team. Our Executive RAP Committee is Co-Chaired by Steve Burrowes, Director of Client Services and Lenora Aldridge, a Juru (Cape Upstart-Bowen region) Traditional Owner, with strong cultural connections to the Kalkadoon (Mount Isa) region, who lives in Townsville and has worked for Centacare NQ for over 12 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on our current committee is integral to the development of the RAP. Guidance, support and cultural safety have been important considerations with the voices of these staff guiding the development of the RAP. External to the Agency, we seek guidance and support from Sandra Crosato-Matters. Sandra is a Torres Strait Islander women and has cultural and family connections to Darnley Island. She has worked for the Queensland Government for over 25 years. Mrs Crosato-Matters is the Manager for the Townsville Service Centre with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership. Her passion is in education, employment and training, and helping young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their career goals. Anne Taylor, born in Ayr and raised across the river in Home Hill, is of Irish and Torres Strait Islander descent and has been living in Townsville for 21 years. Anne's Torres Strait Islander lineage connects her to the Dauer Meriam tribe from Mer (Murray Island). The Queensland Government has provided Anne with an avenue to enter the workforce and the positions she has held over the years has allowed her to build her skills, ability, knowledge and experience in working with and for individuals and families experiencing vulnerability, disadvantage and marginalisation. From 2018 - 2019, she led the implementation of the First 1000 Days Australia movement in Townsville. The international First 1,000 Days movement has contributed to evidence connecting a child's first 1000 days of life with lifelong outcomes. This important work, aimed at conception through to the child's second birthday, focused on nutrition and health, and informs maternal and child health practices (Ritte et al, 2016).



<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/>






Relationships





We are optimistic that continuing to build genuine and consultative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our agency, in community and throughout the services we provide, we will assist in individual and agency wide reconciliation.

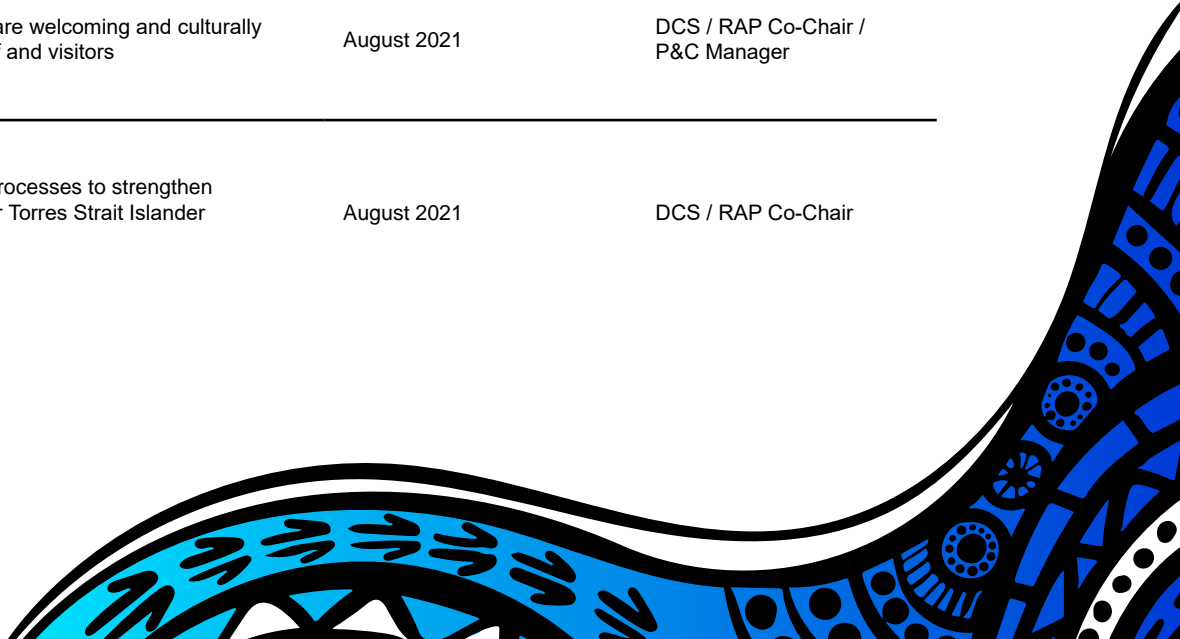
Focus area

Through strong relationship aligned to our strategic directions we will 'develop our workforce' through a collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Elders, and 'broaden our impact' in accordance with foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching in 'solidarity'

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 <p>Continue to build on mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</p>	Proactively engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to support trust relationships and develop guiding principles for future engagement	July 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Collate information across all offices relating to current and potential new relationships and/or activities, including engagement processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations	August 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	September 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
 <p>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	June 2021, 2022	Media and Communication Officer
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event and foster increased awareness across the organisation and community	May 2021, 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May 2021, 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Facilitate at least one NRW event each year	May 2021, 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	June 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
 <p>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</p>	Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation education, events and activities	July 2021	SLT
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through participation in events and positive promotion on website and social media	August 2021, 2022	Media and Communication Officer
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes and inclusion in our activities	August 2021, 2022	DCS / RAP Co-Chair / SLT
	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation	September 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and emerging needs or trends aligned with the Queensland Human Rights Act 2019	January 2022	SLT / P&C Manager
	Review, update and communicate the anti-discrimination policy for our organisation	January 2022	SLT / P&C Manager
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy including its effectiveness in supporting cultural safety	January 2022	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism	July 2021	SLT / P&C Manager
	Provide ongoing opportunities to facilitate increased knowledge awareness of the impact of racism and identification of innovative approaches to reduce racism and the impact	July 2021	SLT / P&C Manager
 Build strong relationships with employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.	Consider how we ensure all Centacare NQ offices are welcoming and culturally safe for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and visitors	August 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair / P&C Manager
	Review and update the induction procedures and processes to strengthen opportunities for engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees across Centacare NQ	August 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair








Respect



We believe that Respect is a recognition of the intimate relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples have with the land, water, their culture and history. It is of utmost importance that we respect and acknowledge the traditional owners on our path to reconciliation.

**Focus
area**

Respect aligns to the strategic initiatives of 'strengthening our processes and practices' and foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching in 'human dignity' and 'subsidiarity'.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 <p>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation	August 2021	DCS / P&C Manager/ D R&R
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff	August 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy	August 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair/ D R&R
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members and leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning	October 2021	SLT
 <p>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>	Proactively facilitate learning opportunities for staff to increase understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols	October 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	June 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in all reception areas across Centacare NQ	June 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	An Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all internal and external meetings	June 2021	SLT
 <p>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	Provide an induction for all staff information and resources relevant to the Traditional Owners of the lands that they are working on	July 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Senior Leadership to provide clear advice on participation in events and provisions to enable this	June 2021, 2022, 2023	SLT
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week	July 2021	SLT
	Budgetary considerations to be made across all programs to support NAIDOC week celebrations across the region	July 2021, 2022, 2023	SLT
	Display promotional material highlighting annual themes, decorate each office space and display NAIDOC themed messaging across all offices during NAIDOC week along with recognition of the celebration on social media	July 2021, 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event and facilitate a Yarning Circle to raise awareness of years theme and events-Elders invited	July 2021, 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair	



 **Centacare**
North Queensland



Opportunities



**Focus
area**

Centacare NQ believe in creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations through shared learnings, culture and knowledge, supporting Indigenous recruitment, and retention strategies aligned with our organisational governance, focused upon development of our staff and their connections within the community.

Opportunities aligns to the strategic initiatives of 'developing our workforce' and foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching in working for 'the common good'.



Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.




Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities	August 2021	DCS / P&C Manager/ D R&R
	Consultation with current Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Staff will occur to help inform future recruitment and retention strategies and increase cultural safety of the organisation	August 2021	DCS / D R&R
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy	August 2021	DCS / P&C Manager
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	October 2021	DCS / D R&R / P&C Manager
	Centacare will develop strategies to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply in Recruitment processes	September 2021	SLT
	Identify professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to both increase skills base, qualifications, and participation in the workforce	October 2021	P&C Manager
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to identify and remove potential barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace	September 2021	P&C Manager
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce	December 2021	SLT / P&C Manager

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 <p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	August 2021	Finance Manager
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses	September 2021	Administration Manager
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy	September 2021	Administration Manager
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff	September 2021	Administration Manager
 <p>Review opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete their Social Work and Master's placements at Centacare NQ</p>	Senior and/or middle leadership to liaise with the universities to encourage and support university student placements	August 2021	DCS / P&C Manager/ D R&R
	Liaise with current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to provide mentoring opportunities for students on placement at Centacare NQ	February 2022	DCS / P&C Manager / D R&R

Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 <p>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</p>	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2021, 22	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2021	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	June 2021, 22, 23 September 2021, 2022, December 2021, 2022, March 2022, 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Have senior leaders in CNQ and Traditional Owner and/or other community significant person as Co-Chair of RAP Committee	June 2021	SLT
 <p>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</p>	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021, 22, 2023	DCS
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2021, 22	M&C Advisor
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2022	DCS
 <p>Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</p>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2023	DCS
	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia in regard to prior learning, challenges and future direction of the new RAP	February 2023	DCS / RAP Co-Chair
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and endorsement	March 2023	DCS



Reconciliation ACTION PLAN

Contact details for enquiries about Centacare NQ's RAP

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