

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

in collaboration with



November 2024 – May 2026



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Artwork by **Melissa Barton**

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health.nsw.gov.au

November 2024





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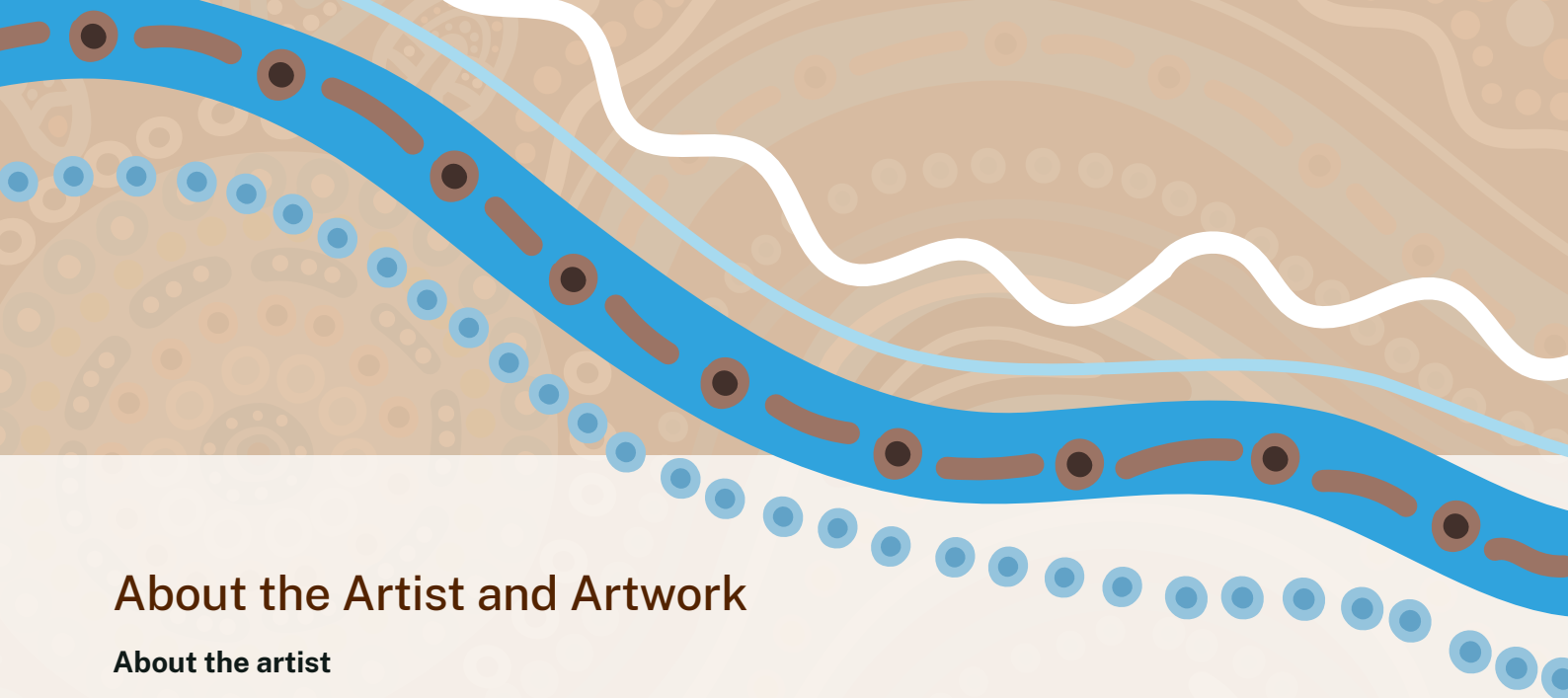
Acknowledgment of Country

The NSW Ministry of Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which 1 Reserve Road is situated: the Cammeraygal (Gammaraygal) people. We honour the ancestors of yesterday, the custodians of today and those of tomorrow. We recognise the continuing connection to land and waters, and how culture is held, nurtured and shared. We pay our respects.

Terminology

Within NSW Health, the term 'Aboriginal' is generally used in preference to 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of NSW (refer to Policy Directive [GL2019_008](#)) When referring to reconciliation more broadly this document has used 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' acknowledging that there are Torres Strait Islander people living and working in NSW.

The term '*non-Indigenous*' is used to refer to all people who do not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



About the Artist and Artwork

About the artist

Melissa Barton is a contemporary Aboriginal artist living on Dharug Country, in the Macarthur region of Sydney. Melissa is a proud Boorooberongal clan woman of the Dharug nation, with her connections to Aboriginal culture dating back thousands of years.

Melissa is passionate about sharing stories like her ancestors and Elders through creativity and art, Melissa is able to depict and convey meaning and story telling onto the canvas so people can come on a journey of understanding and learn more about Aboriginal culture, stories, and identity.

Budyari Dhurabangin

(Named in Dharug Dalang -language - this name translates to Healing Rivers)

The artwork embodies a powerful narrative of connection and reconciliation in health between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in NSW. At the foundation, the flowing river systems are depicted in the shape of our state, symbolising the lifeblood that nourishes all corners of NSW and connecting the 50-plus Aboriginal nations together. These rivers not only provide sustenance and health but also serve as a metaphor for unity – an essential thread weaving together our diverse stories and experiences.

The rivers swirl and intertwine, representing the clean flow of life and the vital importance of maintaining our natural environment. As they meander through the canvas, they evoke a sense of movement and continuity, reflecting the shared journey toward healing. This imagery speaks to the ways our waterways connect us, reminding us that we are all part of a larger ecosystem, reliant on one another for wellbeing.

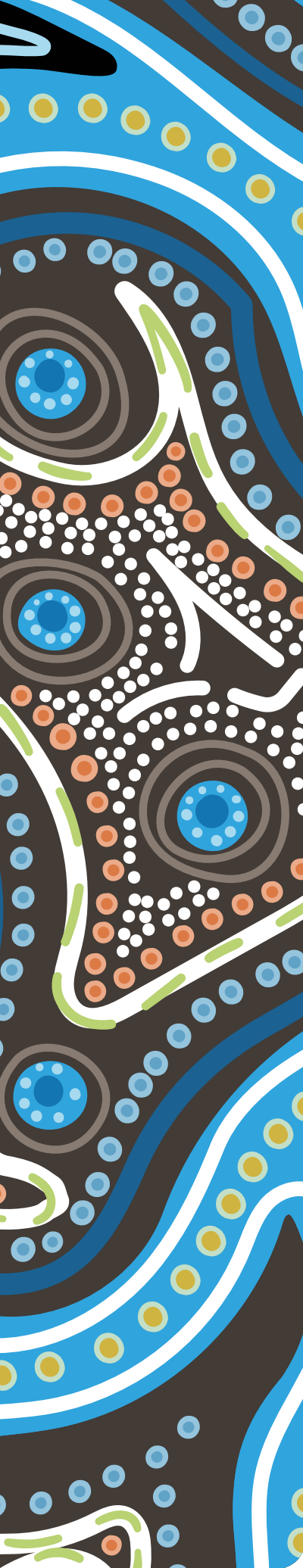
Above this vibrant foundation, larger circles featuring U-shaped symbols illustrate the collaborative spirit of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. These symbols are a testament to our shared commitment

to work together – bridging gaps, fostering understanding, and cultivating mutual respect. The kangaroo tracks, etched across the canvas, signify our shared path forward. They encourage us to keep moving, to progress together with purpose and determination, echoing the resilience of our ancestors who have walked these lands long before us.

In the sky above, smaller circles represent our ancestors, watching over us as we navigate this journey. Their presence offers guidance and wisdom, reminding us of the rich tapestry of culture and tradition that underpins our collective identity. They inspire us to honour the past while forging a brighter future.

Through “Budyari Dhurabangin” I invite viewers to reflect on the beauty of connection and the power of collaboration in fostering healing. This artwork serves as a call to action for all communities to come together, acknowledging our shared responsibilities and celebrating the strength found in our unity. Let it be a beacon of hope and a reminder that, like the rivers, we can flow together toward a healthier, more harmonious future.





A message from the

Secretary, NSW Health

I am proud to present the NSW Ministry of Health's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect RAP), which marks an important step forward in our journey towards meaningful reconciliation.

This plan will help the Ministry reflect on where we are in our reconciliation journey and prepare us for future reconciliation initiatives.

At the heart of NSW Health, we care for community. We have a responsibility to be active participants in bringing about much needed healing and building a more equitable and respectful future for Aboriginal people.

Our ongoing work to ensure Aboriginal people and communities have positive health experiences and outcomes is a priority, but we also recognise that improved health experiences and outcomes require investment in meaningful and widespread reconciliation.

Aboriginal people and communities have lived on these lands for tens of thousands of years, creating a rich cultural heritage. Our vision for this plan is that we make our contribution towards an Australia where Aboriginal cultures are cherished and celebrated, and self-determination is realised.

The reconciliation process will be led by the Ministry's non-Indigenous staff in collaboration with our Aboriginal colleagues. Our Reflect RAP demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to ensuring our staff gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal cultures and to uphold the principles of respect, equity, and cultural safety in all aspects of our work.

Our foundational Reflect RAP provides a roadmap to continue our reconciliation journey and outlines the pathway of actions we will take - from building a culturally safe workplace, strengthening relationships with our Aboriginal partners, stakeholders and communities, and investing in our Aboriginal workforce.

Underpinned by our CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment, we will foster an inclusive workplace where the wisdom and contributions of Aboriginal people are valued and respected.

This plan embodies the Ministry's ongoing commitment to truth-telling, relationship-building and healing outlined in the Apology to the Stolen Generations I made on behalf of NSW Health on National Sorry Day in 2022.

I acknowledge there is much more to be done, as we as an organisation commit to walking this collective truth telling journey for many years to come.

I look forward to seeing these commitments become action, and I encourage each and every one of us to be accountable for, and embody, our goal of reconciliation both in the workplace and in our day-to-day lives.

Susan Pearce AM
Secretary, NSW Health



A message from

Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the NSW Ministry of Health to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The NSW Ministry of Health joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

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

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

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

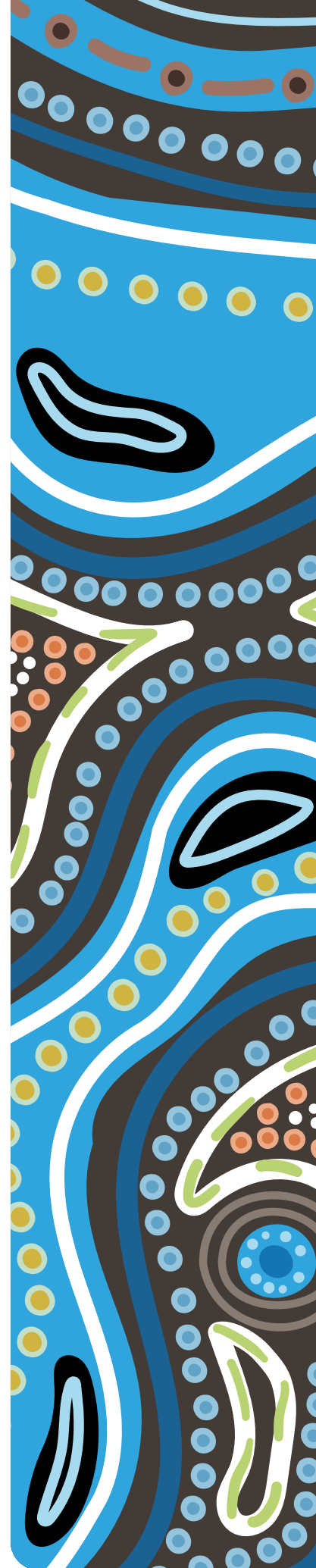
These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

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

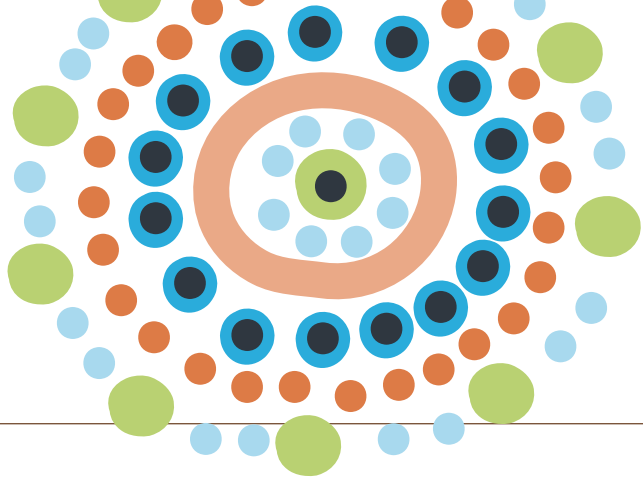
This Reflect RAP enables the NSW Ministry of Health to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives,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

Congratulations NSW Ministry of Health, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Our Statement of Commitment



The NSW Ministry of Health is committed to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal people by embedding Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being into the systems, structures and operations of the Ministry.

Aboriginal health is a priority for the Ministry, we recognise that improved health outcomes require investment in meaningful and widespread reconciliation. Therefore, this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), is part of a larger commitment towards reconciliation and truth-telling that extends beyond the health domain.

“ Aboriginal health is a priority for the Ministry, but this Reflect RAP is not just health specific. It must be recognised as being part of a much bigger piece of work and commitment towards reconciliation... it is directly related to truth-telling.”

Employee of the Ministry

We believe reconciliation is the responsibility of non-Indigenous people. Therefore, the reconciliation process will be led by non-Indigenous staff in collaboration with our Aboriginal colleagues.

A critical part of our reconciliation journey is to lay the foundations for building an enabling workplace environment that is free of **racism** and has an understanding of Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing, and being. This requires us to build and maintain trusted and genuine relationships with Aboriginal people and communities across NSW, and actively invest in our cultural learning journey.


To do this, the Ministry will:

1. **Accept and acknowledge Australia’s history** – educate ourselves and each other about the history of Australia, and the ongoing impacts of **colonisation** on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
2. **Be creative and do things differently** – build the foundations to activate a new way of working that is grounded in self-determination, and genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities.
3. **Establish a culturally safe enabling environment** – promote a workplace environment that enables people to acknowledge, and challenge individual and institutional racism and unconscious bias through self-reflexivity and open conversations.
4. **Take ownership and responsibility** – hold all Ministry staff, particularly Executives, accountable for promoting reconciliation and **cultural safety**, as reconciliation is reliant on personal action, collective commitment, and meaningful investment.
5. **Build and nurture relationships** – establish trust, listen deeply and deliver services in a way that meets the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people and communities on their terms, with reference to local mobs, location, social phenomena, language, context and so on (**pedagogy of place**).
6. **Commit to continuous quality improvement** – build the foundations for an ongoing and continuous journey towards meaningful reconciliation and cultural safety.



“Commitments are important. But firm commitments that are backed up by deliverables and actions are better.”

Employee of the Ministry



**“At the core of
it all, we care
for community.
So, we have a
responsibility
to do this.”**

Deputy Secretary

Our Vision & Values

Our vision for reconciliation is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live and work in a reconciled Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have positive and holistic health and wellbeing outcomes.

We know that this starts with and requires building genuine partnerships, truth-telling and historical acceptance of this country's past and the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As NSW Health, we are in a unique position to deliver health services that reflect and respond to the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people, and that centre Aboriginal paradigms.

In addition to NSW Health CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment we will be guided by the following values:

Courage

Courage in the face of racism is our change agent. We must be courageous in our approach to creating an enabling workplace environment, where we can have uncomfortable and challenging conversations.

Shared responsibility

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility and must be committed to by everyone. Placing the primary responsibility to non-Indigenous staff can reduce colonial load of Aboriginal staff and peoples.

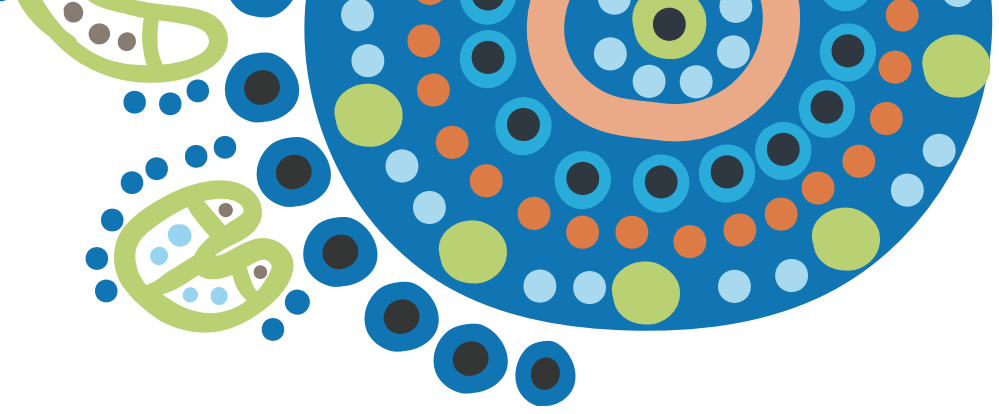
Open heart and mind

Building the foundations for meaningful reconciliation requires an open heart and mind to learn about and accept the truth of this country's past. It also requires an openness to acknowledge and celebrate other ways of knowing, doing and being.

Relationality

Reconciliation cannot happen without building and nurturing genuine relationships with Aboriginal people, organisations and communities.

Our Business



The NSW Ministry of Health core business is to support the executive and statutory roles of the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Medical Research. We are the 'system manager' of the NSW public health system, the largest public health system in Australia, operating more than 220 public hospitals and providing community health and other public health services. We guide the development of services and investments in the NSW public health system to ensure that the health priorities of the NSW Government are achieved for the community of NSW. We are also responsible for monitoring the quality and safety of the NSW public health system and for providing leadership in clinical governance.

The Ministry has one office location at 1 Reserve Road, St Leonards NSW and employs approximately 1,100 people. Of those 1,100 staff members, approximately 29 (2.63%) identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.¹ As the system manager for NSW Health, the Ministry's geographical reach is statewide across all of NSW. NSW is home to more than 8 million people of whom 3.4%, or 278,043 individuals identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.² In total, the NSW public health system employs approximately 176,000 people (139,881 full-time equivalent staff as at June 2024) of whom 3.04% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our Partnerships and Current Activities

We have developed in partnership with Aboriginal people and stakeholders' a number of system-wide initiatives such as the NSW Aboriginal Health Transformation Agenda which outlines NSW Health's response to the Priority Reform Areas from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG). It is the key strategic workplan for Transforming Aboriginal Health in NSW that compiles projects and actions from across the NSW Health System.

Additionally, the refreshed Aboriginal Health Plan has been developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC). It incorporates the Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas as cross-cutting enablers of change and systematic transformation, working in partnership

to achieve the highest level of health for Aboriginal people, families and communities. Under the plan NSW Health aims to be engaged in and accountable to Aboriginal co-led and co-created formal partnership arrangements that are sustained, adequately resourced, trusted, impactful and committed to Aboriginal defined priority outcomes and strategies. Five reform priorities have been identified under the Priority Reform Area 'Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making' including:

- **Co-creation and shared decision-making** – To increase the level of Aboriginal ownership and co-creation in commissioning, design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation across the health system.
- **NSW Health governance and management** – To strengthen investment of time and resources in formal co-creation and shared decision making for meaningful outcomes in all State level partnership arrangements with Aboriginal people and organisations.
- **District-level governance and management** – To strengthen investment of time and resources in formal co-creation and shared decision-making for meaningful outcomes in all District level partnership arrangements with Aboriginal people and organisations.
- **Service-level governance and management** – To strengthen investment of time and resources in formal co-creation and shared decision-making for meaningful outcomes in all service level partnership arrangements with Aboriginal people and organisations.
- **Cross-sector collaboration** – To strengthen NSW Health leadership in facilitating cross sector collaboration for better health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Other key initiatives include:

- Expanding our Aboriginal workforce
- Developing the Racism Accountability Framework
- Funding new multi-disciplinary hub services in regional and rural areas and;

¹ Ministry of Health Aboriginal Workforce Dashboard as of 11 April 2024.

² ABS Census 2021

- Developing an Aboriginal Health Governance and Accountability Framework. The purpose of the Framework is to embed Aboriginal peoples at all levels of decision-making across the NSW Health system to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Ministry has a wide range of programs to support Aboriginal Health. In August 2024 the Enterprise Program Management Office conducted a mapping exercise of these programs and how they interact with the Centre for Aboriginal Health (CAH). 123 programs across the MoH were identified as either being Aboriginal Health specific (74), or programs containing Aboriginal Health components (49). Common themes were identified across the programs, including:

- Improving access to services
- Strengthening and empowering Aboriginal Communities to make informed decisions about their Health
- Strengthening support for Aboriginal Health staff in NSW Health to deliver culturally safe health care to Aboriginal Health communities.
- Improving prevention and care for Aboriginal people e.g. in Alcohol and other drugs, maternal and family health, oral health, mental health, non-communicable and communicable diseases and violence, abuse and neglect.
- Improving access to research grants to support Aboriginal-led research.
- Procurement and asset management.³

NSW Health also has a long-standing partnership agreement with the AH&MRC and supports 42 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to meet the holistic healthcare needs of Aboriginal people in NSW. Strong partnerships with ACCHOs enable the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal communities to guide health system planning.

An example of Ministry partnerships with ACCHOs includes work to improve access to health services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients living in regional, rural and remote areas through a new

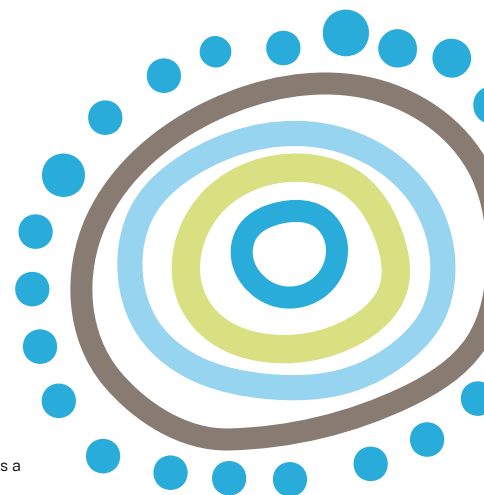
Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS) initiative. IPTAAS provides financial assistance to patients travelling from regional, rural, remote locations to receive healthcare. The IPTAAS/ACCHO Direct Funding Initiative provides IPTAAS funds to participating ACCHOs to manage on behalf of their patients. Providing IPTAAS funding directly to each pilot will leverage the knowledge of the ACCHO to remove barriers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may encounter when applying for the scheme. ACCHOs and the Ministry are partnering through a flexible agreement to ensure there is room to learn and adapt throughout the pilot initiative.

These partnerships and initiatives are essential noting challenges in achieving Closing the Gap targets for health and wellbeing outcomes, with the following targets recorded as not on track in the Closing the Gap Report released July 2024:

- Target 1 – By 2031, Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation'
- Target 4 – By 2031, Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.
- Target 14 – Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

Our Reconciliation Journey

Our commitment to reconciliation is underpinned by the need to build long-lasting and trusted relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, to support culturally safe workplaces, and to respond to and address racism. Historical discrimination and harms experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people because of government policies has resulted in a loss of trust and fear of accessing public health services, a barrier which still exists today. We are developing this RAP to show our commitment to reconciliation and improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being outcomes.



³Data collection through the EPMO and ODSs, Aug - Sep 2024. Note: [1] This list may not be exhaustive, however should be considered as a baseline in understanding the distribution of programs across the Ministry (inclusive of ACI, excludes CAH programs).

Our approach to implementing the RAP is to add value to our existing work. It is important that the RAP is embedded across the entire Ministry, and critical that all staff contribute to its implementation. Whilst the implementation of the RAP will require strong leadership from our Executive, it is important that we establish collective accountability across the whole organisation.

We are at the beginning of our Reconciliation Action Plan journey. We are however already active in guiding and implementing policies aimed at improving Aboriginal peoples' health outcomes and workforce development.

RAP Champion:

Deputy Secretary, Rural and Regional Health

RAP Advisory Committee:

The Reflect RAP Advisory Committee will oversee the development of the Ministry Reflect RAP and support and facilitate reconciliation across the Ministry by building relationships, respect and trust. These align with the core values of NSW Health.

The Advisory Committee will comprise of Ministry Executive, Chief Executives, other senior Ministry Executive, and Directors of Aboriginal Health from the Ministry. This will include a core membership of senior Aboriginal and non-Indigenous staff. This model highlights the responsibility of non-Indigenous employees to lead reconciliation, which is informed by cultural expertise whilst being respectful of the colonial load for Aboriginal peoples. It also demonstrates a culture of truth telling and Aboriginal governance to key stakeholders and decision makers.

Members for the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee are:

- Deputy Secretary, Rural and Regional Health, (Co-Chair)
- Executive Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health, (Co-chair)
- Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance
- Principal Advisor, Strategy and Partnerships, Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Chief Executive, Health Education and Training Institute
- Deputy Secretary, Population and Public Health
- Deputy Secretary, Patient Experience and System Performance
- Deputy Secretary, Health System Strategy and Planning
- Director, Information and Performance Support, Regional Health Division

- Executive Director, Office of the Secretary
- Chief Executive, Northern NSW Local Health District
- Chief Executive, Central Coast Local Health District
- Deputy Secretary & Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Asset Management
- Executive Director, Centre for Population Health
- Executive Director, Strategic Communications and Engagement Branch
- Manager Aboriginal Health Unit, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

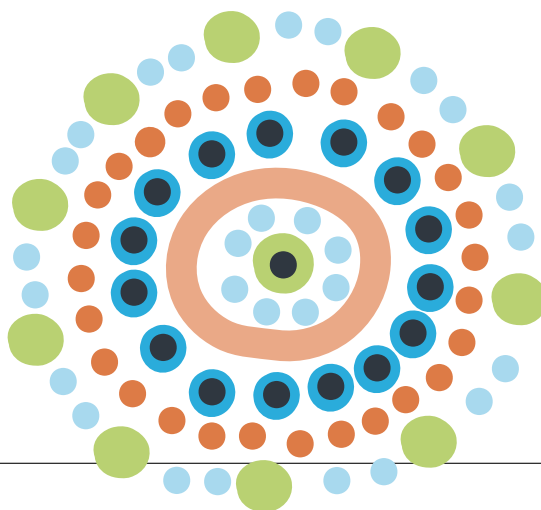
Three of these members identify as Aboriginal people.

RAP Working Group:

The RAP Working Group has been established to guide the development and implementation of the RAP. The RAP Working Group reports to the RAP Advisory Committee. The group has representatives from multiple areas across the Ministry and it is expected that the group will support the implementation of some key deliverables.

There are ten members, and two identify as Aboriginal people:

- Director, Information and Performance Support, Regional Health Division
- Director, Virtual Care
- Principal Project Officer, Program Support Unit, Regional Health Division
- Project Officer, Program Support Unit, Regional Health Division
- Senior Communications Officer, Strategic Communications and Engagement
- Director, Enterprise PMO, Office of the Secretary
- Associate Director, Workforce Planning and Talent Development
- Associate Director, Workplace Relations
- Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Principal Project Officer, Patient Experience.



Ministry Executive Meeting

Advisory Committee

Co-chairs: Deputy Secretary, Rural and Regional Health and Executive Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health
Secretariat: Regional Health Division

Working Group

Co-chairs: Director Information Performance Support, Regional Health Division and Director, Virtual Care
Secretariat: Regional Health Division

Communications and Engagement Team

Reporting Team

Branch/Division Leads

Governance Diagram:

The RAP governance structure is outlined in the diagram above.

About this RAP

ABSTARR Consulting was engaged to support an independent process of consultation within and across the Ministry's programs and services, engaging team members and people managers to identify priorities for consideration and inclusion in the Reflect RAP. The purpose of this Reflect RAP is to build the foundations for a culturally safe and responsive workplace within the Ministry and the broader health system, where Aboriginal people have optimal health outcomes.

According to Reconciliation Australia: *'Committing to a Reflect RAP means scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, deciding on your vision for reconciliation and exploring your sphere of influence.'*⁴

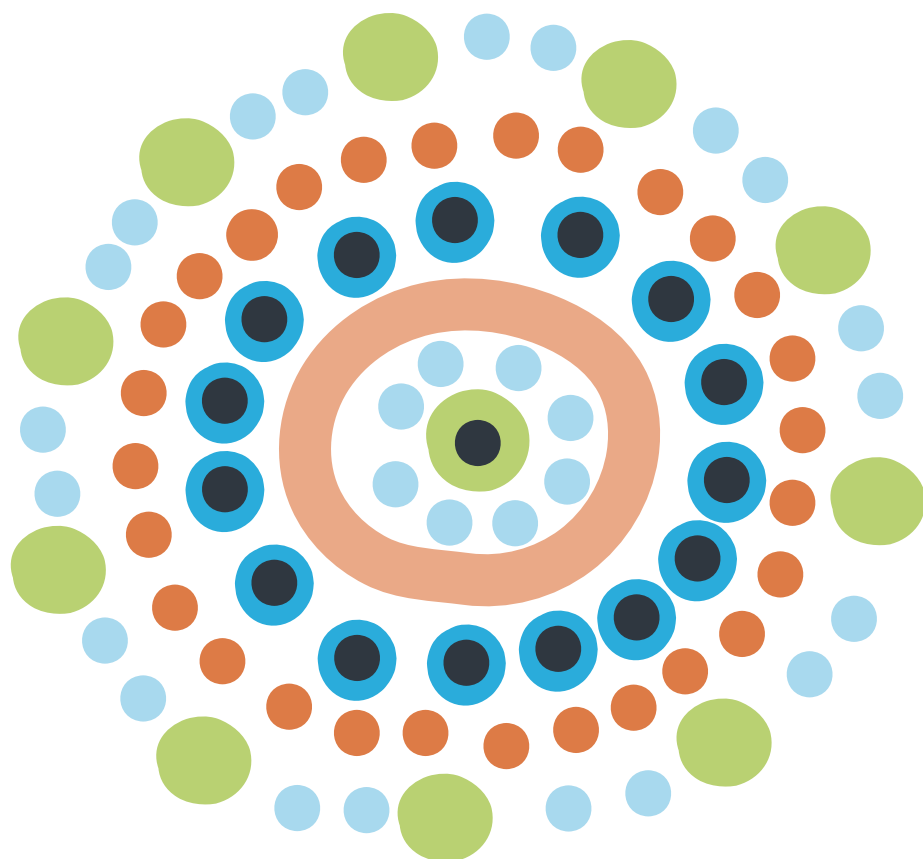
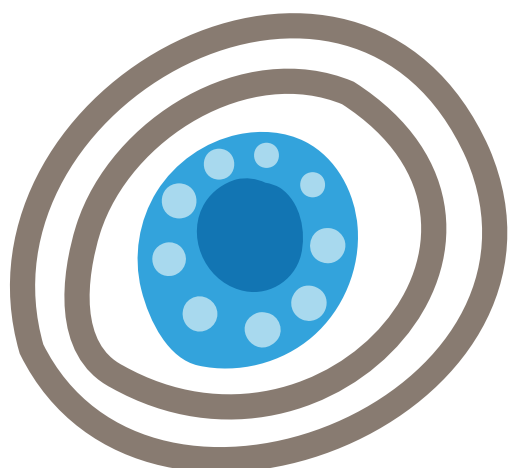
Developing a Reflect RAP therefore requires:

- (i) investment in Aboriginal stakeholder engagement; and
- (ii) investment in mapping out and articulating the Ministry's vision and values for reconciliation.

Consultation with the Ministry's staff is critical to achieving these key priorities. Through the development of this RAP, approximately 431 employees were engaged through online survey, in-person workshops, one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions. The Consultation Report, details the findings from the data assessment and consultation process. These findings indicate that the Ministry has an enabling environment for meaningful reconciliation work and cultural safety and is clearly committed to improving health outcomes through investment in meaningful reconciliation.

The engagement process was an invaluable process which informed the development of this Reflect RAP, including the visions, values, commitments, and actions. Using the findings and in alignment with Reconciliation Australia's core focus areas, this RAP is focused around three pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities and supported by strong Governance.

Each pillar includes specific focus areas with actions, deliverables, timelines, responsibilities and strategic and values alignment.



⁴Reconciliation Australia, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Framework. Sourced from: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/RAP-framework.pdf>

Our Reconciliation Action Plan



“Building trusted relationships takes time, and people need to understand this.”

Employee of the Ministry



Relationships

We understand that relationship building is a critical part of meaningful reconciliation. To meet the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people and their communities, we must build and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders, partners, and communities. Meaningful and long-term relationships with Aboriginal people and communities requires trust, time, patience, and collaboration.

Focus Area: Build and maintain genuine partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders, organisations, and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the NSW Aboriginal Health Governance and Accountability Framework including Appendix 1: NSW Health & Community Controlled Sector Partnership Matrix 	April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary Clinical Innovation and Research, Agency for Clinical Innovation
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event 	27 May – 3 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week 	27 May – 3 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretary, NSW Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff 	May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance

Relationships (cont.)

Focus Area: Build and maintain genuine partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff 	May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Strategic Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Ministry of Health branch and divisional meetings include a focus on improving Aboriginal Health outcomes 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary Clinical Innovation and Research, Agency for Clinical Innovation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of Ministry of Health expectations on what constitutes appropriate behaviour in the workplace, including the negative impact of discriminatory and racist behaviours. 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations

Our Reconciliation Action Plan



“Everyone... should be calling out unacceptable behaviour. [As a First Nations person] it is exhausting to always call it out.”

First Nations employee of the Ministry

Respect

We will be a culturally safe environment that enables staff to challenge individual and institutional racism and unconscious bias through self-reflexivity, open conversations and actions. We will be an organisation that embraces Aboriginal ways of knowing doing, and being and embed truth-telling, self-determination and healing into our everyday practice and business-as-usual.

Focus Area: Prioritise truth-telling and address racism

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop a zero-tolerance approach to racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review NSW Health policies and strategies through a cultural safety lens to identify structural and institutional racism, with a view to updating policies and processes in a timely manner to reduce the impact of systemic racism. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will be embedded into the review 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a NSW Health Racism Accountability Framework 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations, Centre for Aboriginal Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the code of conduct to include racism, that details above and below the line behaviour 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise publication of Work Health & Safety: Better Practices Procedures with relevant inclusion of cultural safety 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations

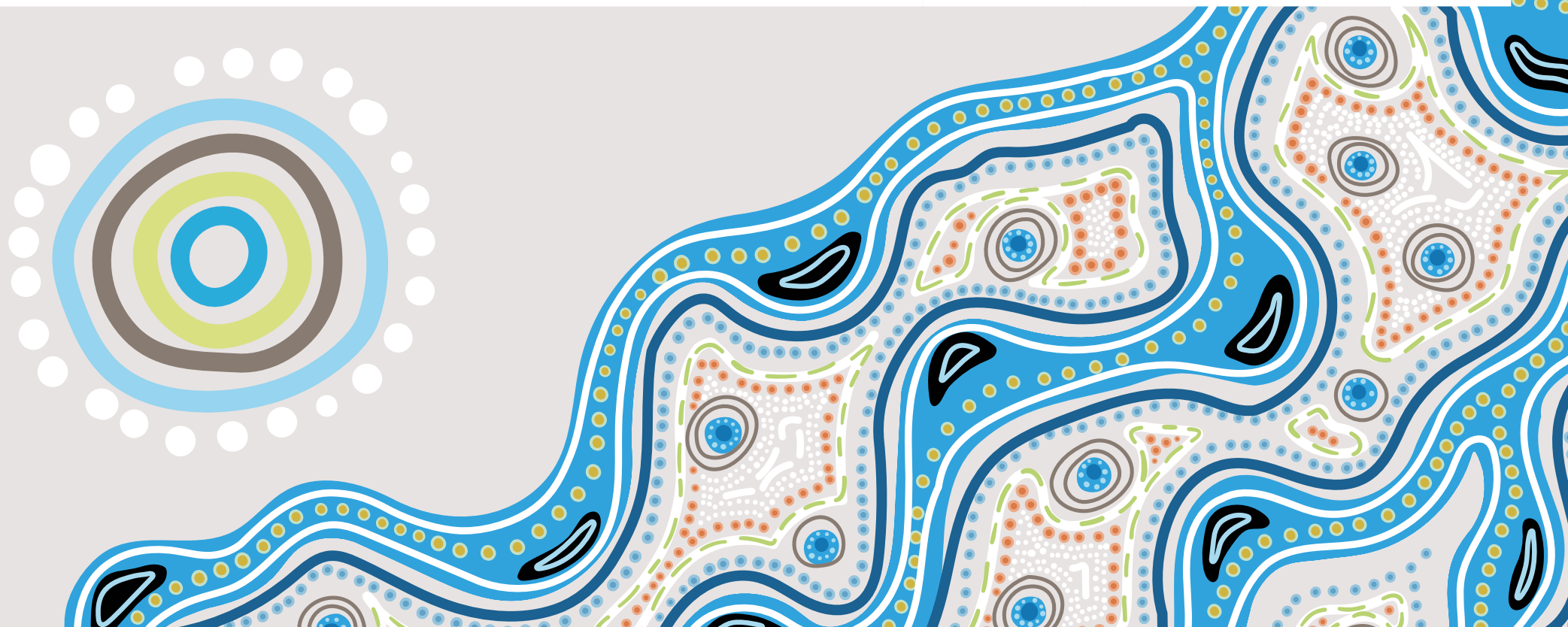
Respect (cont.)

Focus Area: Prioritise truth-telling and address racism

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executives attend cultural immersion training that builds on existing NSW Health training, including Respecting The Difference & Leading The Difference 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations, Workforce Planning and Talent Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and enable truth-telling through the development of education seminars and learning opportunities on the importance of reconciliation and truth-telling. Including the development of a truth-telling reading list accessible for all Ministry of Health staff Identify partnerships to enable truth-telling 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion Support: RAP Working Group
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Centre for Aboriginal Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Strategic Communications and Engagement

Respect (cont.)

Focus Area: Prioritise truth-telling and address racism			
Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Build respect for Aboriginal cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week 	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Strategic Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area 	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Strategic Communications and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group and Advisory Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event 	First week in July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

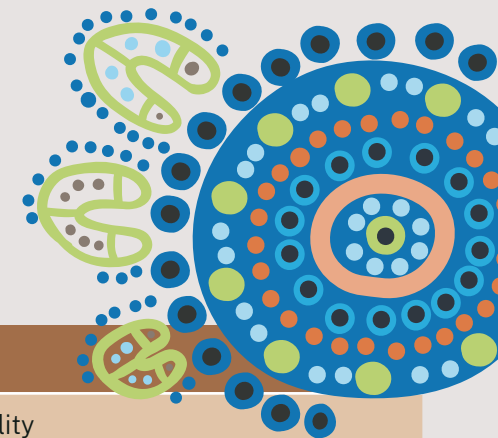


“To be successful, this must be driven by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander narrative. We must utilise Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being to drive this.” “It is about ensuring that when we work with First Nations People, we are doing it on their terms.”

Aboriginal employee of the Ministry

Opportunities

We recognise that Aboriginal people and their ways of knowing, doing and being are integral to every process within the Ministry. To ensure we embed this into our operations, we will invest in our Aboriginal workforce, including career development, secondments, learning opportunities and targeted positions.

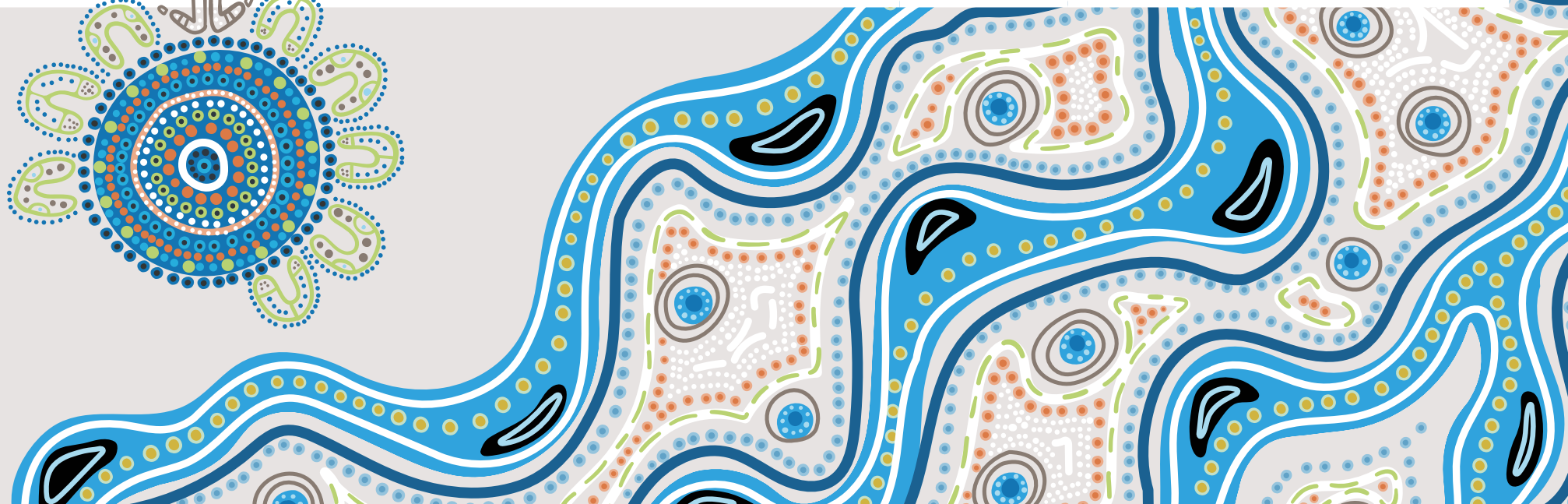


Focus Area: Increase and support our Aboriginal workforce

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workforce Planning and Talent Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish one-to-one mentoring relationships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relevant host organisations for secondment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workforce Planning and Talent Development

Opportunities (cont.)

Focus Area: Increase and support our Aboriginal workforce			
Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct focus group and other communication mechanisms to identify the wellbeing needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and invest in addressing their wellbeing needs 	April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline when Aboriginal people are required on Executive recruitment panels 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance Support: Workplace Relations
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to follow the Whole of Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy which sets targets for spend with Aboriginal businesses and regularly report progress against these targets 	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, Financial Services and Asset Management and Chief Financial Officer Support: Strategic Procurement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socialise existing Supply Nation membership and continue to promote its use in procurement 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Secretary, Financial Services and Asset Management and Chief Financial Officer Support: Strategic Procurement



Our Reconciliation Action Plan



“It is not our responsibility [as First Nations People] to reconcile. We are the ones who have been harmed. It is not our job to fix it... It is our job to tell people what we need, and for executive leaders to respond.”

First Nations Employee of the Ministry

Governance

Reconciliation is everyone’s business. Senior leaders and executives will lead and drive change. We will hold ourselves accountable to our commitments, ensuring that we practice the visions and values underpinning this RAP. We will all be accountable to each other in the workplace and to our Aboriginal colleagues, partners and stakeholders. This requires transparency, leadership, ongoing and regular feedback opportunities, clarity around intentions, expectations, roles, and responsibilities, and effective and culturally safe implementation and governance processes.



Focus Area: Drive effective implementation and embed strong accountability mechanisms

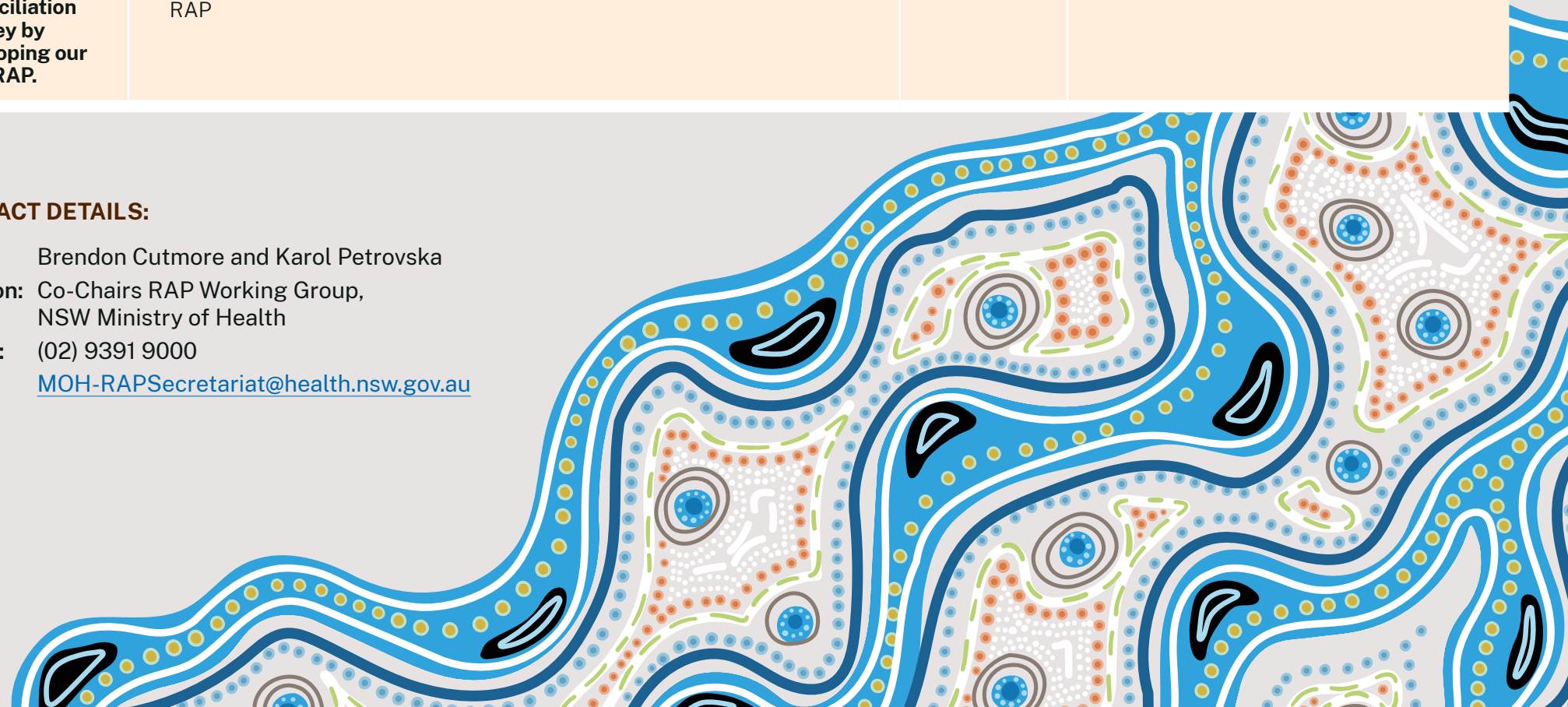
Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain a RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation	October 2024	• RAP Champion
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group	October 2024	• RAP Champion
	• Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group	October 2024	• RAP Champion
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation	October 2024	• RAP Champion
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments	October 2024	• RAP Champion
	• Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally	October 2024	• Secretary, NSW Health
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	October 2024	• RAP Champion • Support: RAP Working Group

Governance (cont.)

Focus Area: Drive effective implementation and embed strong accountability mechanisms			
Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence 	June annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey 	1 August annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia 	30 September annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP 	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Champion

CONTACT DETAILS:

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About ABSTARR Consulting

ABSTARR Consulting Pty Ltd (ABSTARR) is an exciting venture that specialises in the art and science of decolonisation. This means we teach people, organisations and communities about cultural safety, self-determination, and well-being, and how to implement and measure them in real-life situations. ABSTARR stands for Aboriginal Straight Talking About Responsibility and Respect.

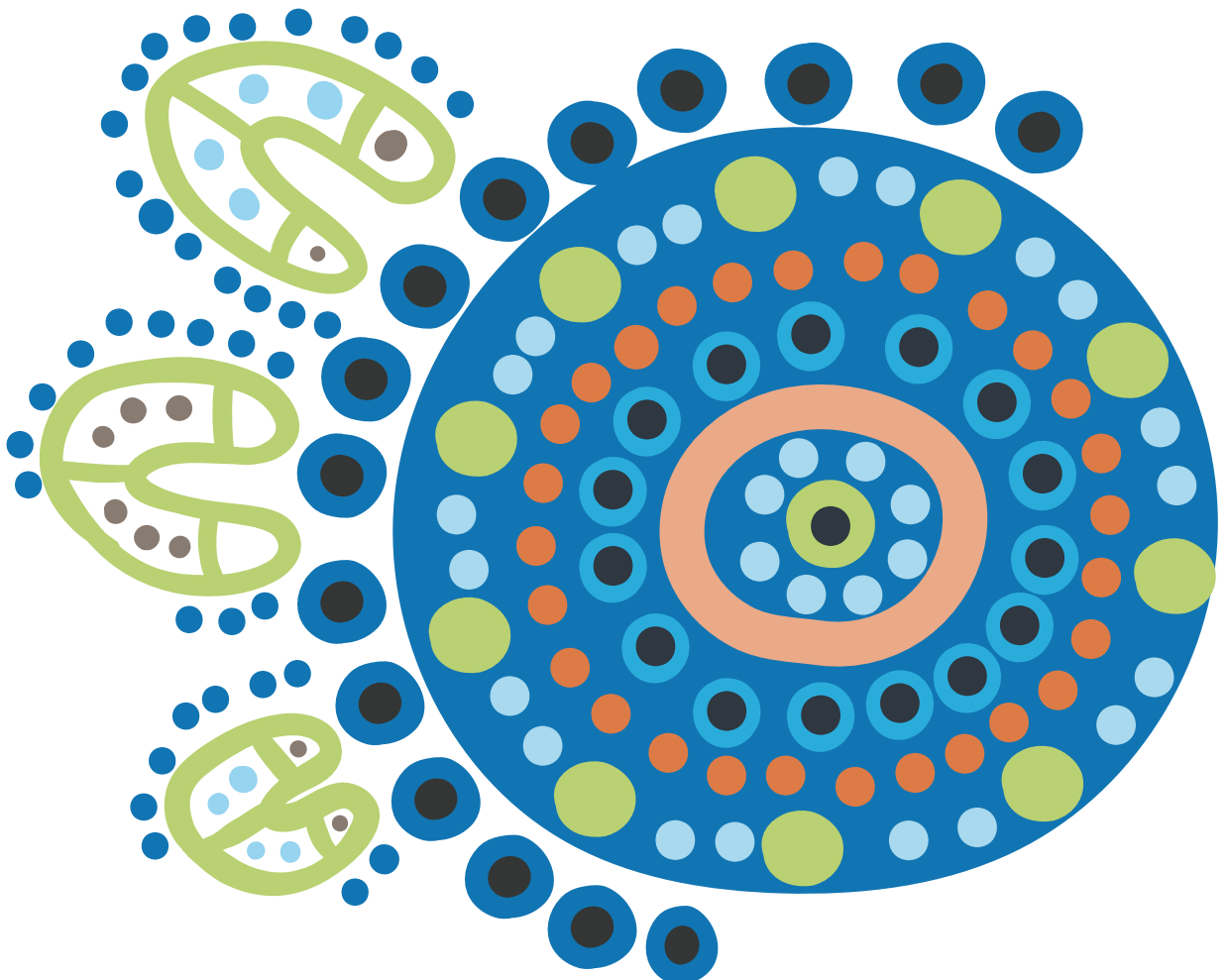
We lead change and deliver excellence in...

- strategic thought leadership
- transformational learning
- wellbeing in the workplace
- critical analysis and evaluation

...for those who want to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The ABSTARR Family is made up of highly trained and very experienced professionals. Our academic qualifications, unique skill set and extensive networks combine to place ABSTARR Consulting in a prime position to deliver quality strategic outcomes and interventions. Expertise in the team includes:

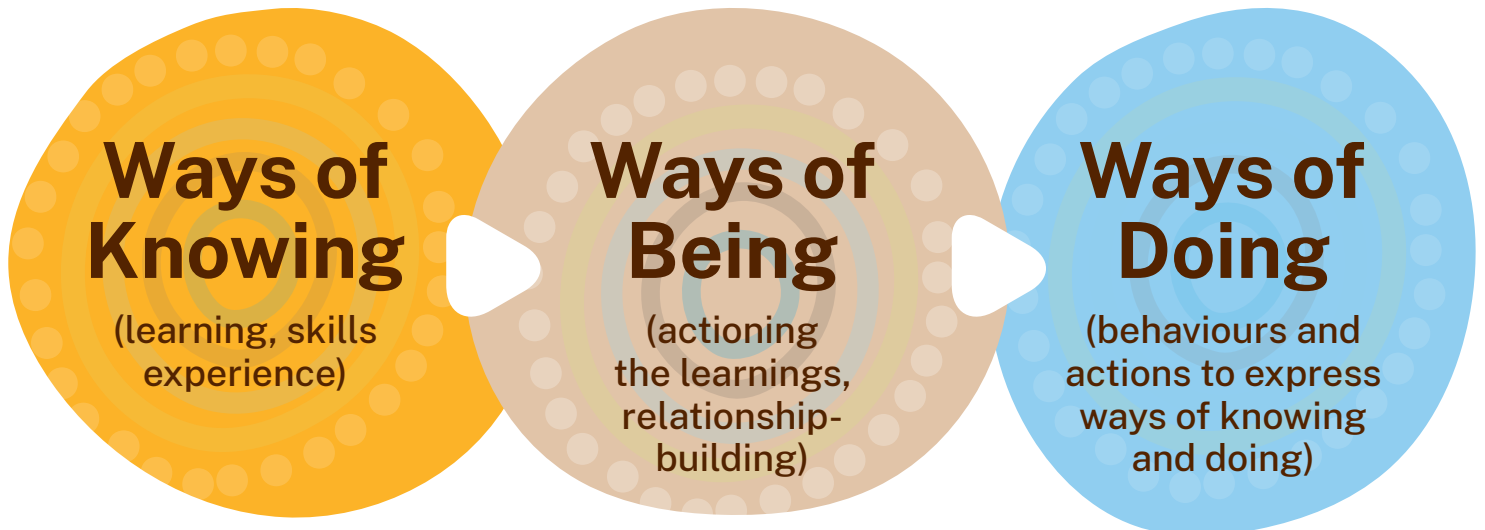
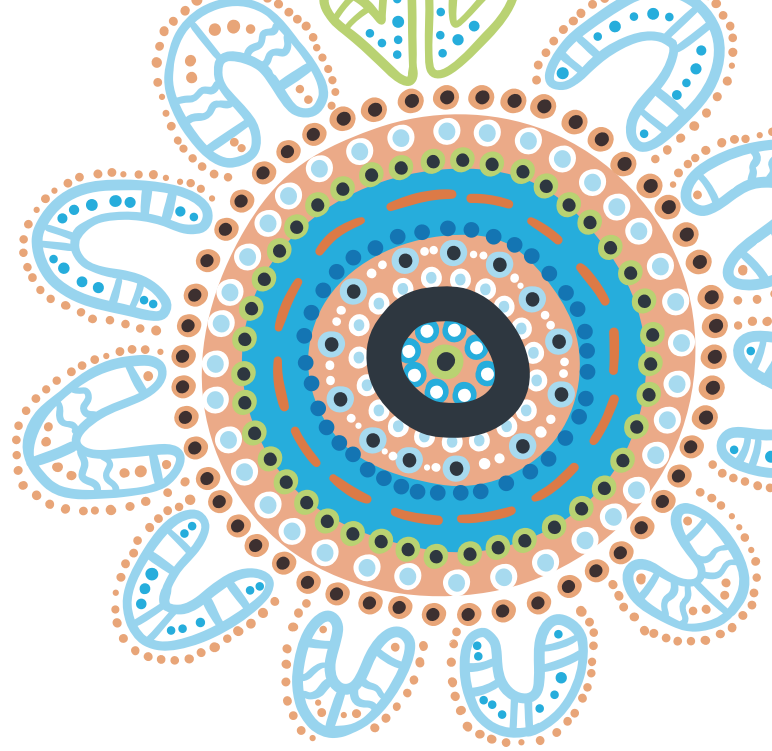
- strategy and policy development and planning
- implementation and change management
- social and emotional wellbeing
- workplace and workforce development and wellbeing
- teaching, learning and curriculum development
- evaluation, auditing and review
- group facilitation and consultation techniques



Glossary of Key Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing is an Aboriginal theoretical framework for research that centralises the core structures of Aboriginal relational ontology and epistemology.⁵ There are three main constructs and processes: (i) establishing what is known (*knowing*), (ii) establishing relations (*being*); and (iii) enacting ways to maintain these relations (*doing*).



- “Ways of knowing” refers to the processes of learning about ontology according to the social, political, historical, and spatial circumstances of the learner, their group and interactions with outsiders. These processes include “listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualizing, assessing, modelling, engaging and applying.”⁶ Without knowing, one cannot ‘be’.
- “Ways of being” refers to the actioning of what one *knows*. In other words, it is driven by one’s process of learning about ontology (ways of knowing). It is about building relationships and earning rights by fulfilling relational obligations based on what one knows.
- “Ways of doing” are a “synthesis and an articulation of our ways of knowing and being.”⁷ They are the behaviour and actions of expressing oneself (individually and as a group) and one’s roles (individually and in a group). These behaviors and actions are seen in languages, traditions and ceremonies, social organisation, art and so on as proof of our ontology.

⁵ Karen Martin & Booran Mirraboopa (2003) Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for indigenous and indigenist re-search, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 27:76, p. 206 <DOI: 10.1080/14443050309387838>

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 209 and 210.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 210.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Terms of Reference

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and ways of knowing, being, and doing, when applied to workplaces, have been described as Aboriginal Terms of Reference (ATRs). ATRs are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and values, and vary with context, history, and place. ATRs are not culture itself but are expressions of cultural values. ATRs are the basis of culturally safe enabling environments and must be understood, agreed to, and observed by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and all non-Indigenous people involved in an organisation. ATRs are not aspirational, they are operational and strategic and are enacted through everyday processes.

Colonisation

Colonisation refers to the systems of power that facilitates the oppression of Indigenous peoples and their ability to practice their cultures and access their lands. Colonisation in Australia began at the time of European invasion. Patrick Wolfe defines colonisation as a structure or process – not an event – that is predicated on the “dissolution of native societies.”⁸ This dissolution has and continues to allow the coloniser (white settlers) to extract and control resources, including land and labour, and “deny and exclude what it does not own – the sovereignty of the Indigenous other.”⁹

Colonial Load

Colonial load refers to the typically invisible added layers of work duties and responsibilities given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace. This is often done without any formal agreement or alteration to their workload. Colonial load is the expectation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to provide additional cultural knowledge, education, and support to the workplace. This may include educating non-Indigenous peers about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. This extra work is borne usually because there are very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in that organisation, there is a lack of cultural safety and a lack of resources to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

Cultural Safety

Cultural Safety refers to addressing racism and unconscious bias in individuals and the enabling environment.¹⁰ It involves reflecting on one’s own views and biases and how these could affect decision-making and outcomes. Cultural safety can be described as an

environment where: “There is no assault, challenge, or denial of their (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s) identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living, and working together with dignity and truly listening.”¹¹ Cultural safety is critical in ensuring the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, reducing attrition rates, and improving the quality and safety of workplace practices, policies, and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To ensure the cultural safety of workplaces, it is integral that these principles are embedded throughout organisations.

Paradigm

A paradigm refers to a pattern of doing, thinking or being. ‘Paradigm shifting’ or ‘shifting the dominant paradigm’ means changing ‘what is known’ or shifting one’s mindset to be able to think through a different lens or different way of knowing. For example, shifting the dominant Western paradigm to encompass Indigenous ways of knowing or; changing what is known about Indigenous peoples so that communities can represent themselves how they want to be represented.

Pedagogy of Place

Pedagogy is a method or practice of teaching and learning a concept. Pedagogy refers to how this process influences and is influenced by the social, political, and psychological development of the learner. For example, learning about Australian society through a colonial lens vs learning about Australian society through the lens of people who have experienced colonisation (Indigenous peoples).

Pedagogy of Place is a place-based approach to educational pedagogy (i.e. the practice of teaching and learning). Aboriginal pedagogies connect learning to a specific place because knowledge is situated in relation to a location, experience, group of people and context. When we refer to pedagogies of place, we are referring to the place-based learnings, understandings and ways of knowing, doing and being.

Racism

The concept of ‘race’ is not a scientific or material fact of life. It is a constructed socio-political concept that has been used to create a hierarchy of different identities for the purpose of division and oppression.¹² Racism can take both individual and structural forms, and it can occur at three interrelated conceptual levels that frequently overlap in practice: internalised racism,

⁸Patrick Wolfe, (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native, *Journal of Genocide Research*.

⁹Patrick Wolfe, (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native, *Journal of Genocide Research*.

¹⁰Phillips, G. 2015. *Dancing With Power: Aboriginal Health, Cultural Safety and Medical Education*. PhD thesis. School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University.

¹¹Williams, R. (1999). Cultural Safety – what does it mean for our work practice? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 23(2), p. 213

¹²Cunningham, J., Paradies, Y.C. Patterns and correlates of self-reported racial discrimination among Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, 2008–09: analysis of national survey data. *Int J Equity Health* 12, 47 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-9276-12-47>.

interpersonal racism, and systemic racism.¹³ Internalised racism is the acceptance by members of a marginalised group (i.e., by an Aboriginal person) of the belief about the inferiority of one's own ethnic or racial group. Interpersonal racism is the unfair inequalities that exist within the interactions across different groups, and systemic racism is the “conditions, practices, policies or processes that maintain and reproduce avoidable and unfair inequalities” between different groups.¹⁴

Systemic and individual racism have been embedded within Australia's systems since invasion in 1788,¹⁵ with the intent (whether consciously or not) to eliminate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Racism must be understood within the context of oppression, power, and privilege.

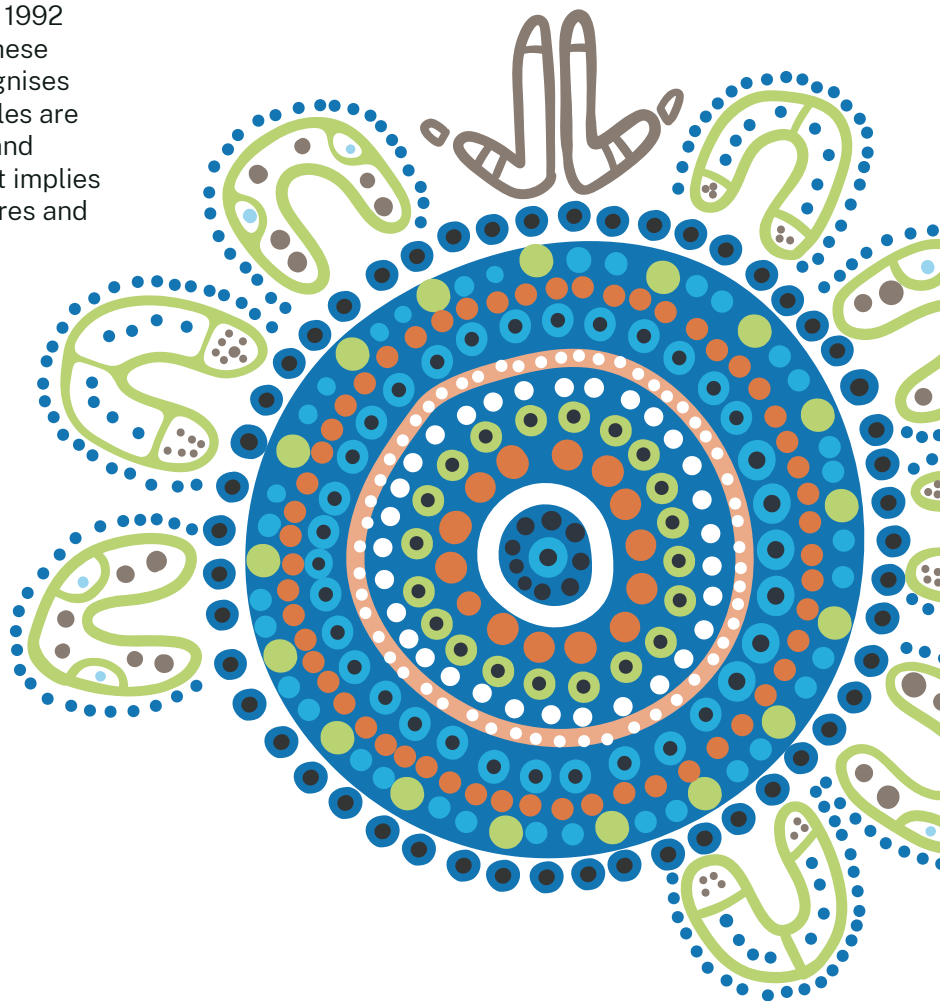
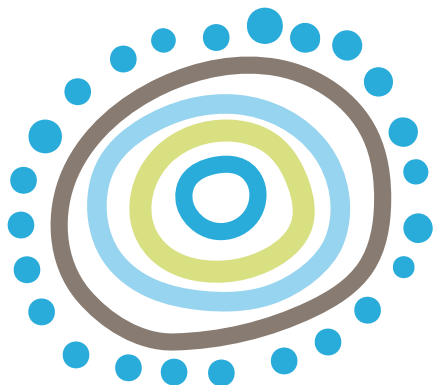
Self-Determination

The principle of self-determination has been described as the most fundamental of all human rights for Indigenous peoples. Self-determination can be defined as the ability for a group or community to make decisions about and for their own group or community. The right to self-determination has a particular application to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First people and is based on the simple acknowledgment that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are Australia's first people, as was recognised in the historic Mabo 1992 judgement, and are the Sovereign Owners of these lands and waterways. Self-determination recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are best placed to design and implement policies and practices for their communities. Furthermore, it implies that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledge are best for this land.

Without self-determination, it is not possible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fully overcome the legacy and ongoing processes of colonisation. The inability to live according to a preferred set of values and beliefs, and to exercise the inherent right to live in that way and be respected by others, is at the heart of the current disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Self-determination is an ‘ongoing process of choice’ that ensures that non-dominant communities can meet their social, cultural, and economic needs.

Sovereignty

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty refers to the indelible and perpetual title and connection to land that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to their Countries. The existence or validity of this sovereignty is not predicated on any recognition by the colonising State. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the sovereigns of their Countries. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have never ceded sovereignty.



¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Gatwiri, K., Rotumah, D & Rix, E. (2021) 'Black Lives Matter in Healthcare: Racism and Implications for Health Inequity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia'. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18(9): 4399. Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/9/4399>.

Transformational Unlearning

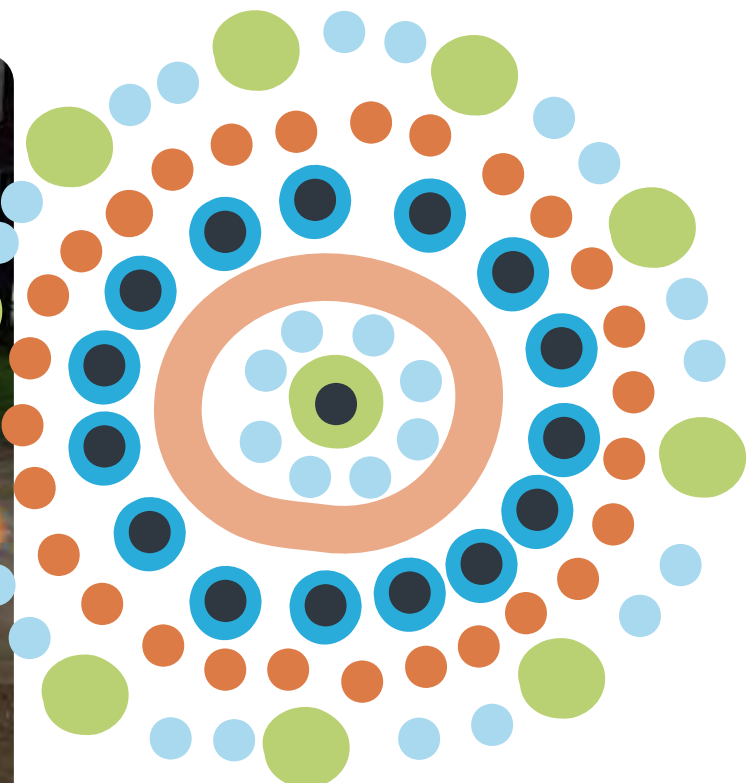
Before non-Indigenous people can learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, peoples and pedagogies, they must unlearn what they thought was “normal”. In other words, they must become aware of their own white privilege and potential for unconscious bias, discrimination and racism. This process can be understood as ‘transformational unlearning’. It is a process of “laying the groundwork for a culturally safe enabling environment.”¹⁶

Transformational unlearning is the first step in ABSTARR’s Strategic Change Model. It is the most difficult as it is a cultural and affective change for both individuals and groups that requires a high level of individual reflexivity. This reflexivity reveals that transformational unlearning is required before the learner can become receptive and respectful of Aboriginal cultures and peoples.

Whiteness and White Privilege

Racism, unconscious bias, and discrimination are only expressions of an underlying set of values and paradigm. The term ‘paradigm’ is used here to define a belief system or worldview that influences a particular set of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological beliefs.¹⁷ Therefore, the paradigm used in the perpetration of colonisation is but one of many ways of knowing, being and acting in and upon the world. Whiteness is not about ethnicity or skin colour, but instead a term which makes visible the matrix of dominant ways of knowing, doing and being that have their ancestry in colonisation.

White privilege is the set of benefits granted to those who resemble and accept those dominant cultural norms compared to those who apply a contrarian view. In Australia, White privilege refers to the privileges of individuals who belong to the group that built the system (white settlers) and receive benefit from being part of the perceived superior racial identity group. Such privileges are often assumed and unrecognised by both the individual and the society that surrounds them. White privilege does not correlate to being racist; however failing to interrogate these privileges and being complicit in them directly contributes to racism and allows it to persist in Australia.



¹⁶ Phillips, Greg. 2015. *Dancing With Power: Aboriginal Health, Cultural Safety and Medical Education*. PhD thesis. School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University (p 263).

¹⁷ Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian journal of native education*, 25(2).





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