



**Health**  
Northern NSW  
Local Health District



# Northern NSW Local Health District **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan**

October 2021 – October 2023

# Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbaynggirr and Githabul Nations are the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we work and live. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians' living culture, their connection to Country and their contribution to the life of this region. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders of these Nations, and to all Aboriginal people past, present and future.

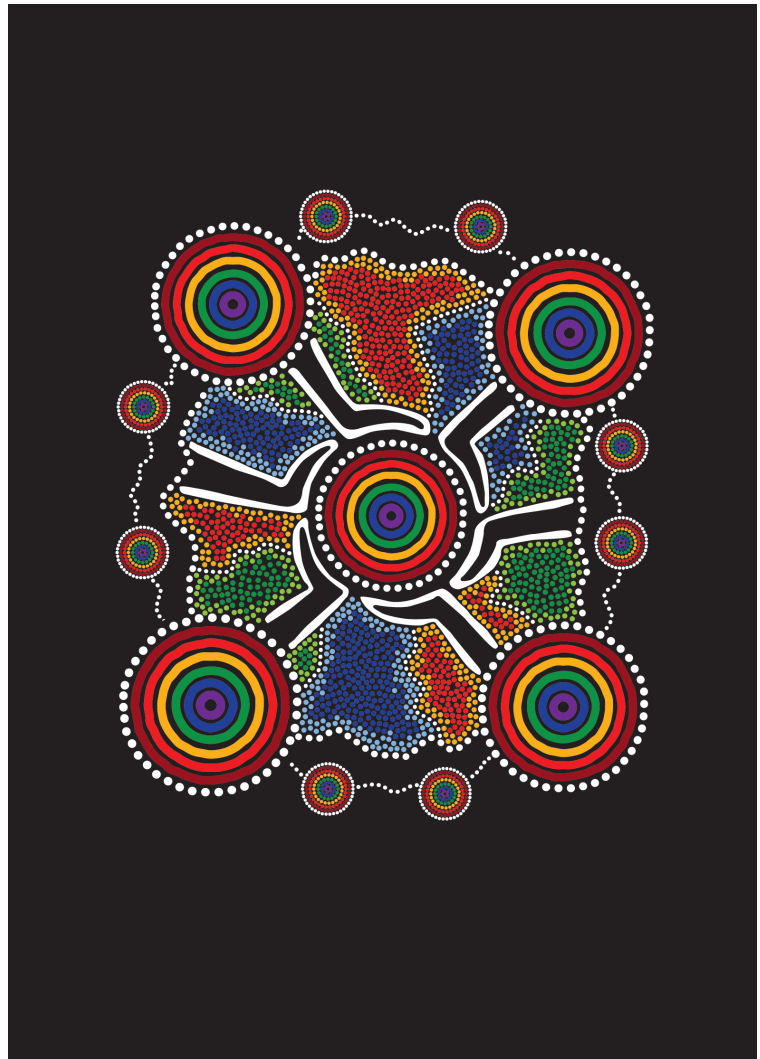
**Note:** In accordance with NSW Health policy, throughout this Plan the term Aboriginal is taken to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



# About the Artwork

Jason King is a local Aboriginal artist who grew up, and still resides, in the Tweed Valley.

Jason's artwork is a representation of Aboriginal communities and culture, supported by the various public and private organisations, health centers and specialist services collaborating to provide best practice integrated medical care. These organisations are listening to and respecting Aboriginal culture, sustaining community health, and supporting the physical, emotional and social wellbeing, and empowerment, of each individual. The small circles represent the various Northern Rivers communities, and the larger circles represent organisations, such as the Local Health District. The different components all come together to support the theme of 'Empowering Aboriginal Health Together'.





# Chief Executive's Message

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Northern NSW Local Health District's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

We are justifiably proud of the existing relationships we have with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, workforce and partners. Through our RAP, we will strengthen these relationships by embedding reconciliation initiatives across our organisation.

Our RAP will direct the way we engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and build upon the respect and acknowledgement of Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We will continue to grow and develop our Aboriginal workforce, as well as explore opportunities for Aboriginal people and organisations to participate in our supply chain.

I would like to thank the RAP Working Group for its efforts in progressing our Reconciliation Action Plan. Our Working Group will continue to oversee the RAP and ensure its successful implementation.

## Wayne Jones

Chief Executive  
Northern NSW Local Health District





# Our vision for reconciliation

Aboriginal Health is central to everything we do. We will continue to work alongside Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Medical Services and others, in “Empowering Aboriginal Health” - one of the priorities in our Strategic Plan. This priority is significant, not only due to the outcome it seeks, but also the way in which this outcome will be achieved, in partnership with Aboriginal people, community and services. It reiterates a fundamental principle essential to achieving health equality; Aboriginal people are central to developing solutions to address the community's health needs.

Our vision for reconciliation is one where Aboriginal members of our community are involved in prioritising and developing health services, have access to culturally safe health services, and contribute to equality in health outcomes across the community.

We recognise that NNSWLHD is a significant provider of health care in our region, however there are many organisations, particularly Aboriginal Medical Services, which are critical to the health journey for Aboriginal people. We commit to working in partnership with these organisations in order to provide the highest level of quality health care to our community.



# Our business

“Working together to deliver quality health outcomes across our communities.”

NNSWLHD covers an area of 20,732km<sup>2</sup>, spanning from the Local Government Areas of the Clarence Valley in the south to Tweed in the north. The western and southern borders of the district join the Hunter New England Local Health District and Mid North Coast Local Health District. The northern border of the District joins Queensland, with the city of Gold Coast located immediately north of the Tweed Local Government Area.

Over 300,000 people live in the communities we service, with 5.7% of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Our services are provided across eight hospitals, four Multi-Purpose Services, one Drug and Alcohol Detoxification Unit, 17 Community Health Centers and three HealthOne Services.

The District delivers a broad range of health services in state-of-the-art facilities, with access to general and specialist services. Staff are connected to best-practice medical care throughout Australia thanks to a growing network of training opportunities and relationships with local and metropolitan tertiary education providers.

At March 2021, NNSWLHD employs over 6000 staff. 234 staff identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, representing 3.84% of our total workforce.

The Aboriginal Health Unit – as part of the NNSWLHD - provides strategic advice on Aboriginal cultural considerations, and embedding this advice into localised policy, planning and program development. The Aboriginal Health Unit delivers services and programs to Aboriginal communities throughout the district, including healthy lifestyle, palliative care and chronic care management, as well as cultural safety training and developing the Aboriginal workforce. NNSWLHD recognises that community consultation is vital to ensuring our services are culturally appropriate and aligned with the health needs of the Aboriginal community.



## This consultation is undertaken through a number of forums, including:

- ❖ Ngayundi Aboriginal Health Council: made up of representatives from the local Aboriginal community and NNSWLHD staff. Ngayundi provides a forum for Aboriginal people to participate in and provide advice on health service planning, development, delivery, evaluation and prioritisation with a view to attaining equality of health status and life expectancy for Aboriginal communities.
- ❖ Northern NSW Aboriginal Health Partnership: a partnership between Northern NSW Local Health District, Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service, Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service, Rekindling the Spirit and Healthy North Coast. The Partnership seeks to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people across the district through coordination of health service delivery, joint positioning on health policy and increased information sharing.
- ❖ Community Partnership Advisory Council (CPAC) and Community Advisory Groups (CAG): NNSWLHD has a number of opportunities for community members to share their experiences, comment on initiatives and become partners in design, planning and evaluation of health services. Aboriginal people are critical to our community advisory forums, ensuring that Aboriginal voices and experiences are heard and considered in our health service planning and delivery.







Barry Boland, Educator, is delivering Respecting the Difference training across NNSWLHD. Respecting the Difference will assist in increasing cultural competency and promote greater understanding of the processes and protocols for delivering health services to Aboriginal people. In doing so, Respecting the Difference aims to improve the health status of Aboriginal people and ensure NNSWLHD is a welcoming and safe space for Aboriginal patients, staff and community



\* The map indicates the general location of larger groupings of Aboriginal people, which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialect and individual language groups. Boundaries are not intended to be exact.

This Reconciliation Action Plan supports NNSWLHD's **Strategic Plan 2019–2024**. The Strategic Plan provides an overarching framework for working together with our community and service partners to deliver quality and safe health services to the communities of Northern NSW. As part of the Plan, NNSWLHD has committed to Empowering Aboriginal Health, as one of the six strategic priorities that will guide service delivery and planning.

## Empowering Aboriginal Health

We acknowledge the significant health differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in NSW.

Aboriginal Health will be central to everything we do.

Our organisation will work alongside Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Medical Services and other service partners to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in our region.

### Between 2019 – 2024 we will:

- ❖ Work alongside Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Medical Services and other service partners to put in place the Reconciliation Action Plan.
- ❖ Continue to work in partnership to provide culturally safe health care.
- ❖ Develop an Aboriginal health 'dashboard' to allow us to check our region's performance.
- ❖ Further develop our Aboriginal workforce, enhance employment and career opportunities and implement the:
  - NNSWLHD Aboriginal Workforce Plan;
  - Aboriginal Cadetship Program including the Aboriginal Nursing Cadetship.
- ❖ Strengthen the Aboriginal partnership agreement with our partners:
  - Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation Richmond Valley;
  - Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service;
  - Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service Grafton;
  - Rekindling The Spirit;
  - Healthy North Coast.

## Our RAP

The development of our RAP was guided and informed by a RAP Working Group, with representatives from across the NNSWLHD, including Aboriginal staff representatives.

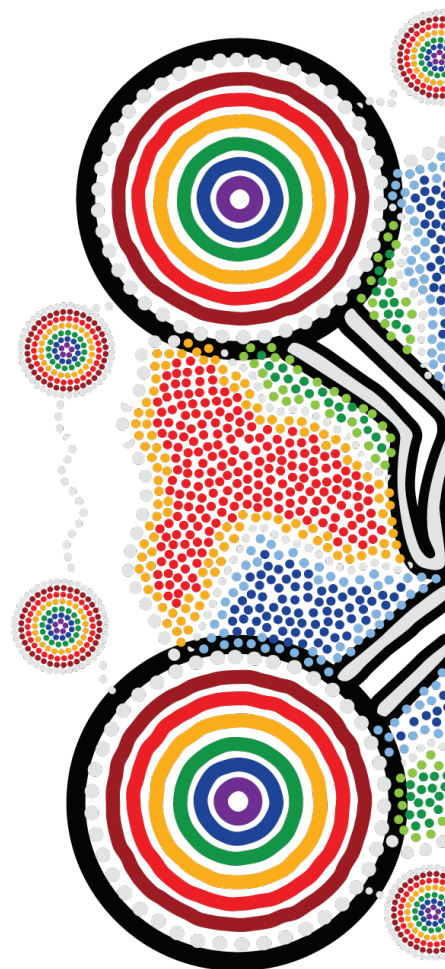
Seven members of the Working Group are Aboriginal people.

The Reconciliation Action Plan was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. This includes all LHD staff, representatives from Community Advisory Groups, Ngayundi Aboriginal Health Council and the Northern NSW Aboriginal Health Partnership.

The RAP Working Group will continue to meet and will have responsibility for overseeing the implementation and success of the RAP. The Chief Executive will serve as the RAP Champion, ensuring the RAP and its priorities are communicated and celebrated across all levels of the LHD.

The RAP Working Group members are:

- ❖ Katharine Duffy, Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, Chair
- ❖ Kirsty Glanville, Associate Director Aboriginal Health
- ❖ Richard Buss, Director of Workforce
- ❖ Lyndal Smith, Program Manager Aboriginal Health
- ❖ Deb Monaghan, Nurse and NNSWLHD Board Member
- ❖ Laurel Rogers, Aboriginal Health Worker
- ❖ Cameron Johnson, Manager Aboriginal Workforce
- ❖ Ellen Palmer, Executive Officer – Director of Nursing, Casino Memorial Hospital
- ❖ Daniel Ashton, Public Health Trainee
- ❖ Fiona Baker, Manager, Media and Corporate Communications
- ❖ Matthew Long, Director of Corporate Services



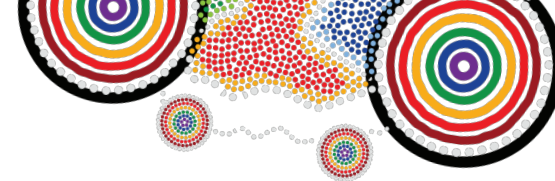


# Relationships

Relationships are at the core of everything we do. Strong and meaningful relationships with the Aboriginal community are vital to ensuring equitable access, the sharing of experiences and promoting a pathway to reconciliation.

**Focus area:** Integration Through Partnerships and Our Community Values Our Excellent, Person-Centred Care.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Provide opportunities for the Aboriginal community to participate in health service planning, delivery and evaluation.	Ngayundi Aboriginal Health Council to meet at least 2 times per year	March and September 2022 March 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Aboriginal people from across the district actively participating in Community Action Groups	March and September 2022 March 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Maintain Aboriginal participation on the NNSWLHD Board	April 2023	Chair, NNSWLHD Board
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	June 2022	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation	May 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy	April 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism	December 2022	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, including Aboriginal Medical Services.	NNSWLHD representatives to participate in all Northern NSW Aboriginal Health Partnership meetings	November 2021 February, May, August and November 2022 February and May, 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Continue to partner with AMSs and other stakeholders across shared services/programs	June 2022	Chair, NNSWLHD Board
	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement	June 2022	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	March 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health



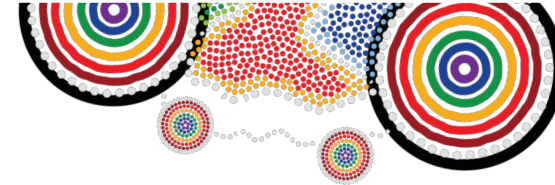
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	All RAP Working Group members to attend at least one external NRW event	May 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	May 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Organise at least one NNSWLHD NRW event each year	May 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	May 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Explore opportunities to assist other organisations in our footprint to develop a RAP by sharing our experience and learnings	May 2022 and 2023	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation	May 2022 and 2023	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly	May 2022 and 2023	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation	May 2022 and 2023	Manager Aboriginal Workforce

We have a deep respect for Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land where we work and live. We will celebrate and acknowledge Aboriginal peoples' cultures, histories and ongoing connection to this area at every opportunity. In doing so we will promote the NNSWLHD as a welcoming and safe place for Aboriginal community, staff and patients.

**Focus area:** Empowering Aboriginal Health

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	10% increase per annum of LHD staff undertaking Respecting the Difference face to face training	November 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	At least 75% of RAP Working Group members attend a cultural learning experience with a local Aboriginal organisation	June 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Maintain Respecting the Difference online training at 70% or above	November 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Review Respecting the Difference to ensure it remains culturally appropriate and relevant to staffs' learning need	November 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year	June 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols	April 2022	Chief Executive
	Review and update a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	June 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Acknowledgement of Country plaques displayed at the entry to all NNSWLHD hospitals and health facilities	June 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Acknowledgement of Country posters with suggested wording, are present in all LHD meeting rooms	June 2022	Associate Director Aboriginal Health
	Acknowledgement of Country provided at the commencement of all meetings	June 2022	Associate Director Aboriginal Health





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Promote and encourage participation in NAIDOC events to all staff	July 2022 and 2023	Chief Executive
	NNSWLHD to host at least one NAIDOC event	July 2022 and July 2023	Chief Executive
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC week	December 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	RAP Working Group members attend at least one NAIDOC event	July 2022 and 2023	RAP Working Group Chair

# Opportunities

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we acknowledge the past injustices that have impacted on Aboriginal people. NNSWLHD, as one of the largest employers in our region, will utilise its influence and resources as a means of supporting Aboriginal employment and businesses. We recognise that employing Aboriginal people is a part of providing a culturally safe health service, and that Aboriginal peoples' knowledge and connections enhance the care we provide to the community.

**Focus area:** Value, Develop and Empower our People



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace	December 2021	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders	December 2021 and June 2022 December 2022	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Develop and implement Aboriginal workforce priorities, as part of an overarching Aboriginal health strategy	December 2021	Manager Aboriginal Workforce
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities	December 2021	Chief Executive
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to a minimum of 4% of our total workforce	June 2023	Associate Director Aboriginal Health

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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	June 2022	Director Finance
	Investigate Supply Nation membership	June 2022	Director Finance
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	June 2022	Director Finance
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses	June 2022	Director Finance





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain at least 50% Aboriginal representation on the RWG	April 2023	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG	April 2022	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Meet at least two times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation	October 2021 April and October 2022	Chair, RAP Working Group
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	December 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments	December 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation	December 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management	December 2021	Chair, RAP Working Group
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	September 2022 and 2023	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually	October 2021 and 2022	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly	December 2021 March, June, September and December 2022 March, June 2023	Chair, RAP Working Group
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	May 2022	Chair, RAP Working Group
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	January 2023	Chair, RAP Working Group



Clarence River, Maclean





Fingal Head, Tweed Heads



## CONTACT DETAILS

Name: Kirsty Glanville

Position: Associate Director Aboriginal Health

Email: [kirsty.glanville@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kirsty.glanville@health.nsw.gov.au)

Phone: 02 6621 1957



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