



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE

Northern Health

May 2024 – May 2026



Acknowledgement of the artwork

Northern Health would like to deeply acknowledge and appreciate “Yapemeyepuka (Together),” an evocative artwork crafted by Alkina Edwards, a gifted artist born in Bairnsdale Gunai Kurnai country and rooted in the Echuca community (Yorta Yorta) country.

The piece poignantly illustrates the historical journey from exclusion to cultural safety within the hospitals for Aboriginal people. Each symbol tells a story: the gum leaves purify the lands and spirits; the gathering circles depict Aboriginal communities uniting and feeling secure in hospitals; the sand hills honour the ancestral lands on which these institutions stand. The interconnectedness of the gathering circles is a tribute to the resilient elders whose tenacity and advocacy have empowered the newer generations to feel protected and heard within

healthcare settings. The celestial backdrop, filled with stars, whispers tales from our dreaming, while the central green emblem pays homage to our sacred waterways – the life-giving force that nourishes, heals, and inspires.

This artwork is also a testament to Alkina’s rich lineage, spanning from the Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba, Mutti Mutti, and Wiradjuri on her mother’s side to the Bundjalung, Wakka Wakka, and Jinibara on her father’s side.



Terminology Note

The term “patient” is used to encompass clients, consumers, and individuals accessing a wide range of health services.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and are thankful to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who participated in this project and the precious advice they gave us.

To the Traditional Owners, Elders and communities, we hope we have respected your land and customs.

We will continue to improve our responsiveness to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by providing culturally appropriate services of the highest quality.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our health service is built, those of the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people, and we acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.



Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive

Whilst Northern Health is proud to have achieved significant success with the implementation of its first Reconciliation Action Plan (2019-2021), we recognise that reconciliation is a journey and there is still much to achieve

We are particularly proud of our Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Support Unit, expertly led by Karen Bryant. Narrun Wilip-giin has had a meaningful impact on the quality of care delivered to our Aboriginal patients. We will continue to monitor our progress in working towards closing the gap in health outcomes, supporting our planning and collaboration, and of course providing liaison support to our patients. We will continue to facilitate and consult with the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee, whose primary role is to provide strategic direction for the planning and delivery of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people attending Northern Health.

Northern Health strives to offer a culturally safe environment in all our facilities by embracing the new Narrun Wilip-giin Cultural Gathering Space, commissioning new artwork, and installing Acknowledgement Plaques across all of our campuses. Priorities for this RAP include strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal organisations and community, building upon the respect we intend to practice each and every day to Aboriginal people, facilitate opportunities for our Aboriginal workforce, including improving

our recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff, and finally to strengthen our governance and leadership which is necessary to deliver improved inclusion, cultural safety and tailored services to help close the gap with our Aboriginal patients.

This Reconciliation Action Plan demonstrates a whole of organisation approach to cultural diversity and has received full endorsement by Reconciliation Australia, the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Reconciliation Action Plan Subcommittee, Northern Health Executive and Northern Health Board.

We are proud to present the 2023-2025 Northern Health Reconciliation Plan and take this opportunity to thank those who contributed.



Siva Sivarajah
Chief Executive



Jennifer Williams AM
Board Chair



Message from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Northern Health 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 close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Northern Health continues to be part of a strong network of more than 3,000 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 Northern Health will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to Northern Health 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 Northern Health 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, Northern Health will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

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

Congratulations Northern Health on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia





Our vision for reconciliation

Northern Health is a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities are welcomed, achieve equitable health outcomes and are culturally safe.

Our vision for reconciliation is underpinned by our recognition that hospitals in particular, and health settings more generally, have been places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families have not been culturally safe. Indeed, we recognise that many hospitals have been sites of historical and contemporary trauma.

Therefore, embedded in our vision for reconciliation is a commitment to engaging in a truth-telling process, where we better understand the injustices of the past as a path to creating equity in the future. This means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people coming together in genuine collaboration.

Our commitment is to continue the reconciliation process. Our aim is that it leads to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families in the region saying “Northern Health is my hospital”.

Statement on Aboriginal Child Safety

At Northern Health, we promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We ensure the diverse needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are acknowledged and respected. This commitment extends to ensuring that children’s safety and well-being are integral to our organisational culture and leadership, involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, recognising their pivotal role in our mission to elevate child safety.

Our business

Northern Health is the major provider of acute, maternity, sub-acute, mental health, specialist, community and home-based services in Melbourne's rapidly growing outer north.

As of January 2024, Northern Health has a workforce of 8,957 employees, of which nine are Aboriginal people. The organisation is actively developing strategies to systematically identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Our comprehensive range of services is delivered across five main campuses:

Northern Hospital Epping, Broadmeadows Hospital, Bundoora Centre, Craigieburn Centre, and Kilmore District Hospital.

Additionally, we extend our mental health services across several locations, including Epping, Broadmeadows, Jacana, Preston, Mill Park, and Coburg, ensuring wide-reaching support for mental wellbeing in our community.

Each year, Northern Health provides essential care to a vast number of patients, with statistics reflecting our significant impact:

111,475

patients receive treatment in our Emergency Department

103,389

are treated through our Virtual Emergency Department (VVED)

114,224

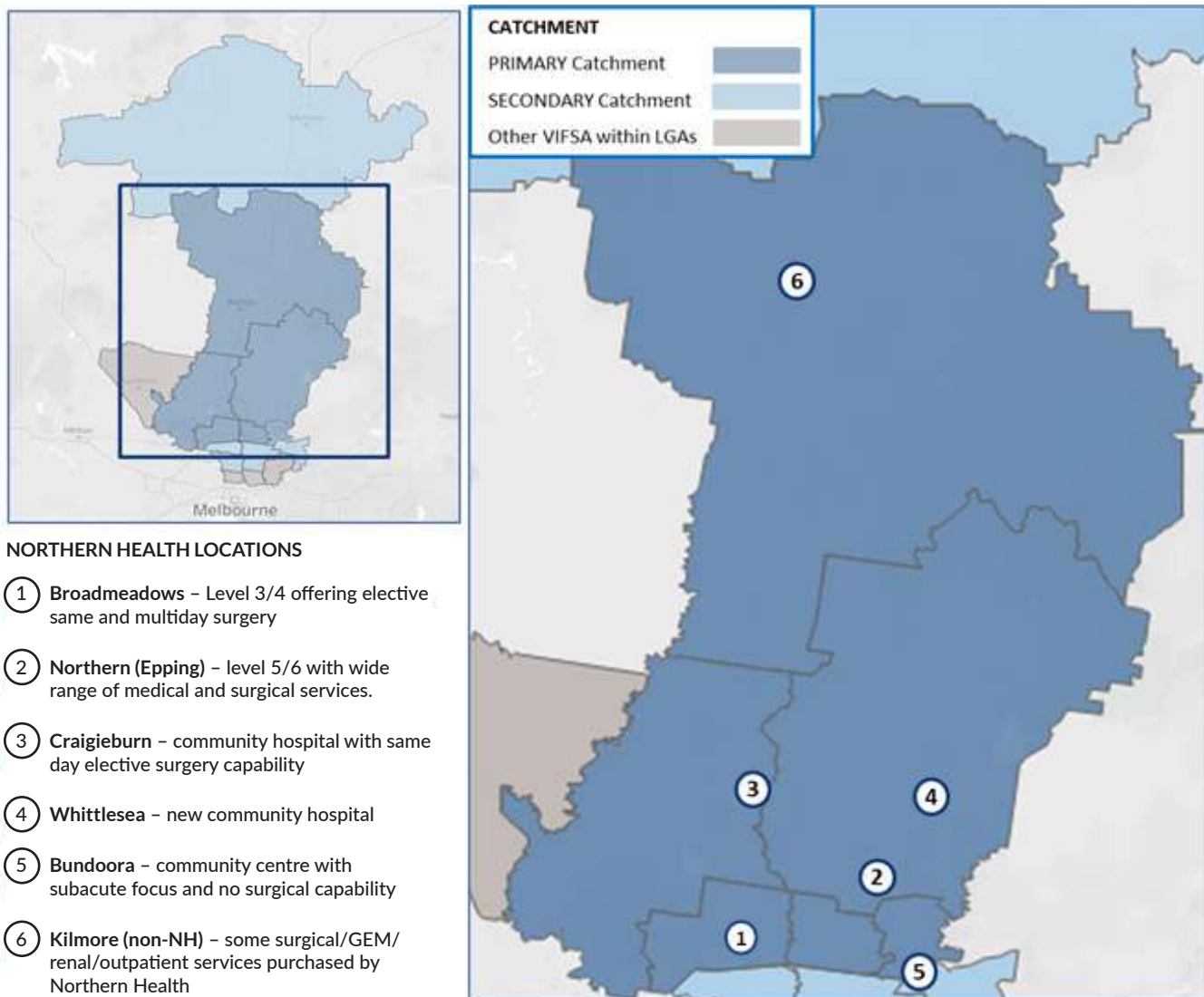
patients are admitted for care (with 34,960 of these arriving by ambulance)

3,252

babies are welcomed into the world in our facilities.



The Northern Health catchment includes three of the state's six fastest growing areas: Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell. Due to the rapid development of new suburbs in the north, our population is projected to grow with an annual growth rate of 2.7% over the next decade, reaching an estimated 740,000 by 2036.



The two Kulin nation lands where Northern Health services reside is Woi Wurrung Wurundjeri land in the City of Whittlesea and City of Hume; and Taungurong land in the Shire of Mitchell (above).

Local Aboriginal Community

Our services are based on Woi Wurrung Wurundjeri Country in the City of Whittlesea and City of Hume, and Taungurong Country in the Shire of Mitchell. These areas are part of the Kulin nation.

According to the Census data 2021, the City of Mitchell is growing, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making up 2.2% of the population. The City of Whittlesea, Hume and Shire of Mitchell combined have a 1.0% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

In 2022, mental health services in the catchment of City of Moreland and City of Darebin transitioned to Northern Health. These areas have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 0.6% and 1.0% respectively.

The local Aboriginal community members make a valuable contribution to our community. However, we recognise that the health gap between Aboriginal communities and other communities is still a major factor, and that the process of reconciliation still requires a considerable effort.

Northern Health's sphere of influence in advancing reconciliation extends across a broad spectrum, encompassing internal stakeholders such as its diverse workforce and leadership, and reaching out to the wider community through strategic partnerships and dedicated services. By integrating Aboriginal perspectives and voices into its governance through the RAP membership and engaging directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through its Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Northern Health demonstrates a commitment to provide culturally sensitive healthcare, positions it as a key player in driving systemic change towards reconciliation.



Our Commitment

Cultural safety means an environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe where there's no assault, challenge or denial of one's identity, of who they are, and what they need.

Cultural safety in health care for patients is about good communication, being treated respectfully, empowerment, identifying barriers and unfair treatment, and family inclusion.

Cultural safety is an ongoing learning journey to reflect on one's own cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes that may form and affect others, including a responsibility to address their unconscious bias, racism and discrimination.

We will improve our responsiveness to community needs by following the direction set by our local Aboriginal community members, and Reconciliation Australia, in particular the pillars of its Reconciliation Action Plan: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

The Northern Health Board, Chief Executive and Executive Committee will ensure the Aboriginal community is enabled towards self-determination, and that the community will experience positive change by improving our health service's cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness.

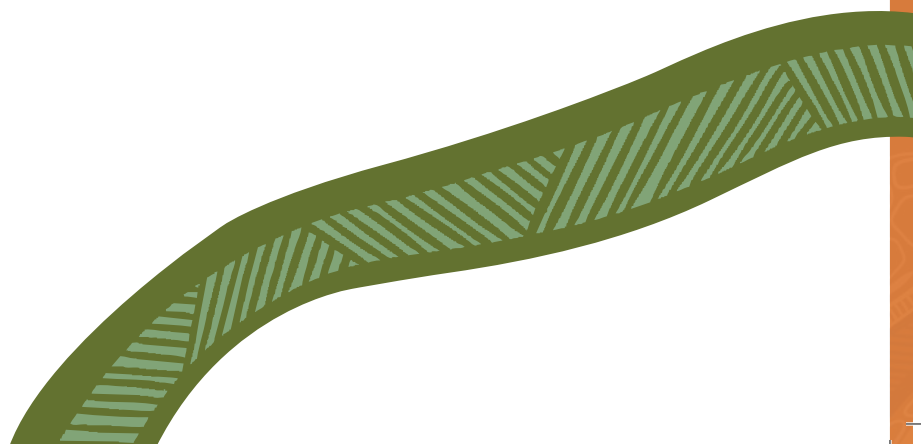
Northern Health will strengthen valuable relationships with key Aboriginal organisations such as the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to improve the development and delivery of services.

Northern Health will strengthen the presence of the Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Support Unit and build a stronger and culturally safer place for the Aboriginal workforce.

Northern Health will ensure it provides a welcoming environment, making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, as well as plaques acknowledging our Traditional Owners, are displayed at all campuses.

Northern Health will develop training modules designed to improve cultural responsiveness and safety in the delivery of services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Northern Health will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan to make sure it reaches its objectives.



NH Aboriginal Advisory Committee

The function of the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee is to advise on the health needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, provide strategic direction in the planning and delivery of culturally appropriate and safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending Northern Health, identify and take action to resolve issues and problems that create barriers to better health outcomes, and advise on the development and implementation of the NH Reconciliation Action Plan. The proceedings of the NH Aboriginal Advisory Committee are recorded in minutes and reported to the Northern Health Patient Experience of Care Clinical Improvement Committee and the Community Advisory Committee.

Development of the Reconciliation Action Plan

The Northern Health Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was developed by the NH Reconciliation Action Plan Subcommittee in partnership with the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee and other community members. The RAP sub-committee meets regularly, with the primary aims of monitoring, implementing and reporting on the RAP. The Sub-committee reports to the Northern Health Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which reports to the NH Executive.

Governance for achievement of the Reconciliation Action Plan is provided via a range of reporting lines and committees. The diagram below demonstrates the governance pathway for the Reconciliation Action Plan.



The RAP is aligned with Reconciliation Australia RAP guidelines.

It is also aligned with various Department of Health Frameworks and policy documents including:

- Keeping our kids safe – Cultural safety and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Commission for Children and Young People – Victoria’s 11 Child Safe Standards
- Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027
- Aboriginal Cultural Safety Plan
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework Part 1 and 2
- Aboriginal Governance and Accountability Framework
- Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 – 2023

The NH RAP Subcommittee has executive representation, and is formed by senior managers across various departments and campuses, as well as local Aboriginal community members.



Principles

Respect

The wrongs of the past must be recognised in order for reconciliation to progress. Self-determination: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and carers are encouraged to gain a better understanding of the health system and their rights, and actively participate in determining their journey to recovery.

Education

Northern Health will actively improve the cultural awareness among its staff members. Northern Health will raise awareness about the health system and its services in the community.

Equity

Access to services must be improved; Northern Health will endeavour to attend to every Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander consumer, and reduce premature discharges, unplanned re-admissions, and the unable to attend rates. Aboriginal people have a right to receive the best service Northern Health can offer can offer.

Opportunity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have opportunities to participate in, and inform decision-making in relation to health care at Northern Health. This will include: Aboriginal consumer membership and participation in relevant committees as well as improved employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

RAP Membership (as of May 2024)

Aboriginal Members

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Noel King | Gunditjmara / Ngario Monaro Consumer Advisor/ Aboriginal Elder |
| Owen Butler | Wiradjuri Consumer Advisor/Aboriginal Elder |
| Andrew Morrison | Gunditjmara Consumer Advisor / Your Health |
| Karen Bryant | Gunditjmara Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer |
| Natalie Bloomfield | Gunai Kurnai Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Educator |
| Coen Brown | Gunditjmara / Yorta Yorta / Wiradjuri / Woiwurrung Emergency Department Aboriginal Liaison Officer |
| Tya Fry | Gunditjmara / Wotjobaluk Occupational Therapist |
| Toni Gabelish | Gangulu / Yiman Aboriginal Liaison Officer |
| Lindsay Holmes | Narungga / Gunai Kurnai Aboriginal Mental Health Liaison Officer |
| Jo Quinn | Ngemba (Wailwan / Kamillaroi Nations) / Wiradjuri Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Koori Maternity Service |
| Moira Rayner | Bundjalung / Dunghutti Emergency Department Aboriginal Liaison Officer |
| Stephanie Thompson | Gunditjmara / Kirrae Wurrong Aboriginal Liaison Officer |

Non-Indigenous Members

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Jason Cirone (Chair) | Chief Allied Health Officer (RAP Champion) |
| Yue Hu (Co-Chair) | Director, Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Support Unit |
| Sherrilyn Ballard | Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| Nicole Carlon | Divisional Director, Operations Nursing, Women's & Children's |
| Lisa Carter | Operations Director, Aged Mental Health |
| Catherine Fletcher | Operations Manager, Outpatient Services |
| Maree Glynn | Director Clinical Practice Improvement |
| Jacqui Harper | Operations Manager, Craigieburn Centre DDON/Site |
| Johanna Hayes | Divisional Director, Hospital Without Walls |
| Wendy Irving | Nurse, Emergency Department |
| Neela Konara | Director of Partnerships |
| Belinda Nash | Nurse Unit Manager, Unit 2 Broadmeadows Hospital |
| Chrissy Nicolaidis | Associate Director, Activity Based Funding & Reporting Health Information Services |
| Maria Soo | Director, Organisational Capability |
| Penelope Vye | Associate Director Allied Health Social Work & Spiritual Care |
| Stefania Zen | Education & Engagement Manager |

Aboriginal Advisory Consumers



Uncle Noel King

I am a proud Gunditjmara/Ngario Monaro man

After obtaining the qualifications in Community Services and Employment, I've gained experience in both education and health sectors. I worked as a Youth Worker for 23 years in Queensland and Victoria, as a Community Worker for 12 years, and as an Employment Consultant for 3 years. Before my community work, I was a qualified printer in Gippsland and Melbourne for 13 years.

I also served with the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health, where I was the inaugural Chairperson. I've worked as a counsellor and have experience in delivering health brokerage services on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

I moved to Melbourne in 2014 and have been actively involved with the local Aboriginal community ever since. My positive patient experience at Northern Health inspired me to give something back to the community. As a result, I joined the Northern Health RAP sub-committee and the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee in 2022.

For me, reconciliation is a way of informing non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal culture in a positive and constructive light, that empowers the Aboriginal community.



Uncle Owen Butler

I am a proud Wiradjuri man

Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Station Officer with 43 years firefighting experience with a career change within the brigade 9 years ago to a Multicultural/Emergency Management Community Liaison Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the public safety industry.

Skilled in Crisis Management, Public Safety, First Aid, State and Local Government, Emergency Management professional and an Aboriginal Independent Prisoner Volunteer (Department of Justice and Community Safety).

Along with the Northern Health RAP Sub Committee I am also engaging with LGA's across the Northern suburbs of Melbourne including

Hume, Whittlesea, Merri-bek, Darebin, Banyule and Yarra with First Nations committees along with Climate Change and Diversity/Inclusion committees.

I am Deputy Chair at the Barrbunin Beek Gathering Place, West Heidelberg within the City of Banyule and like all my work in community I am trying to make a difference with a direction to Self Determination for First Nations and being productive within our society.

Reconciliation is the coming together of opposing parties to achieve a mutual outcome.

However, this can only be achieved if we can reconcile the equality in life expectancy, education, employment and all the important measurable areas of disadvantage between the opposing parties.

What we are asking for is a commitment from the two parties (First Nations and Non-First Nations) to working towards a more equal and respectful future.



Andrew Morrison

I am a proud Gunditjmara man with 3 children

I have worked in the Aboriginal Health sector for over 20 years, in both mainstream and Aboriginal Community Controlled services. I have also been a board member on multiple Aboriginal Community controlled services. I am committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities. With extensive experience in this field,

I am dedicated to raising awareness of the health disparities faced by Aboriginal peoples and advocating for culturally-sensitive healthcare solutions. I am passionate about

making a positive impact on the lives of Aboriginal people and am dedicated to working towards a brighter, healthier future.

Narrun Wilip-giin Team

Narrun Wilip-giin (Spirit Keepers in Woi Wurrung language) is the name for the Northern Health Aboriginal Support Unit.

Narrun Wilip-giin is committed to fostering a healthcare environment that is both safe and culturally sensitive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, starting with specialised support for patients and carers to ensure they can fully access all

Northern Health services. Further, Narrun Wilip-giin makes it a priority to connect patients with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), strengthening the

continuum of care. Cultural sensitivity is integral to the operations of Northern Health, aiming not only to provide services but also to create a welcoming environment, gather feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities patients, actively identify and remove barriers to build lasting relationships with the local Aboriginal community.



FRONT LEFT TO RIGHT

ED Aboriginal Liaison Officer: **Moira Rayner**
Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer: **Karen Bryant**
Aboriginal Liaison Officer: **Stephanie Thompson**
Aboriginal Occupational Therapist: **Tya Fry**
Education & Engagement Manager: **Stefania Zen**

BACK LEFT TO RIGHT

KMS Aboriginal Health Practitioner: **Jo Quinn**
Mental Health Aboriginal Liaison Officer: **Lindsay Holmes**
Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Educator: **Natalie Bloomfield**
Aboriginal Liaison Officer: **Toni Gabelish**
Consumer Participation Coordinator: **Sherrilyn Ballard**
Chief Allied Health Officer: **Jason Cirone**

Koori Maternity Service

The Koori Maternity Service (KMS) at Northern Health offers culturally tailored care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families from pregnancy through six weeks post-birth. Led by a dedicated trio of permanent staff - Joanne Quinn, an Aboriginal Health Practitioner and Non-Aboriginal midwives Alex Slade and Courtney Lawson, both who have had extensive experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families - the service provides a holistic approach to maternity care. This includes everything from culturally sensitive pregnancy care to labor support, post-birth guidance, and even home visits. Unique offerings like 'Ngay Nga-Ango' a culturally safe Aboriginal Birthing Room, the 'Koori Cuddler' volunteer program and possum skin baby wraps further enrich the service and provides culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal women and their families. KMS staff build on respectful, trusting relationships to ensure both clinical excellence and cultural safety for patients and their families.



What does Reconciliation mean to us?

True reconciliation requires Australian community members to firstly recognise and acknowledge First Nations peoples of this land, our histories our cultures and the ongoing inequalities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since colonisation. Transgenerational trauma is something our people experience on a daily basis.

Karen Bryant, Guditjmara,
Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO)

Reconciliation is about acknowledging and learning from our shared history, confronting the challenges we face today, and working towards a better future together. I feel privileged to have learned so much from working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Jason Cirone, Chief Allied Health Officer

Our KMS team at the Northern work hard to provide culturally safe and holistic care and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families from early pregnancy through to 6 weeks post birth. By building trusting relationships with our families and providing culturally safe continuity of care we are now seeing women returning for their second, third and fourth time to access KMS and engage with antenatal care early in pregnancy.

Jo Quinn, Ngemba (Wailwan / Kamillaroi Nations) / Wiradjuri, Aboriginal Health Practitioner

Reconciliation is a daily commitment; it thrives in every interaction and constant learning. For all who call Australia home, it's a journey we navigate together with open minds and reflective hearts.

Yue Hu, Director, Narrun Wilip-giin
Aboriginal Support Unit

Northern Health's Inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan Achievements



Relationships

Establishment of Executive-led Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Development of the Aboriginal Patient Monitor & Health Scorecard

Formal partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

Closing the Gap - Health Promotion with Djirra and community

In our Northern Health 1st Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, feedback from the Aboriginal community included requests to improve access to services and health promotion.

Northern Health Narrun Wilip-giin partnered with Djirra to deliver five Aboriginal women's health and online workshops programs, made possible by a grant from Tobin Brothers Foundation. A total of 58 participants from Northern Health catchment and across Melbourne attended, with topics including how to access services such as cervical, breast, and bowel screening.

Karen Bryant, Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer said, "The workshops enabled Aboriginal women to listen to speakers on topics relating to women from 18 years to Elders, in a culturally safe space." 78 per cent of participants reported that the program speakers encouraged them to reach out and make health checks.

Antoinette Braybrook, the CEO of Djirra, said, these workshops are critical to improving health outcomes and providing support for our women to live strong in culture and identity."

Respect

- Mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness online training for all staff
- Organisation-wide celebrations of NAIDOC Week, and National Reconciliation Week
- New commissioned Aboriginal art across the health service, including new mental health facility
- Acknowledgement plaques and Wominjeka 'Welcome' signs across all hospitals
- Renamed Aboriginal Support Unit to Narrun Wilip-giin - 'Spirit Keepers' (Woi Wurrung language)
- Opened Smoking Ceremony Garden Jorung-bik - 'A pleasant Place' (Woi Wurrung language)
- New uniforms for Narrun Wilip-giin staff
- Established Aboriginal Women's Physiotherapy Clinic at Craigieburn
- Publication of Narrun Wilip-giin children's colouring book
- Promotion of Asking the Question "Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?" across Northern Health
- New Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Cultural 'Gathering Space'
- Adult possum skin cloak on permanent display at the Northern Hospital site
- Boorai possum skin wrap available and well utilised by Aboriginal families



Featured image shows Narrun Wilip-giin 'Dilly bag' with health information, provided to participants at the workshops.



Uncle Colin Hunter Jr, Traditional Owner (above), welcomed attendees with a Smoking Ceremony

Smoking Ceremony Garden Launch – Jornung-bik “a pleasant place”

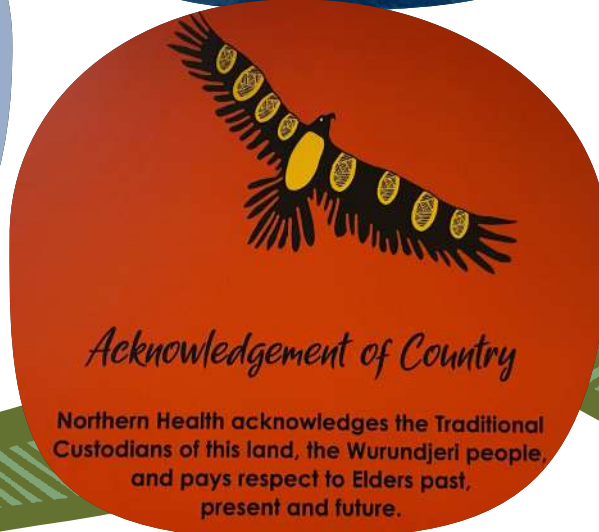
The need for the garden was identified when an Aboriginal patient on a 12 year cancer journey entered Northern Health palliative care, before entering the dream time. At the request of the patient’s family, they wished to perform a Smoking Ceremony in the patient’s final days on the ward.

Karen Bryant, Proud Gunditjmara woman and Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Northern Health said, “We now have a culturally safe space for Smoking Ceremonies.

Through the lens of diversity

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training for all staff has been made mandatory, new artwork and acknowledgement plaques were installed outside all wards and departments, we renamed the Aboriginal Support Unit with Woi Wurrung name ‘Narrun Wilip-giin’ meaning “Spirit Keepers”, developed an Aboriginal patient portal and health scorecard, and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service.

Acknowledgment plaques



Opportunities

More Aboriginal ALOs, Koori Maternity Service staff

More Aboriginal consumers on committees

Establishment of Aboriginal nursing and allied health cadetship programs

Development of Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Northern Health Aboriginal Cadetships: Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing (RUSON)

The first two RUSON's have thrived in the culturally safe space that Northern Health provides. One has been recognised as Employee of the Month on their ward and the other has successfully completed her Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduate Program and has gained employment at Northern Health.

Allied Health Cadetship

The Aboriginal Allied Health program is an opportunity for students who identify as Aboriginal to work within the allied health team to develop key clinical skills around patient interactions and to develop an understanding of working within the public health network.

Erin believes that the program “was so valuable in improving my confidence and growth to hopefully become a better clinician and implement skills in my future practice of Audiology.”

Kym Patterson, Associate Director, Allied Health explains “the Cadetship Program offers additional support to Aboriginal students undertaking their final years of undergraduate study and contributes to a culturally safe and respectful working environment.”

Karen Bryant, Senior Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, said the Cadetship programs, along with the postgraduate program, were an investment in the future, empowering Aboriginal nurses, midwives and allied health, increasing their confidence and competence in their chosen career pathway.



Trinity (above) is a proud Wullli Wullli woman from Theodore/Cracow in Central Queensland.



Erin Edwards (above), a proud Gunditjmara woman.

The background features a dense, repeating pattern of Indigenous-style motifs, including circular medallions, leaf-like shapes, and geometric designs, rendered in various shades of red and purple. Two prominent wavy lines, one orange and one green, with diagonal hatching patterns, sweep across the lower portion of the page.

Northern Health's 2nd Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan Consultation

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Consultation

The consultation process undertaken to support the development of Northern Health's second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2022-2024) has taken place over a 12-month period through to April 2022 and include:

- Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Support Unit Patient Survey (n=63)
- 25 Aboriginal community members from 18 different clans
- Local Aboriginal organisations including:
 - Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
 - Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)
 - First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing
 - Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
 - Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre
- Two consultation workshops were also held with an independent facilitator engaged to guide the discussions:
 - A Special Meeting of the Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee was held on the 16th of February 2022 and included members of Northern Health's Executive Leadership Team
 - Board Ownership Workshop held on the 28th of April 2022 and included the Chair and a member of the Community Advisory Board Subcommittee.

Mostly, the consultations were an opportunity for those consulted to reflect back on the successes and challenges of Northern Health's previous Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), as well as a look forward to identifying ways Northern Health could enhance its commitment to reconciliation in its next RAP. The patient survey explored the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients regarding Northern Health's ability to provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families.

Across the consultations, the themes and focus areas for Northern Health's next RAP were highly consistent. There was overall acknowledgement that Northern Health had progressed in its commitments to supporting Aboriginal patients and families – indeed, significant achievements over the last three years were acknowledged. However, those consulted also noted that many of the actions from Northern Health's first RAP will need to be strengthened in its second if momentum is to be maintained.

Reconciliation for me means the joint acknowledgement of past history and injustices and working together to build respectful relationships and strengthen the bond between people.

David Le, Manager, Transcultural and Language Services

Reconciliation means that we stand together, we recognise each other's strengths, we seek to understand each other's struggles, we embrace unity, and acknowledge that we have to re-learn the history lessons through the eyes of those who are the Traditional Custodians of the land."

Belinda Scott,
Executive Director Mental Health

Themes

From the consultation process, five main overriding themes were identified through a process of content analysis and priority setting.



Northern Health's 2nd Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan



Reconciliation to me means acknowledging that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were our First Nations people, by respectfully listening to their stories and bringing an openness and understanding to what injustices occurred and how this is impacting on their lives and their health outcomes. Our responsibility is committing to closing the gap by making health care more accessible by providing a culturally safe and respectful place to care for the health needs of our Aboriginal members in a way that they choose.

Maree Glynn, Director of Clinical Practice Improvement

My Mother's fight for justice, and activism as an Elder and Stolen Generations survivor, led to the Victorian Reparations Scheme being established. This is her legacy; her children will continue her fight for justice and the compensation she is entitled to.

Aunty Donna Wright, Northern Health Aboriginal Advisory Committee (NHAAC)

Reconciliation for me is about acknowledging the past, the history, the injustice, and the pain caused and committing to work towards genuine respect and pride of this land's First Peoples, of their knowledge and culture. Reconciliation starts with education, and I am proud to work closely with Narrun Wilip-giin in promoting awareness of the impact, history is still having today in the lives of our Aboriginal patients today.

Stefania Zen, Education and Engagement Manager, Transcultural and Language Services (TALS) / Narrun Wilip-giin Aboriginal Support Unit

Reconciliation is taking the time to understand someone else's journey and to walk with them in understanding, empathy and kindness.

Toni Gabelish,
Aboriginal Liaison Officer

I think reconciliation begins by listening with an open mind and open heart. You must be prepared to act and make change but also continue to do things that are effective. I believe that through more inclusion of all cultures in every day roles and activities, we can grow together with a better appreciation, and acceptance of our similarities and differences."

Daniel Crompton, Director of
Emergency Services

Every single Australian should have equitable access to the very best mental health care available. Working side by side with our First Nations fellow Australians, we can all make this a reality.

John Dermanakis, Operations Director
Mental Health

Reconciliation is a means and way of developing ideas, practices and education to encourage and enable opportunities for all people to recognise, respect and have a deeper understanding of the diversity of Aboriginal cultures, and respond with kindness and empathy in a practical and meaningful way. This will create a space for truth telling and unity.

Maira Rayner,
ED Aboriginal Liaison Officer

1

RELATIONSHIPS



At the heart of Northern Health's reconciliation efforts is fostering a deep connection between the wider community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Melbourne's outer north. Achieving reconciliation for us means cultivating trustful and respectful relationships within our healthcare settings and the communities we serve. Building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will facilitate authentic connections with local community members, assist with sharing health services experiences, and facilitate improved access to culturally safe services. These relationships will be built upon Northern Health's values of Safe, Kind, and Together.

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1.1 Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. | March 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Partnerships Senior ALO |
| | Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | February 2026 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Partnerships |
| 1.2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). | Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | May 2024, 2025, 2026 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Public Affairs |
| | RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Organise at least one NRW event each year. | 27 May- 3 June 2024, 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website | May 2024, 2025, 2026 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| 1.3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce. | June 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Organisational Capability |
| | Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. | December 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Partnerships |
| | Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation. | December 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Partnerships |

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| | Have an 'access day' to allow communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, to walk through the service, provide feedback, and build relationships. | June 2025 | Senior ALO Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| | Partner with First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing to improve the health coordination of both services with the aim of enhancing the health outcomes of the local Aboriginal communities. | May 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Engage community members in the conversation who are not currently accessing the service to monitor access and collate feedback. | June 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Ensure "Keeping our Kids Safe: National principles for Child Safe Organisations" are implemented for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. | December 2024 | Divisional Director (nursing) Women's and Children's |
| | Promote and increase uptake of VVED to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. | March 2024 | Director VVED |
| | NH Aboriginal staff & Committee representatives, Board members/ Executives have a yarning circle. Acknowledge that Reconciliation process is ongoing. Reconciliation is made visible through ongoing active stakeholder engagement by involving each area and division with actions to raise awareness and ensure accountability for deliverables that will improve access and equity to culturally safe services. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Promote successful RAP initiatives through internal & external communication channels eg: iNews stories and 'Window' (weekly all staff virtual information forum) presentations to staff. | June 2024 | Director Public Affairs |
| 1.4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | December 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Organisational Capability |
| | Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. | June 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Organisational Capability |
| | Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. | February 2025 | Senior ALO Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Organisational Capability Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| | Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism. | May 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 1.5 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision-making processes to deliver self-determination. | Reflect self-determination in organisational decision-making processes through consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is everyone's responsibility by supporting self-determination through service and capital planning, staff education, care delivery, referral, and discharge planning. | June 2024 | Education and Engagement Manager |
| | Deepen understanding of Self-Determination by incorporating the concept into Northern Health's Cultural Safety awareness training. | December 2025 | Education and Engagement Manager |

2

RESPECT



Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, rights, and experiences is fundamental to advancing all five dimensions of reconciliation. Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of doing things is crucial for establishing respectful and meaningful relationships, fostering a shared national identity, expressing pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage, and ensuring that Northern Health closes the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| 2.1 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning. | Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. | June 2024 | Senior ALO Education and Engagement Manager |
| | Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy. | September 2024 | Senior ALO Education and Engagement Manager |
| | Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff. | December 2024 | Education and Engagement Manager Director Organisational Capability |
| | Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. | December 2025 | Education and Engagement Manager Director Organisational Capability |
| | Mandate and monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and education programs across NH and conduct regular reviews of cultural safety training needs. | June 2024 | Education and Engagement Manager |
| | Provide face-to-face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety training to Northern Health Executives and Board members (external facilitator). | May 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Provide training on cultural safety and unconscious bias for all staff via a First Nations organisation. | December 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 2.2 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols. | Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | December 2024 | Senior ALO Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. | December 2024 | Senior ALO Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. | December 2025 | Senior ALO Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. | December 2025 | Director Public Affairs |
| | Revise relevant procedure to reference appropriate and respectful commissioning and display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork and flags purchased for all sites. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Procurement |
| | Introduce the concept of truth telling to tell and learn the real history of Aboriginal people, and readjusting the truth about colonisation. | December 2024 | Education and Engagement Manager |

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 2.3 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July 2024, 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin Director Organisational Capability |
| | Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff. | First week in July 2024, 2025 | Director Public Affairs |
| 2.4 Provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and consumers. | Display plaques to acknowledge Traditional Owners of the land in prominent areas. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Implement the Flag Procedure and display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at all sites. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Display culturally appropriate Aboriginal artwork and provide signage for both adults and children. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 2.5 Develop and deliver culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families. | Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are correctly and sensitively identified through Asking the Question process. Ensure Aboriginal identification at all points of registration is achieved and record cultural and individual factors in clinical files. | June 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Identify specific health conditions where there is a health outcome gap between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the non-Indigenous population., collect baseline data for these conditions, and develop culturally safe strategies to improve health outcomes. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Improve communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and gather feedback from patients and local Aboriginal communities. | June 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Explore the possibilities of developing culturally safe discharge plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and improve the referral process. | June 2024 | Director Partnerships |
| 2.6 Establish a culturally safe environment in which diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are respected and valued. | A public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is available and displayed in public access. | December 2025 | Divisional Director (nursing) Women's and Children's |
| | Improve awareness and promote the availability of Koori Maternity Service (KMS) procedure and the cultural protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families amongst programs and workforce. | June 2024 | Divisional Director (nursing) Women's and Children's |
| | Introduce and promote an internet page outlining all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services including KMS and Narrun Wilip-giin. | December 2024 | Director Public Affairs Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Develop a mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to provide feedback on their Patient Experience. | December 2024 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | Include a member of the Narrun Wilip-giin on review panels of serious incidents involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. | June 2024 | Senior ALO KMS Aboriginal Health Practitioner |
| | Representation by appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in NH committees involving child and young adults. | June 2025 | Divisional Director (nursing) Women's and Children's |

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| <p>2.7 Identify active steps the organisation can take to empower, encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to engage with and celebrate their cultures.</p> | Make available and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's books and literature in the wards for children. | May 2024 | Divisional Director (nursing) Women's and Children's |
| | Celebrate International Indigenous Children's Day on the 4th August. | August 2024 | Director Public Affairs |
| | Ensure an Aboriginal advocate is present (KMS, ASU, Lakidjeka or Aboriginal advocate) for child protection meetings at NH as per the VACCA protocol with DFFS. | June 2024 | Director of Legal Services |
| | Narrun Wilip-giin and Koori Maternity Services take active steps to empower, encourage and support Aboriginal children to express their culture and language. | June 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Review NH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural training to include appropriate reference to children and their cultural requirements. | June 2024 | Education and Engagement Manager |
| | Create a banner on child safety with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work and display on patient-facing television banners. | May 2024 | Director Public Affairs |
| <p>2.8 Ensure that patient or service information materials are reviewed for cultural appropriateness.</p> | Develop new or review existing patient materials in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. | December 2025 | Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| | Ensure representation by engaging with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer in the Consumer Advisory Committee. | December 2025 | Consumer Participation Coordinator |

3

OPPORTUNITIES



Equal participation in a variety of life opportunities is essential for the well-being of all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Northern Health is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal opportunities to access health services. Northern Health will strive to offer opportunities in employment, procurement, and staff well-being initiatives.

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| 3.1 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development. | Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | January 2026 | Director Organisational Capability |
| | Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. | June 2024 | Director Organisational Capability |
| | Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. | June 2024 | Director Organisational Capability |
| | Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. | December 2025 | Director Organisational Capability Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. | December 2024 | Director Organisational Capability Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Employ an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment advisor to facilitate and improve employment and employment opportunities to Aboriginal people. | June 2024 | Director Organisational Capability |
| | Monitor and report on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, including recruitment and retention. | June 2024 | Director Organisational Capability |
| | Review cultural and ceremonial leave policies and procedures to facilitate staff participating in events of cultural significance. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Investigate apprenticeship and cadetship opportunities across other areas of the health service (in addition to nursing and allied health), and provide work experience for Aboriginal students. | December 2024 | Director Allied Health Education Director Nursing Education |
| 3.2 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 2024 | Director Procurement |
| | Investigate Supply Nation / Kinaway memberships. | June 2024 | Director Procurement Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. | June 2024 | Director Procurement Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. | May 2024 | Director Procurement Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. | December 2025 | Director Procurement |
| | Establish an equitable process for commissioning Aboriginal artwork for use across the health service. | December 2024 | Director Procurement Director Narrun Wilip-giin |

4


GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING



The successful delivery of culturally safe services and environments requires strong internal Governance. All parts of the health service have an integral role in ensuring the safety and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.


| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|---|--|---|---|
| 4.1 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | February 2026 | Senior ALO Director Narrun Wilip-giin Consumer Participation Coordinator |
| | Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG. | March 2026 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation. | June 2024 August 2024 October 2024 February 2025 April 2025 June 2025 August 2025 October 2025 February 2026 April 2026 June 2026 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 4.2 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | June 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | May 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management. | January 2026 | Chief Allied Health Officer |

| ACTION | DELIVERABLE | TIMELINE | ROLE RESPONSIBLE |
|--|---|--|---|
| 4.3 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally. | 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 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. | 1 August annually | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. | 30 September annually | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. | May 2024 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP. | May 2026 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| | Continue to report on 'Aboriginal Health scorecard' internally and to the NHAAC. | August 2024 November 2024 February 2025 May 2025 August 2025 November 2025 February 2026 May 2026 | Chief Allied Health Officer Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 4.4 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP. | Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | December 2025 | Director Narrun Wilip-giin |
| 4.5 Strengthen Northern Health leadership and governance. | Improve leadership visibility- e.g. NH Executives and Board wearing badges and using acknowledgement email footers, where appropriate. | December 2025 | Chief Allied Health Officer |
| | NH Executives and Board support, endorse, and attend relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week. | Ongoing | Chief Allied Health Officer Executive Director Public Affairs |



//
To me, reconciliation is about coming together as one. It's about recognising the past, learning from the actions of our past governments, and ensuring we never repeat those mistakes. It's about growing and strengthening our bonds between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and creating equity and equality for all of us as one nation.

Stephanie Thompson, Aboriginal Liaison Officer



“ We acknowledge the impact of our shared history on the lives of First Nations Peoples. Reconciliation is about listening to Aboriginal voices, coming together to support self-determination, showing respect and driving equity for future generations.

Sherrilyn Ballard, Consumer Participation Coordinator



Introduction of the Artwork

Yapemeyepuka (Together)

Story meaning:

The story the artwork is the path that has been paved from being denied access to mainstream hospitals and to know being allowed and made to feel safe within mainstream hospitals.

Symbols meanings:

The gum leaves represent cleansing of the lands and spirits.

The gathering circles you see represent Aboriginal people gathering together and being in a safe environment within the hospital.

The sand hills on the top and bottom represent the traditional lands hospitals are built on.

The parts connecting the gathering circles represent the elders who have paved the way for the next generation to have a voice and feel safe within health care environments. Depicting their journey of fight.

The background colours, stars represent our dreaming.

The two figures represent our elders in our communities.

The big middle green symbol represents our water ways within our lands, depicting the strong connection we have with our waters as our waters are our life source, a place of gathering, healing and dreaming.



Artist Biography

My name is Alkina Edwards.
Born in Bairnsdale Gunnai Kurnai country.

From the Echuca community (Yorta Yorta) country. Lived in Echuca my whole life and have just recently moved to the Shepparton area with my fiancé.

From my mother's side I am a proud Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba, Mutti Mutti, Wiradjuri woman.

From my father's side I am a proud Bundjalung, wakka wakka, jinibara woman. I come from many strong bloodlines and connections which I am so proud to know and be connected to.



Northern Health