



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council



NHMRC Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan II

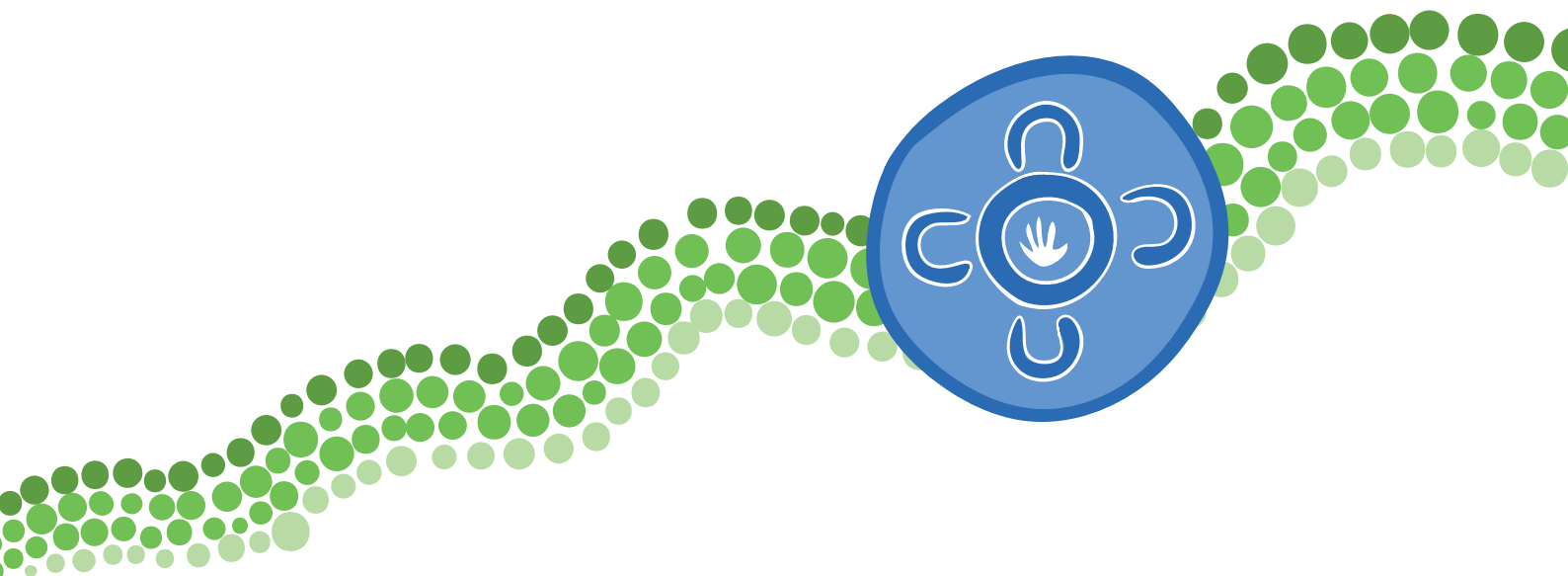
April 2022 - April 2024

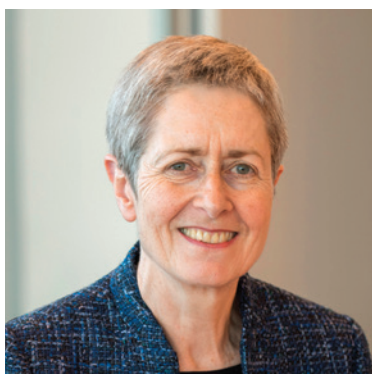


Artwork: Jordan Lovegrove, Aboriginal Artist

The Artwork for the National Health and Medical Research Council's work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical research communicates empowerment of people over their health and the progression of learning and knowledge out from the meeting place (NHMRC - bottom left corner), where many people are gathered. In the streams are the sources of nutrition and health—ants, berry bush and fish—as well as stars which symbolise new ideas.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands around Australia and pays our respect to their Elders, both past and present.





Message from the CEO

We welcome our new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) II which builds on the considerable progress NHMRC has made since our first RAP in 2015. In this RAP, we take significant further steps in our journey to advance reconciliation. We also commit to building accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and lessons, within and outside NHMRC.

A milestone achievement during the life of our previous Innovate RAP was the development of *Road Map 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research* ([Road Map 3](#)). Extensive consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research community advised NHMRC on the direction of the sector over the next ten years.

NHMRC plays a key role in how research is conducted through the development of ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Since our last RAP, [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) was revised through wide-ranging consultation and published along with *Keeping Research on Track II*, developed to provide advice on how the values and principles outlined in the Guidelines can be put into practice in research.

NHMRC has also established a National Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researchers in response to Road Map 3. A team of 91 Investigators, with the majority being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, have come together under the leadership of some of Australia's most prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. This is an important investment in building the capacity and capability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce, which is so critical for leadership of research to close the health gap.

More recently, COVID-19 has presented many challenges. We have had to adapt the way we work very quickly. This has meant changing the way we promote and celebrate National Reconciliation Day, NAIDOC Week and other days of significance. It has also changed the way we provide pipeline opportunities of experience, mentoring, connection and employment with NHMRC and its work.

We have risen to these challenges and built a stronger path forward. Our considerable achievements include the strengthening of provider relationships with the renewal of our membership of Supply Nation. We also celebrated the active participation of two staff members on (virtual) secondment to Jawun. This two-way partnership greatly enhances the understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and extends our mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships.

NHMRC also celebrates offering five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Intern positions in 2020, the highest number yet. Our sought-after internship positions provide direct work experience and opportunities, while increasing our community and stakeholder relationships. Later in this document we describe our achievements and reflect on how this process has helped drive this Innovate II RAP. One of the key lessons that we take forward is that there are no limits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledges - the more you listen, the more you are able to learn.

I commend our new Innovate Reconciliation Plan to NHMRC staff and encourage each of us to take actions as individuals, managers and leaders to implement it.

Professor Anne Kelso AO



Message from RA CEO

Reconciliation Australia commends the National Health and Medical Research Council on the formal endorsement of its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

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

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

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

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

These learnings extend to the National Health and Medical Research Council 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 the National Health and Medical Research Council 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, the National Health and Medical Research Council will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

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

Congratulations to the National Health and Medical Research Council on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

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Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia in which all people are able to live happy and healthy lives.

To support this vision, we will continue to build an organisation that is culturally aware and committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, experiences and rights.

Greater cultural understanding within NHMRC will ensure we can improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through research that addresses health equities.

Our vision is supported by our RAP, our Corporate Plan, NHMRC's [Road Map 3](#), and our Indigenous Employment Strategy. The development of our new RAP has been a priority for NHMRC, to ensure our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is embedded in our culture.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation

NHMRC commits to:

- Strengthen our procurement policies, to maximise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier opportunities
- Strengthen cultural competence. This is more than cultural awareness. It is the set of behaviours, attitudes and policies that will enable us to work effectively in cross-cultural situations
- Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP, including communicating regularly with staff on updates about and progress with the RAP
- Monitor existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, identify gaps and encourage relationship development in those areas
- Raise the agency's profile and visibility to attract, retain and foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, interns, researchers and recipients of research grants.

“Our staff are proud of NHMRC’s commitment to reconciliation and have a strong desire to continue to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and histories.”

Alan Singh, RAP Chair

Our Work

Health and medical research and its translation into improved clinical practice, health policy and health services delivery are vital for the continued advancement of human health and well-being.

As Australia's lead medical research funding agency, NHMRC plays a critical role in all these areas in support of the agency's mission of 'working to build a healthy Australia'.

NHMRC's functions are to foster 'improved health and medical knowledge, including through funding research, translating research findings into evidence-based clinical practice, administering legislation governing research, issuing guidelines and advice for ethics in health and the promotion of public health'.¹

In all its work, NHMRC relies on collaboration with researchers, clinicians, policy makers, service providers and consumers.

NHMRC is a national organisation, with offices in Canberra and Melbourne, on the lands of the Ngannawal people and the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation.

NHMRC consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Council, the Principal Committees, working committees and the staff. NHMRC has established an advisory committee to seek advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and health research issues – the Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus – which is advisory to the CEO. This committee is comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives on NHMRC Council and Principal Committees and Early Career Researchers. The committee was chaired by Professor Sandra Eades AO until the conclusion of the 2018-21 triennium on 30 June 2021.

NHMRC employs approximately 209 people.

Currently we employ five self-identified Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander staff members, and have an Indigenous Employment Strategy in place to encourage future recruitment.

“Having an active, living RAP gives direction, impetus and strength to reconciliation actions in the workplace. It forms a framework for actions, transparency and accountability.”

Dr Michelle Hyde, RAP Working Group Member

¹ [NHMRC Corporate Plan 2021-2022](#)

Our Reconciliation Journey

NHMRC's commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people covers all aspects of NHMRC's responsibilities, as well as contributing to the Australian Government's Closing the Gap initiatives.

We support and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by:

- investing in research that addresses issues of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- providing unique funding opportunities for research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health
- increasing participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in health and medical research, specifically NHMRC's grant schemes.

The launch of NHMRC's inaugural Reflect RAP in March 2015 enabled us to publicly declare our commitment to reconciliation, which we maintained through the 2016-2018 Innovate RAP. Throughout the last five years, employees have been involved in turning our commitments into actions.

Our RAP documents our ideas and actions on ways that we as an organisation, and as individuals, can contribute to closing the gap.

We have used the principles of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities to assist us. Our RAP has allowed us to focus on building relationships, both internally and externally, and to raise awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of our RAP. To achieve our vision for reconciliation, our future RAPs will continue to be developed in consultation with staff across NHMRC, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, as well as stakeholders.

RAP Working Group

The RAP has been developed by our RAP Working Group (RAP WG), which is made up of energetic and passionate staff members from across the agency. Our current membership includes:

- Executive Director, Research Translation Branch and Indigenous Champion
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser
- Assistant Director, Indigenous Health Advice
- Senior Project Officer, Indigenous Health Advice
- Director, Translation Projects and Advice
- Director, Human Resources
- Assistant Director, Human Resources
- Assistant Operations Manager, Business Services
- Media Officer, Media and Communication
- Senior Project Officer, Priorities and International Engagement
- Assistant Director, Governance, Regulation and Secretariat Support and Social Club representative
- Assistant Director, Guidelines
- Procurement Officer, Corporation Operations and Information
- Senior Project Officer, Strategic Projects and Support
- Senior Project Officer, Research Policy.

At least 3 current members of the RAP Working Group self-identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

The RAP's principal advocate (Indigenous Champion) within NHMRC is the Executive Director of the Research Translation Branch. The Champion's role is to cultivate strong and productive relationships within the portfolio, with other government agencies and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Our RAP represents the views, ideas and values of the whole organisation, and ownership of our RAP actions has been embraced by all staff. Our Indigenous Champion, along with our RAP Working Group, will guide the implementation of our planned actions and the monitoring of our progress.

Our Achievements

We are proud of NHMRC's role in working to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research. We have made considerable progress toward achieving the actions planned in our first Innovate RAP, which are outlined here.

The most significant change resulting from our RAP is a greater emphasis on attracting and recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interns. We have worked to ensure that more potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are aware of the rewarding work available at NHMRC. The NHMRC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander internship program provides:

- opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to gain insight into the work of NHMRC
- enhanced educational experience through practical work experience
- exposure to government processes in relation to funding of health and medical research
- paid placements (APS2 Classification).

Since the commencement of the program in 2016, eight interns have completed the program.

Staff who were not part of the RAP Working Group have contributed new ideas for future RAPs, indicating that awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues has been heightened.

We attribute this to our RAP and to presentations by senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers through our Indigenous Speaker series, such as Professor Yvonne Cadet-James, Dr Sean Taylor, Associate Professor Daniel McAullay, Associate Professor Maree Toombs, Associate Professor Raymond Lovett and Associate Professor Yvette Roe, to name a few.

To ensure our work environment is culturally sensitive, Cultural Awareness Workshops have been held. National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and NAIDOC week activities also enhance our understanding, increasing respect for the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Staff have also acknowledged the importance of Sorry Day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by joining in the National Sorry Day bridge walk.

Staff demonstrated a strong desire to build their cultural knowledge and have requested the continuation of current cultural learning activities. We will extend current resources and include a variety of internal and external cultural learning opportunities.

Some of our great successes include:

- the JAWUN secondment program, which gives NHMRC executive staff the opportunity to build respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and contribute to the development goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, organisations and communities
- the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to greet you in the foyer together with the Acknowledgement of Country signage
- the apt naming of NHMRC executive meeting room ‘Nummerak’ – the Ngunnawal word for wattle, often used for food and medicines
- Acknowledgement of Country training, also in Ngunnawal language, with Mr Tyrone Bell
- A brand new award honouring Professor Sandra Eades AO FAHMS – NHMRC Sandra Eades Research Excellence Award is given to the top-ranked application by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researcher in the Emerging Leadership category of Investigator Grants
- Participation of Samantha Faulkner, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser, in a six-month secondment to the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University as part of an APS Indigenous Research Secondment Pilot (the pilot provided an insight into the unique barriers to career advancement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Australian Public Service).

NHMRC Corporate Plan 2021-2022 continues our long-standing commitment to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NHMRC committed to allocate at least 5% of funding per annum from the Medical Research Endowment Account to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

To enhance our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations, NHMRC has developed the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement Strategy*. The overall aim of the strategy is to improve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NHMRC activities and promote NHMRC’s role in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research.

Working with communities, NHMRC developed the third iteration of our key document for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ health—*Road Map 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research* (Road Map 3). Road Map 3 is the product of an extensive consultation process in which researchers, health workers, government officials and community members came together to advise on future directions for research. In that sense, Road Map 3 belongs to the whole community which has shared its insights and passions for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.

NHMRC has achieved its target of 5% of total research funding being allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical research since 2008. In 2020, 6.4% of funding or \$54.3 million was allocated. NHMRC remains committed to supporting the highest quality research that drives improvements in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

A 2016 public call for research priorities saw NHMRC receive many submissions which were developed as Targeted Calls for Research (TCR). Of the submissions received the following TCRs were funded:

- Nutrition in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Healthy Ageing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from Early Life to Young Adults.

In late 2020, another public call for research priorities was opened. The round closed in early 2021 and a number of submissions were received. With the Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus, these will be prioritised and developed into TCRs.

NHMRC has established a National Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researchers as part of its response to Road Map 3. The Network is intended to create one inclusive system that brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research groups and their support networks to create a structure that builds capacity and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers. The Network will also work towards providing a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers, empowering communities and nurturing national and international collaborations to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The Network comprises a team of 91 investigators – 47 Chief Investigators and 44 Associate Investigators – and represents the largest cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers ever assembled with a single goal of growing the next generation of research leaders. The Lead Investigators are Professor Gail Garvey, Professor Alex Brown, Professor Sandra Eades AO and Dr Pat Anderson AO.

NHMRC continues to participate in a tripartite agreement in international Indigenous health with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

Lastly, NHMRC revised two key ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- [*Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018*](#)
- [*Keeping research on track II 2018*](#).

Key Lessons

In assessing NHMRC’s actions under our previous RAP, several lessons were identified. These have guided development of NHMRC Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024. Some of these lessons are:

- A small dedicated team (RAP Working Group) overseeing the implementation of the RAP increases both progress and engagement
- It is acceptable to include goals we are not sure how to achieve. We will find a way
- Senior leaders play an important role in encouraging our commitment to practical reconciliation
- Keeping our RAP activities manageable, achievable and realistic maintains motivation and momentum. But persistence and continuing effort are also required to change culture
- The agency’s profile and visibility should be raised to attract, retain and foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, interns, researchers and recipients of research grants
- Cultural capability is essential to the successful delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- There are no limits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledges. The more you ask and are willing to listen, the more you learn.

“I would like to see promotion of the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research translation and implementation become second nature.”

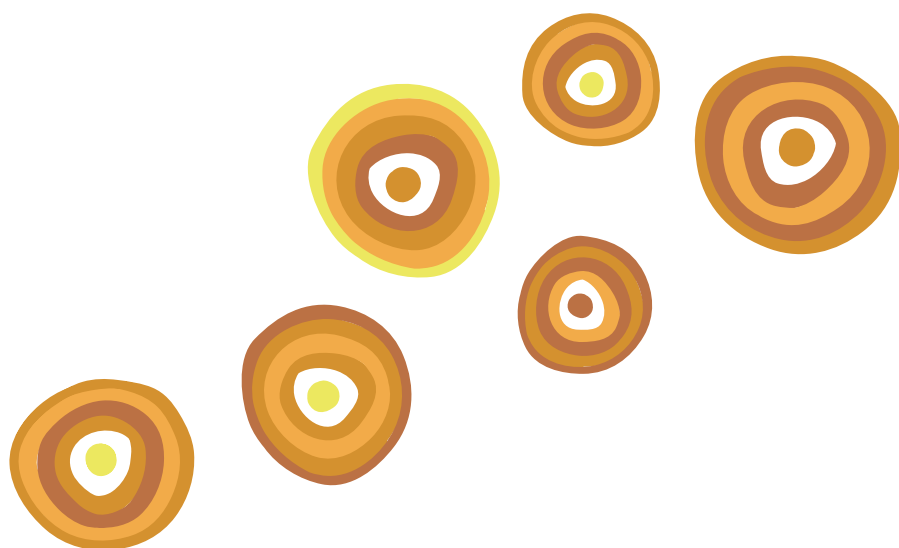
Naomi Gowor, RAP Working Group Member

Reconciliation in All Our Work

As a nation, Australia has embarked on the reconciliation journey together and we will reflect the same passion and commitment within NHMRC. Our RAP articulates the commitments we will make as an agency, but it is our hope that we will all make our own individual journeys of reconciliation. We encourage all employees to familiarise themselves with the five dimensions of reconciliation.²

- **Race relations** invites all Australians to build stronger relationships of trust and respect, creating a nation that values, understands and is truly proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences
- **Equality and equity** ensures all Australians are provided with equal services and opportunities and together, as a nation, we uphold the rights of and appropriately recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **Unity** encourages all Australians to value, recognise and be proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of our nation's identity
- **Institutional integrity** guarantees support for reconciliation is shared across Australia's government, business and community sectors
- **Historical acceptance** hopes for an Australia that understands and accepts the wrongs of our past and the impacts they continue to have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, ensuring we amend these wrongs so they are never repeated.

Through building **relationships, respect** and creating **opportunities** between all employees, we can continue to raise the awareness of our colleagues about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, identities and successes. Our journey of reconciliation at NHMRC is ongoing. One of the ways NHMRC supports the journey is with the promotion of our **Indigenous Speaker Series**, which we encourage all of our employees to attend.



² [Five dimensions of reconciliation](#), Reconciliation Australia

Your Role in NHMRC'S Reconciliation Journey

NHMRC'S Reconciliation Journey is an ongoing one. It does not begin or end with each RAP.

Some ideas on how you can contribute to NHMRC'S Reconciliation Journey are:

Make your contribution to Reconciliation by making the RAP yours

Complete NHMRC'S Cultural Awareness Training Program

Participate in Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations

Complete CORE, the APS wide cultural e-learning package

Use Supply Nation when purchasing goods and services

Become a mentor or buddy to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Intern

Perform an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings or events, including over Zoom

Attend an Indigenous Speaker Series talk

Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across all branches and at all levels

Share and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research achievements on social media

Relationships

NHMRC recognises the importance of building meaningful and respectful relationships to help us to understand, meet the needs and encourage the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in our work.

We believe exploring opportunities to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, all areas in NHMRC and across the Australian Government, will ensure our policies, programs and practices deliver effective and appropriate health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research. We will be better informed and more culturally capable in undertaking our work by building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national and local organisations, particularly those external bodies that provide strategic policy advice, direction and leadership.

Action 1		
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Maintain engagement and meaningful relationships with the Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	April, July, November 2022, March, July, November 2023, March 2024
Host the Indigenous Speakers Series and aim to invite four speakers per year.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	April, July, September, November 2022, April, July, September, November 2023, April 2024
Review and refresh NHMRC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Engagement Strategy.	Director, Human Resources	November 2022
Meet with at least two local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the health and medical research sector annually and develop guiding principles for future engagement.	Indigenous Champion	December 2022, 2023
Participate and contribute to the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Indigenous Capability Forums, Indigenous Liaison Officer meetings and HR Inclusion Forums.	Director, Human Resources	June 2022, 2023
Continue to participate in the Jawun APS Secondment Program.	Director, Human Resources	May 2022, 2023

Action 2 Build and promote relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Director, Human Resources	May 2022, 2023
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to attend external NRW events.	Indigenous Champion	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023
Ensure the RAP Working Group participates in one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	Indigenous Champion	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023
Host at least one internal NRW event at each office annually.	Indigenous Champion	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023
Acknowledge, promote and celebrate National Sorry Day on 26 May and Mabo Day on 3 June.	Indigenous Champion	26 May, 3 June 2022, 26 May, 3 June 2023
Support the Bridge Walk each year by encouraging all staff to attend.	Indigenous Champion	27 May 2022, 28 May 2023
Support co-hosting an inter-agency NRW event.	Indigenous Champion	14 April 2022, 15 April 2023
Invite Reconciliation Australia to attend internal NRW events.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, March 2023
Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's (RA) NRW website .	Director, Human Resources	29 April 2022, 30 April 2023

“Reconciliation is about sharing your stories and listening to those of others – acknowledging the negative as well as the positive. This way we build a shared understanding of the past that informs a common vision of the future.”

Julie Goode, former RAP Working Group Member

Action 3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	Indigenous Champion	15 May 2022, 2023
Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	Indigenous Champion	October 2022, 2023
Collaborate with other like-minded organisations on RAPs and develop ways to advance reconciliation.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	November 2022, 2023
Invite local Australian Public Service (APS) staff to attend NHMRC's events celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.	Director, Human Resources	30 June 2022, 2023
Action 4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	Director, Human Resources	March 2023
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisers to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	Director, Human Resources	August 2023
Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	Director, Human Resources	October 2023
Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	Indigenous Champion	December 2023

Respect

NHMRC recognises and respects the rich cultures, histories and protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We seek to ensure that our employees are culturally aware, sensitive and confident to engage respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in relation to our commitment to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research.

Action 5 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural awareness learning.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Director, Human Resources	August 2022
Ensure appropriate cultural awareness training is available for staff through face-to-face and online training modules.	Director, Human Resources	October 2022
Encourage staff to engage with cultural awareness training or immersion programs as part of their Professional Development Plan.	Director, Human Resources	October 2022
Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural awareness learning.	Director, Human Resources	December 2022
Investigate local cultural immersion opportunities for staff.	Director, Human Resources	January 2023
Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	Director, Human Resources	April 2023
Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	Director, Human Resources	August 2023

Action 6 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by observing cultural protocols.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that NHMRC offices are a welcoming space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by maintaining signage, flags, posters, quotes etc.	Director, Human Resources	August 2022
Review and promote a cultural protocol guide, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	Indigenous Champion	October 2022
Continue to use appropriate Acknowledgement of Country at the start of meetings (e.g. corporate meetings and significant events) hosted by NHMRC. Where staff members have participated in Nggunawal language training, this may be conducted in language.	Indigenous Champion	December 2022
Continue to work with Traditional Custodians to build awareness and understanding of the protocols, meaning and importance of Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies.	Director, Human Resources	January 2023
Continue to invite a Traditional Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country to at least one significant event.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	February 2023
Ensure that appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terminology, spellings and nomenclature are used.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	March 2023

“I joined the RAP Working Group to learn more about how I can both foster and participate in positive cultural change in our agency, make the workplace more welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues. Since joining, I have been inspired by the reach and future aspirations of our RAP, and am excited to be part of the progress.”

Kirilly Agnew, former RAP Working Group Member

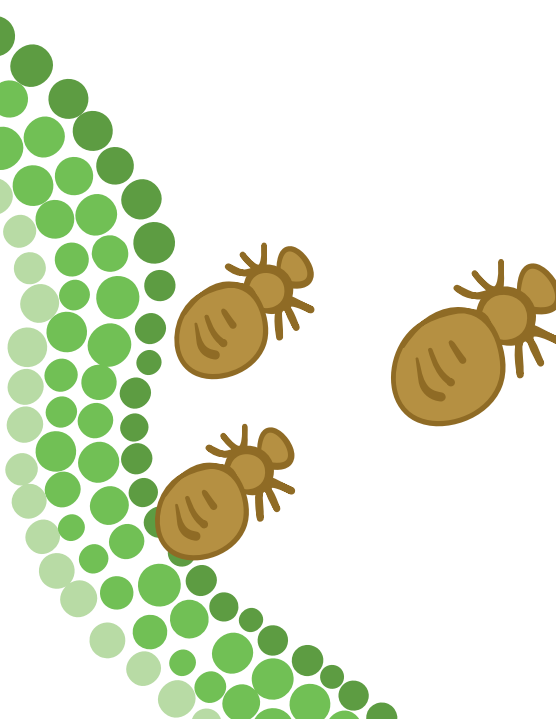
Action 7 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
CEO/Executive communicate their support for staff participation in NAIDOC Week through the staff newsletter, all-staff emails and meetings, and via the intranet.	Indigenous Champion	June 2022, 2023
Encourage all staff to participate in NHMRC NAIDOC week events, starting at least one month in advance.	Indigenous Champion	June 2022, 2023
Review policies and procedures to remove any potential barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in community or cultural events during NAIDOC Week by promoting NHMRC's leave arrangements/entitlements.	Director, Human Resources	March 2023, 2024
Review policies and procedures to remove any potential barriers for all staff to participate in NAIDOC week activities and promote NHMRC's leave arrangements for attending these events.	Director, Human Resources	March 2023, 2024
Engage with local ACT and Victorian NAIDOC committees to promote community events.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	July 2022, 2023
Hold at least one internal all staff event for NAIDOC Week each year.	Indigenous Champion	First week in July 2022, 2023
Ensure RAP Working Group members participate in at least one external NAIDOC week event.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	First week in July 2022, 2023

Action 8 Promote and educate the organisation on national and international days of significance to support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Circulate information to all staff regarding the Anniversary of the Government's apology to the Stolen Generations.	Director, Human Resources	13 February 2023, 2024
Circulate information to all staff regarding National Closing the Gap Day.	Director, Human Resources	16 March 2023, 2024
Hold an event to commemorate National Sorry Day.	Indigenous Champion	26 May 2022, 2023
Hold an event to commemorate Mabo Day.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	3 June 2022, 2023
Circulate information to all staff regarding International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.	Director, Human Resources	9 August 2022, 2023
Circulate information to all staff regarding Indigenous Literacy Day.	Indigenous Champion	6 September 2022, 2023

“For me, the RAP creates a space for non-Aboriginal people to grow in their understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, histories and peoples and to honour them as this country’s First Peoples. It provides the focus and information to reconcile the continuing importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to this country with our grief over the past, and so commit to doing better now.”

A RAP Working Group Member



Opportunities

NHMRC values the knowledges, expertise and contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made and continue to make to our society and our agency. We seek to create and strengthen opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to become more involved with our work.

A key element of our commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research is our engagement with communities. This extends to ensuring there are ample opportunities for employment, expert advice, procurement, professional development and mentorship.

Action 9 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Director, Human Resources	August 2022
Develop, communicate and implement NHMRC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022
Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment with NHMRC (target of 3%).	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Review HR procedures and policies to remove barriers to prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Use current merit pools such as the Merit Pool register held by the APSC (and consider Affirmative Measures - Indigenous Engagement) prior to engaging the market for suitable candidates.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Director, Human Resources	September 2022, 2023
Seek feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interns (and graduates when applicable) and their supervisors, mentors and buddies on the impact of and suggested improvements to the programs.	Director, Human Resources	February 2023, 2024

Action 10 Investigate and provide pipeline opportunities of experience, mentoring, connection and employment with NHMRC and its work.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Continue NHMRC's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander annual Internship Program. Offer at least two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Internship opportunities each year.	Director, Human Resources	December 2022, 2023
Investigate options to offer at least one APS Indigenous Graduate an opportunity to experience a work rotation with NHMRC. This may be through partnerships with the Department of Health.	Director, Human Resources	December 2022, 2023
Support commitments in Affirmative Measure— Indigenous Employment provision for Identified positions.	Director, Human Resources	December 2022, 2023
Support commitments through the Tripartite Agreement with our New Zealand and Canadian counterparts for mentorship and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	December 2022, 2023
Support commitments in grant schemes for postgraduate students.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	December 2022, 2023
Action 11 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Maintain NHMRC's annual membership of Supply Nation.	Director, Finance	December 2022, 2023
Promote a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that NHMRC may engage for goods and services through the Whole of Australian Government Indigenous Opportunities Policy.	Director, Finance	December 2022, 2023
Review procurement policies and procedures to identify any barriers to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Director, Business Services	December 2022, 2023
Encourage staff to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Director, Business Services	December 2022, 2023
Hold an annual meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.	Director, Business Services	December 2022, 2023
Seek feedback from both NHMRC staff and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander suppliers on their experiences and any suggestions for improvements.	Director, Business Services	December 2022, 2023
Ensure staff are aware of, and following, the Commonwealth's Indigenous Procurement Policy.	Director, Business Services	August 2022
Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Director, Business Services	October 2023

Governance

NHMRC will track and report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally through our Reconciliation Working Group, Annual Report and to Reconciliation Australia.

Action 12 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented on the RAP Working Group. Where possible, include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interns and graduates (where applicable) and ensure meetings are held during their placement.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	February 2023, 2024
Maintain the Terms of Reference for the RAP WG to keep them current and relevant.	Indigenous Champion	February 2023, 2024
Review and refresh RAP WG membership to ensure diversity of membership including representatives from all branches.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, 2023, 2024
Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Indigenous Champion	May, August, November 2022, February, May, August, November 2023, February 2024
Action 13 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
RAP WG members to include their committee role as part of their Professional Development Plan (Workplace Conversations).	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, 2023, 2024
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022
Engage our senior leaders and staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, 2023
Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, 2023
Maintain appointment of a RAP Champion from senior management.	CEO	April 2022

Action 14 Build accountability and transparency by reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.		
Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
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.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	June 2022, 2023
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Questionnaire.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	August 2022, 2023
Provide regular reports to Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus.	Indigenous Champion	December 2022, 2023
Provide regular reports to NHMRC by Staff Consultative Forum (SCF).	Director, Human Resources	December 2022, 2023
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	30 September 2022, 2023
Complete Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Barometer.	Director, Human Resources	May 2022
Increase our public profile by reporting our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings on NHMRC website and in NHMRC Annual Report.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	September 2022, 2023
Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Indigenous Champion	May 2024

Action 15 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser	January 2024
Consult widely across NHMRC and our external networks and liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Indigenous Champion	February 2024

Action 16 Complete a full review of all RAP deliverables annually.

Deliverable	Lead responsibility	Timeline
Appoint a subgroup each year to conduct the annual review of the RAP.	Indigenous Champion	March 2023, 2024
Develop a monitoring key to determine successes and where more work is needed.	Indigenous Champion	April 2022, 2023
Present the annual review to NHMRC Staff and the Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus.	Indigenous Champion	April 2023, 2024

“The RAP is not a document, it’s not even really a plan. It is a way of living, breathing and caring about people, to build relationships with people and Country. It is a way to acknowledge, respect and privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices as the voice of wisdom and knowledge in this land.”

Dr Wee-Ming Boon, RAP Working Group Member



Contact details:

Alan Singh

02 6217 9149

Alan.singh@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC Indigenous Champion and RAP Chair
Executive Director, Research Translation

Samantha Faulkner

02 6217 9526

samantha.faulkner@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser

Katie Matthews

02 6217 9217

Human.resources@nhmrc.gov.au

Director, Human Resources
NHMRC RAP Secretariat