



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital



Reconciliation Action Plan: Innovate

November 2024 – November 2026



Connection

Kenita-Lee McCartney

“In the heart of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, a profound story of reconciliation unfolds, woven through the vibrant artwork that reflects the spirit of collaboration.

The circles depicted in the artwork symbolise meeting circles where people come together, telling the tale of unity among healthcare services dedicated to the holistic care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The U shapes represent people, it represents the community, those who have walked through the doors seeking care and those who will be cared for from the hospital and its partners in the future.

The artwork tells the story of the commitment of Royal Melbourne Hospital’s relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

-Kenita-Lee McCartney, artist



The Royal Melbourne Hospital acknowledges the Kulin nations as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our services are located. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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A message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends the Royal Melbourne Hospital on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

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

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for the Royal Melbourne Hospital to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, the Royal Melbourne Hospital will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering

consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

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. The Royal Melbourne Hospital is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Royal Melbourne Hospital's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Royal Melbourne Hospital on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

A message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive

We are pleased to present the Royal Melbourne Hospital's (RMH) second RAP, an Innovate RAP. This plan marks another significant step in our ongoing commitment to Reconciliation with First Nations peoples.

As one of the largest health services in Victoria we have a responsibility and an opportunity to play a leading role in closing the healthcare gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians.

Our RAP supports our purpose to advance health for everyone, every day, reflecting our commitment to create a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system.

This is change that starts with our people, for as we know, to achieve our goals of delivering great care, we need to first make sure we are providing a culturally safe environment for our workforce.

We are proud that since the introduction of our RAP in 2020, we have grown our First Nations workforce, including the development of our First Nations Health Unit. Fully staffed by First Nations healthcare professionals, and supported by an Elder-in-Residence, the Unit also opened a dedicated space at our Parkville hospital in 2023, ensuring a culturally safe space is always available to staff and community. We have recently appointed our first Aboriginal Health Director, who will continue to strengthen our strategic agenda, including training, education and development for all RMH staff, now and into the future.

First Nations Health is governed internally by dedicated First Nations staff and non-Indigenous allies through our First Nations Governance Committee, who collaborate to drive greater awareness and support of our Reconciliation goals across the RMH.

Through the RAP collaboration new initiatives have been made possible

to create a more culturally welcoming workplace, including a smoking ceremony procedure to support end-of-life care for First Nations patients, and procurement of native foods for the development of a 'Mob Meal' plan.

Staff have been encouraged to participate in cultural training and gain a greater understanding of the importance of asking the question 'Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?', with the most recent data showing 90 per cent of staff have completed this training. This supports referrals to liaisons across hospital and mental health services, with 439 patients referred to the First Nations Health Unit across the 2022-23 financial year.

Thank you to the Committee for your work in driving the development of this new RAP.

An Innovate RAP asks us to deepen our understanding of our sphere of influence and develop innovative approaches to Reconciliation, building strong relationships that empower our First Nations staff, patients, and consumers.

This focus on self-determination for First Nations peoples is an ongoing aim, but just as important is for our non-Indigenous staff, volunteers and community who play a vital part in our Reconciliation journey.

Please take your time to read the activities in our RAP and consider how you can contribute to and participate in Reconciliation through your own education and engagement with training, celebrations and opportunities in your role.

Linda Bardo Nicholls AO
Board Chair

Professor Shelley Dolan
Chief Executive

A message from the Director Aboriginal Health

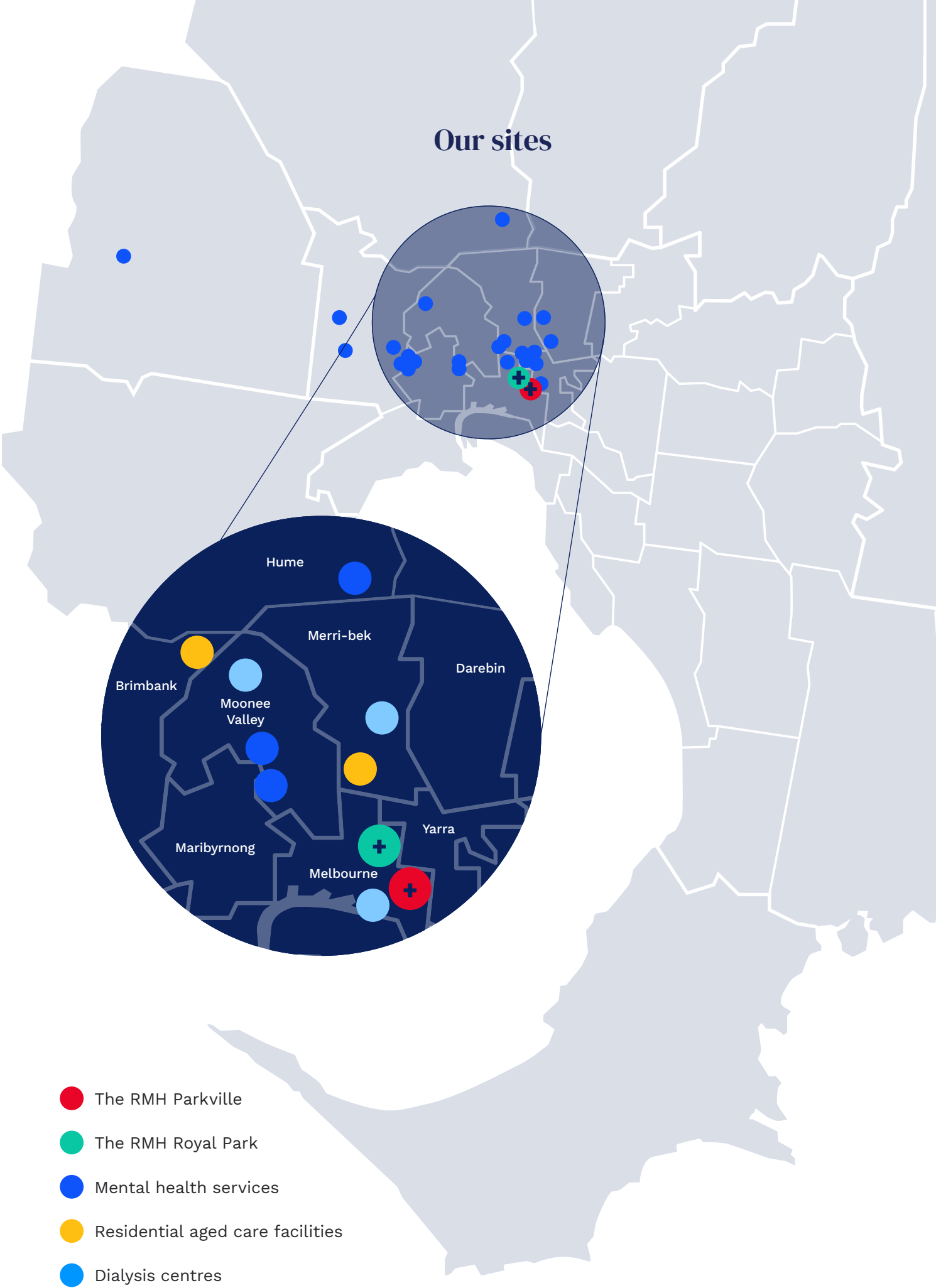
The RMH’s Innovate RAP 2024–2026 reaffirms our commitment to our journey toward reconciliation and is predicated on a more equitable and respectful future. As the recently appointed Director Aboriginal Health, this role demonstrates the RMH’s investment to ensuring high level strategic direction across the organisation. This role aims to prioritise the actions as defined under the National Safety Quality Health Standards (NSQHS) for how we meet the needs of First Nations people. Specifically, we aim to prioritise our approach to working with consumers, communities, and other stakeholders. Understanding these different approaches will allow us to prevent duplication, create innovate solutions to often difficult challenges and promote self-determination; ultimately creating sustainable results. This role will continue to nurture our partnerships, maintain our responsibility to the organisation’s safety and quality priorities, implement and monitor strategies that continue to meet the needs of First Nations people, promote a welcoming environment, and provide comprehensive, culturally safe care to all First Nations people, patients, and visitors.

Candice McKenzie
Director Aboriginal Health

Our progress

While we continue toward our many aspirations to grow our workforce, meet the health needs of our First Nations consumers across RMH’s local catchment area and celebrate events that seek to acknowledge and promote First Nations cultures and practices, the RMH wishes also to celebrate our progress.

- 2019: The implementation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Needs Plan
- 2020: Launch of our first Reflect RAP
- Development and growth of our First Nations Governance Committee including >50% First Nations membership since its inception (est. 2019)
- 2021: The implementation of our First Nations Dermatology Clinic
- 2021: The introduction of mandatory cultural safety learning package for all RMH staff
- 2022: The launch of our Asking the Question campaign across RMH sites and the introduction of mechanisms including a ‘flag’ into our electronic medical records system to alert clinicians and inform safe approaches to care.
- 2023: First Nations Health Unit opening
- 2024: Endorsement of new Innovate RAP (est. 2019)
- Ongoing: Improvement in clinical governance standards including the successful implementation of accurate reporting and monitoring of health information to inform policy and service planning and development
- Ongoing: Improved participation and retention from First Nations employees. The RMH currently employs more than 50 First Nations staff across various clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles.



Transforming spaces

To assist in keeping language alive and create a culturally welcoming space, the RMH incorporates the Woi-wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people when naming spaces. This includes consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage Aboriginal corporation. These spaces include ‘Mooroop Wa-lam-buk’ (renew soul) garden at the RMH Parkville, ‘Ngarra Jarra’ (healing) allied health conference room, ‘Narrkwarren Wilam’ (family home) relatives’ room in our Emergency Department. The Narrkwarren Wilam relatives’ room and entrance to the Emergency Department also includes artwork from Wurundjeri-willam artist Mandy Nicholson and at our Elizabeth Street site we have included our birr djerring – meaning – Coming Together (for staff lounge), wilam yagilaith – meaning – A Place of Learning (for training room 1) and wilam ngarrgu – meaning – A Place of Knowledge (for training room 2).

First Nations spaces

The RMH has opened a dedicated First Nations Health Unit space and incorporates First Nations artwork and languages across its campuses to support culturally safe care for our patients and their loved ones. The RMH officially opened its First Nations Health Unit space in March 2023. This space provides improved access to care and support for our First Nations patients, while also offering a safe and culturally appropriate space while at hospital. To assist in keeping language alive and create a culturally welcoming space, the RMH also incorporates the Woi-wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people when naming spaces. This includes consultation with



the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage Aboriginal corporation. Artwork by First Nations artists has also been hung across the organisation, with plans to expand the collection across more locations.

“It is important when First Nations peoples are accessing our services that they are able to see their culture and who they are reflected – in this case, it happens to be via art as an important part of storytelling and identity,” Director of Aboriginal Health Candice McKenzie said. A key piece of art is ‘Walk Together’, created for the RMH RAP by Bayila Creative’s Dixon Pattern, a proud Gunaai and Yorta Yorta man. It was installed in the RMH Parkville foyer in August 2022, near where the First Nations Health Unit would open seven months later. It also features at the RMH Elizabeth St, including in the wooden panelling of staff office spaces.

Also, at the RMH Elizabeth St are Eunice Napanangka Jack’s ‘Deep Waterhole – Tjukurria’ and Linda Ngitjanka’s ‘Alkipi Rockholes’. Both these pieces are installed near the Birr Djerring (coming together) staff lounge, wilam yagilaith (place of learning) training room 1, and wilam ngarrgu (a place of knowledge) training room 2. At the RMH Parkville, the Narrkwarren Wilam (family home) relatives’ room features artwork from Wurundjeri-willam artist Mandy Nicholson. The Mooroop Wa-lam-buk (renew soul) garden, Ngarra Jarra (healing) allied health conference room are also at the Grattan St campus.



Working in partnership

Over many years the RMH has taken steps to improve our relationships and grow our health initiatives in collaboration with First Nations communities and this has paved the way for us to continue our journey to Reconciliation.

The RMH has multiple partnerships and connections across Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) including Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO). Across the health service, a variety of communities and ACCO's are also represented within memberships of our Community Advisory Committee and the RMH First Nations Governance Committee. These partners play a pivotal role in providing an inclusive, collaborative approach toward service provision and improvement.

Established community partnerships have led to the development of direct referral pathways from VAHS, an established First Nations Dermatology clinic & First Peoples Health and Wellbeing to our community mental health programs. This includes intensive outreach support to First Nations peoples experiencing homelessness and enduring mental illness via Widamba Wilam and social and emotional support offered via the Balit Djerring project. The Royal Women's Hospital, The Royal Children's Hospital, the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the RMH form the Parkville precinct Aboriginal Health Working Group, a partnership to improve services for our patient populations and increase culturally responsive care as well as to celebrate and acknowledge significant events.

Finally, our direct patient care partnerships are also highly valued, with the roles of our First Nations Hospital Liaison Officers, Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialists and the recently appointed Director Aboriginal Health to better support and advocate for First Nations people in our care.

team since the beginning of 2024, helping build the number of people with knowledge and experience of providing culturally safe care within the RMH workforce. By the end of the year, three registrars will have rotated through the service. "The clinic started very small and the fact it has grown and now has a dedicated registrar has shown there is a commitment from the Dermatology Department. And the support I have received has been broad within the department, including referrals from colleagues," Dr Williams said.

"Collegial support is important in areas with a high cultural load. That support has really come from our First Nations Health Unit, but also from colleagues within the Dermatology Department." Dr Williams said VACCHO was supportive of the concept from its infancy. The partnership was "a new way of providing care" in a tertiary hospital, while the service laid the groundwork for the development for more dedicated First Nations clinics within other departments throughout the RMH, she said. In 2021, the First Nations Dermatology service received the team award for the Brilliant Women in Digital Health, presented by Telstra Health, and in 2022 was a finalist in the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards in the 'Improving Aboriginal health' category.



First Nations Dermatology

The First Nations Dermatology service provides care for the skin health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Victoria. Established by First Nations clinicians and with VACCHO as a proud funding partner, the service offers both face-to-face and telehealth appointments, helping improve healthcare access. Service clinical lead and Wiradjuri woman Dr Crystal Williams said past patients of the clinic were now referring their loved ones to the service.

"To get word-of-mouth referrals from First Nations peoples is quite a special experience, because it really is about people advocating for their own health experience," she said. A registrar has been part of the



Growing our workforce

The RMH continues to work toward our commitment to attract, recruit and retain First Nations peoples in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles. With continued input from current First Nations staff member and in consultation with our community partners, the RMH continues its plan to become an employer of choice and great place to work for First Nations peoples. This includes medical internship, graduate nursing (general and mental health) placements, cadetships, mentorships, and work experience programs, as well as efforts to improve cultural capability of all managers to support our RMH staff.



Meet Gunggandji nurse Thom

It did not take long for Thom Kadarimia to know he had made the right choice with a nursing career. Thom recalls a story from early on in his career of a patient and the “smile on his face” after that patient was able to go to the bathroom after weeks in bed because of a spinal injury.

“This is literally a life-changing moment and I got to see this. It is such a rewarding space to be in, and to share those moments with people is such a privilege,” Thom says. As a nurse on the ward, however, Thom has also seen first-hand the different reactions people may have to illness or injury. Some of those reactions may be influenced by other psychosocial and other precipitating factors but could in some cases led to frustration and anger directed at staff.

“Seeing the flip side of that anger is us, as healthcare professionals, feeling like we are quite torn between really wanting to care for a patient – because we do care – but then also think, where do I fit?” Thom is now an Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA) clinical nurse consultant, providing education and support to staff to stay safe at work while continuing to provide care to our community. “I love to talk to staff about this. I feel like the best care occurs when staff safety comes first – when we feel safe and comfortable and can truly be ourselves, we can go to the ends of the earth for somebody but that can only happen if we feel safe.

“The thing we educate people about is that we fit into that puzzle too. When we look after ourselves, we can



interact with patients better.” Thom, who is a proud Gunggandji man from the traditional lands of Yarrabah in Queensland, studied nursing in Perth and moved to Melbourne in 2018. He described making a switch to public health as “life-changing”.

“Coming to the RMH, seeing the diversity of the staff that work here, the diversity of the patients who are here ... I think ‘excellence together’ is a thing I have seen here,” he said. “People are always asking; how can we do this better? We want to improve patient experiences, improve things for staff. Even in my role – I get to talk to staff about how to keep safe, it is such a rewarding space to be in.

“When people say, ‘you come to work for the people’, I feel like it is the place for that.” This year Thom is also providing cultural support for two graduate nurses at the RMH.



Meet the First Nations team supporting mental health consumers

Continuing to build their relationship with community is a key focus of the RMH's First Nations Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team to support culturally safe care and long-term benefits to consumers' health. The First Nations SEWB team provide welcome and orientation to First Nations peoples accessing the mental health service, and support during the recovery journey. The SEWB staff can also connect First Nations mental health consumers with community programs and ACCHOs. The term 'social and emotional wellbeing' reflects a more holistic view of health.

"One of the most important things is that SEWB works over the long-term, so it is about making connections - in our relationships with other services but also with our consumers," said First Nations SEWB Project Officer Erin Alexander, whose mob is Warlpiri. "It can be quite different to the medical model. It is not always culturally accurate to put people through a checklist. It is really important to see people as people and consider



their whole social emotional wellbeing." Building the connection between the team and the community is also important, clinical specialist and Yorta Yorta and Taungurung man Grady Walsh said.

"I get contacts from community people to let me know someone is unwell, what can they do? That means we can be aware of them before they come in and community knows us ... we are seen as a safe place." Among the SEWB team is First Nations staff with experience in mental health care. Erin, who studied both nursing and psychology, says that dual experience is "really beneficial for everyone". Grady adds that identifying with clinicians when the cause of an issue may be cultural more than clinical "is a big thing the mainstream services need to see".

"We do have clinical experience, as well as that cultural awareness that they don't, and I think that is where we are always going to be a benefit," he said.



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan November 2024 – November 2026

Our vision for reconciliation

The RMH vision for reconciliation is a sustainable economic future where First Nations people can thrive, effective and mutually beneficial partnerships are fostered and where First Nations people have an active role in shaping our local and national healthcare system. To bring this vision to life, the RMH will continue to examine and nurture the impact our services have on First Nations people and is committed to establishing long term sustainable change that fosters institutional progress. The RMH continues its commitment toward a more accessible, culturally safe, and equitable healthcare experience for First Nations consumers by celebrating our unique and diverse cultures, acknowledging past injustices, maintaining effective governance, and prioritising key

stakeholder relationships in the co-design of health initiatives that aim to promote self-determination. We accept across our organisation that we have varied skill levels and knowledge about working in a clinically safe way with First Nations patients, consumers, and visitors. Our continued journey to reconciliation through this next iteration will ensure that we celebrate diversity, act with purpose and lead with kindness. Through our actions, RMH understands and values the benefits gained from cultivating a collaborative, shared culture that values and promotes reconciliation and the unique contributions First Nations peoples and communities not only make to the RMH but to Australia.

About the RMH

In 1848, the RMH began as Victoria’s first public hospital, located on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. Today the RMH is one of the largest health providers in the state, providing a comprehensive range of specialist medical, surgical, and mental health services, as well as rehabilitation, aged care, outpatient, and community programs. Our care extends from our Parkville hospital through Royal Park and mental health services across the inner west and western suburbs of Melbourne. We are a designated state-wide provider for services including trauma, and we lead centres of excellence for tertiary services in several key specialties including neurosciences, nephrology, oncology, cardiology, and virtual health. This includes

the world-renowned Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, our joint venture with the University of Melbourne. Our people of 11,202 are united in our purpose of advancing health for everyone, every day, supporting great care that puts people first, leading with kindness to achieve excellence together. The RMH acknowledges the unique privilege we play in developing a strong workforce that can help break down barriers First Nations people may experience when accessing healthcare and enhance our ability to provide culturally responsive care. One of the ways we do this is by employing First Nations people. We continue to strive toward being an employer of choice – one that is progressive, culturally inclusive,

and socially responsible. The RMH employs more than 50 First Nations people across its services, in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles. It is not compulsory that staff declare whether they are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on employment, but we aim to build an inclusive culture where staff are proud and confident to declare their cultural heritage.

The RMH recognises first and foremost the integral role our own staff and employees play in reconciling past injustices and their individual and collective roles in a more unified, cohesive, culturally safe future and we continue to work together to achieve our shared vision. With the Royal Women’s Hospital, The Royal Children’s Hospital, and Peter McCallum Cancer Centre, the RMH forms the Parkville Precinct. Over many years, the RMH has taken steps to improve our relationships and health initiatives with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and this continues to pave the way toward Reconciliation. Our partnerships extend across various stakeholder groups including but not limited to, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector (VACCHO) and the Wurundjeri Traditional Owner Group, the Balit Djerring Project Group, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). Finally, the RMH acknowledges our most influential stakeholder as our First Nations communities, both locally and nationally. The RMH prioritises effective engagement with our First Nations communities to enable self-determination and Indigenous governance and thus a shared responsibility.

Areas for action include, but are not limited to:

- I. Continuing to seek opportunities to expand our First Nations clinical service availability. The RMH First Nations Dermatology service provides care for the skin health of First Nations communities across Victoria. Established by Aboriginal clinicians, the service aims to engage in culturally appropriate care, caring for all types of skin disease including inflammation, infection, and immunity related conditions. The RMH services plan includes culturally appropriate and specific health care services across a wide range of specialities
- II. The RMH will continue to ensure diverse representation across its various decision-making bodies to oversee specifically, the strategies and processes that have outcomes for First Nations people. The RMH acknowledges that representation must include and be informed by the diversity of the organisation’s catchment and that all governing bodies overseeing matters related to First Nations Health have significant First Nations representation. The RMH plans to prioritise the development of a set of guiding principles for working in partnership with individuals and groups to feel safe and respected.
- III. The RMH will identify and support increased participation by First Nations people in the workforce at all levels; clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles.





Our RAP

The RMH recognises the impact past policies have had on the health of First Nations peoples. As one of the largest public health services in Victoria, the RMH will continue to prioritise Reconciliation, aware that we have a leading role to play in improving the health care outcomes of First Nations peoples. Our emphasis continues to be on improving the lives of First Nations peoples and the broader Australian population. We continue to call attention to our key partnership activity, workforce sustainability, the celebration of significant events and improving the cultural capability of our staff and communities as a priority. The RMH relies sincerely on its partnerships and connections with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) including the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) as a source of wisdom and knowledge. Across the service, we continue to give precedence to our partners who play a pivotal role in providing a collaborative and inclusive approach to our Reconciliation journey. Established partnerships have led to the development of direct referral pathways from VAHS, wider outreach across our community for those who need it the

most and social and emotional wellbeing support offered within the hospital via the Balit Djerring project. Greater emphasis has been given to our direct patient care partnerships with the roles of First Nations Hospital Liaisons Officers in place to support and advocate on behalf of First Nations patients and families in our care.

The RMH work however, doesn't stop here. We continue to acknowledge, promote, and celebrate First Nations cultures and practices, as well as work toward efforts to continuously improve the cultural capability of our senior executive and healthcare leaders. To maintain our continued and safe service provision, all activities are governed internally by various working groups. Namely our First Nations Governance Committee whose collective responsibility it is to endorse all First Nations health initiatives across the RMH. Current membership stands at 27 representatives across the hospital with 13 members identifying as First Nations peoples.

Adjunct Professor Kethly Fallon
Chief Nursing Officer and RAP champion

First Nations Governance Committee

The First Nations Governance Committee was established in 2019 to develop and implement a RAP with a focus on building a plan committed to Closing the Gap in health outcomes and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

and the broader Australian population across the RMH's local catchment area, including but not limited to, mental health, chronic disease, and preventative health. The committee membership includes:

- Director Aboriginal Health (Chairperson)
- First Nations Health Unit
- Elder in Residence
- Health Information Representative
- Quality Improvement Representative
- Food Services Representative
- Social, Emotional & Wellbeing (SEWB) representative
- Chief Nursing Officer (RAP Champion)
- (Indigenous) Nursing Workforce (RN) Representative
- (Indigenous) Medical Workforce (MD) Representative
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Consultant
- Orygen Representative
- Allied Health Representatives
- Community Engagement & Patient Experience representative
- People and Culture representative
- Quality and Improvement representative
- Mental Health Services Quality Improvement representative
- General Manager Representative

The Governance Committee has responsibility to:

1. Support and provide input and advice as required on the 6 actions specifically addressing the needs of First Nations people based on the NSQHS Standards User Guide for First Nations Health and report progress to the Clinical Governance (Standard 1) Committee.
2. Provide feedback and endorse changes to the RMH First Nations Health Needs Plan
3. Provide feedback and endorse changes to the RMH RAP in collaboration with community members and staff within the context of the RMH's core business and existing frameworks i.e. First Nations Employment Plan.
4. Provide strategic support and advice on matters related to RAP including consultation with Reconciliation Australia and support all associated projects.
5. Provide strategic support and advice

on matters related to the First Nations Employment Plan.

6. Complete the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) tool identified under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework
7. KPI monitoring and reporting to the RMH Quality Committee

This is the RMH's second RAP with our first RAP launched during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. We look forward to the positive impact our work will continue to have in the years to come and the improved outcomes for our community. The RMH Innovate RAP has been developed in response to the many barriers faced by First Nations people in achieving equitable healthcare and health outcomes. The addition of our Innovate RAP will build on the extensive work already undertaken to continue to celebrate First Nations peoples, art, histories, and cultures. Informed by our First Nations Governance Committee, colleagues, leaders, and community, the RMH recognises that with self-determination comes trust. This RAP together with our previous Reflect RAP will continue to guide our work to empower First Nations voices in decision making and outlines the RMH continued commitment toward increasing equity, accountability, and leadership for First Nations people. Our employment plan is still underway to make the RMH an employer of choice and a great place to work for First Nations people. It includes medical internship, nurse graduate placements, cadetships, mentorships, and work experience program, as well as efforts to improve cultural capability of managers. Ensuring our services, workplaces and events are culturally safe is critical to our work at RMH and remains one of our highest priorities.



RELATIONSHIPS

The RMH gives priority to how we have and continue to foster collaboration, nurture productivity, increase retention and transfer knowledge and skills between First Nations peoples and Non-Indigenous Australians. The RMH believes that building meaningful and sustainable relationships is central to understanding and addressing shared challenges through a collaborative approach that connects people, celebrates culture, shares experiences, and maintains trust

Focus area: People First

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local First Nations stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	December 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
	Collaborate on the RMH community engagement strategy. Underway as per standard 2.13 – The RMH to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to meet their healthcare needs including recruitment of and consultation with First Nations consumer representatives.	December 2024	Lead: Director Patient Experience and Consumer Engagement Support: Director Aboriginal Health
	Review and implement MOU and/or partnership agreements with all existing * and future First Nations stakeholders.	December 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
	Collaborate with VAHS to understand and respond to community needs and work toward establishing joint health initiatives.	December 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
	Partner with VACCHO to be the first Tertiary Hospital to undertake Cultural Safety Accreditation (CSA) program.	January 2025	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: Chief Nursing Officer
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health

2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	First Nations Governance Committee members to participate in an external NRW event in collaboration with NRW Precinct hosts, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre	27 May- 3 June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2025 & 2026	Chief Nursing Officer
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2025 & 2026	Peter McCallum Cancer Centre
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop micro-online learning packages to help educate staff and the community on significance and importance of reconciliation	February 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Communicate RMH commitment to reconciliation publicly.	July 2025 & 2026	Chief Nursing Officer
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2025	Lead: Director Strategic Communications and Media Support: Director Aboriginal Health
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	January 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
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.	November 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Engage with First Nations staff and/or stakeholders to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Educate senior leaders, including executive staff on the effects of racism.	February and August 2025	Director Aboriginal Health



RESPECT

First Nations people hold distinctive rights as Australia's First Peoples and the RMH actively seeks to build respect for First Nations peoples, cultures, knowledge, histories, and rights across our organisation as part of its core business. Our collective goal is to build a strong sense of belonging in an inclusive environment that works respectfully with First Nations people through teaching, learning, research, and collaboration, embracing the best of our diverse cultures and communities. At the RMH we understand and respect the incredibly important value First Nations peoples bring to the table with their rich cultures and histories and will continue to work collaboratively to develop our awareness, appreciation of, and respect for, First Nations peoples so that we may continue to offer a culturally safe place to work and receive care.

Focus area: Be a great place to work and a great place to receive care

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group, HR Managers, and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Continue to engage with local Traditional Owner groups and key partners on matters related to education, cultural learning, and training across the RMH, including the cultural learning strategy, via the monthly First Nations Governance Committee Meetings.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for RMH staff.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Continue to review and roll out the mandatory First Nations Cultural Awareness E-Learning package from the Department of Health (DoH) for Victorian health Services.	August, October, November 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop and implement the RMH First Nations Education Framework to guide education & training requirements of all RMH staff and employees.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Implement training matrix to keep managing staff accountable for ongoing professional development of staff	January 2026	Director Aboriginal Health

6. Improve current health systems to best understand First Nations health care needs and outcomes	Develop and implement a First Nations outpatient referral pathway (Electronic Medical Record) to safely link First Nation consumers with a First Nations Hospital Liaison Officer.	December 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop and implement First Nations Key Performance Indicator [KPI] Dashboard to increase visibility and support RMH requirements to track, monitor and report on First Nations Health performance metrics.	January 2025	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: Director Health Intelligence
	Leverage existing internal and external auditing processes to determine how well the organisation is meeting NSQHS standards.	December 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
7. Demonstrate respect to First Nations 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.	August, October, November 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review, implement, and continue to communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	August, October, November 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	All major events	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review and update Acknowledgement of Country and/or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of all staff meetings – as per guideline.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Design and implement Mob Meal Plan for inpatient cohort	June 2024	Lead: First Nations Project Officer
8. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	First Nations Governance Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	January 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2025 & 2026	Chief Nursing Officer



OPPORTUNITIES

The RMH continues work toward developing a strong and prosperous future for its First Nations patients, consumers, staff, and community. The RMH strives to address various market barriers through appropriate evaluation of our programs including preferential procurement policies, increased employment pathways and professional development, creating opportunities for greater access to and participation in the Australian economy.

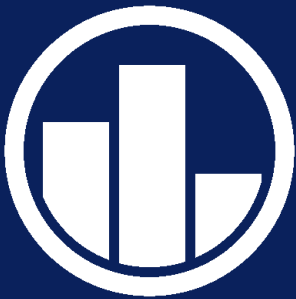
Focus area: *Strive for Sustainability*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2024	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: Recruitment team and DEI consultant
	Engage with First Nations staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	June 2025 & 2026	First Nations Governance Committee
	Develop and implement a First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations candidates & stakeholders.	November 2024	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Nations participation in our workplace.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop an organisational wide Employee Valuation Proposition (EVP)	July 2025	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: Chief Nursing Officer
	Develop and implement learning packages for hiring managers that incorporate training aimed at reducing institutionalised racism, improved communication, and an increased awareness of unconscious bias.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health



	Develop early career (PhD, traineeship & cadetship) pathways into healthcare professions at RMH.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Undertake a gap analysis to help inform strategies and understand the specific needs of First Nations people in the health service organisations catchment.	December 2025	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: DEI Consultant
	Support identified staff to join the monthly mob gathering network that allows for informal opportunities for staff to get together, develop ideas, create cultural inclusion, and improve health and wellbeing.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
10. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement a First Nations procurement strategy.	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health
	Maintain Supply Nation membership.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses to staff.	January 2025	Lead: Procurement Team Support: Director Aboriginal Health
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses.	January 2025 & 2026	Lead: Procurement Team Support: Director Aboriginal Health
	Continue to grow and review existing commercial relationships with First Nations businesses.	June 2025 & 2026	Lead: Director Procurement Support: Director Aboriginal Health
	Continue to attend regular meetings with Kinaway	January, June and September 2025 & 2026	Lead: Procurement Team Support: Director Aboriginal Health

11. Address Health Needs of First Nations people	Develop strong integrated health systems to provide access to tertiary healthcare that encourages health promotion, preventative services that reduce the burden of disease, avoid unnecessary emergency department visits, and maintains access to high quality care.	November 2026	Lead: Director Aboriginal Health Support: Chief Nursing Officer
	Engage First Nations consumer representatives and staff to advise on culturally safe service delivery programs and initiatives.	November 2026	Lead: Director Community Engagement and Patient Experience Support: Director Aboriginal Health
12. Grow First Nations research reputation and capability	Use the Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord [marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri] principles to increase the number of First Nations staff engaged in research at RMH.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Develop guidelines for undertaking First Nations research	July 2025	Director Aboriginal Health

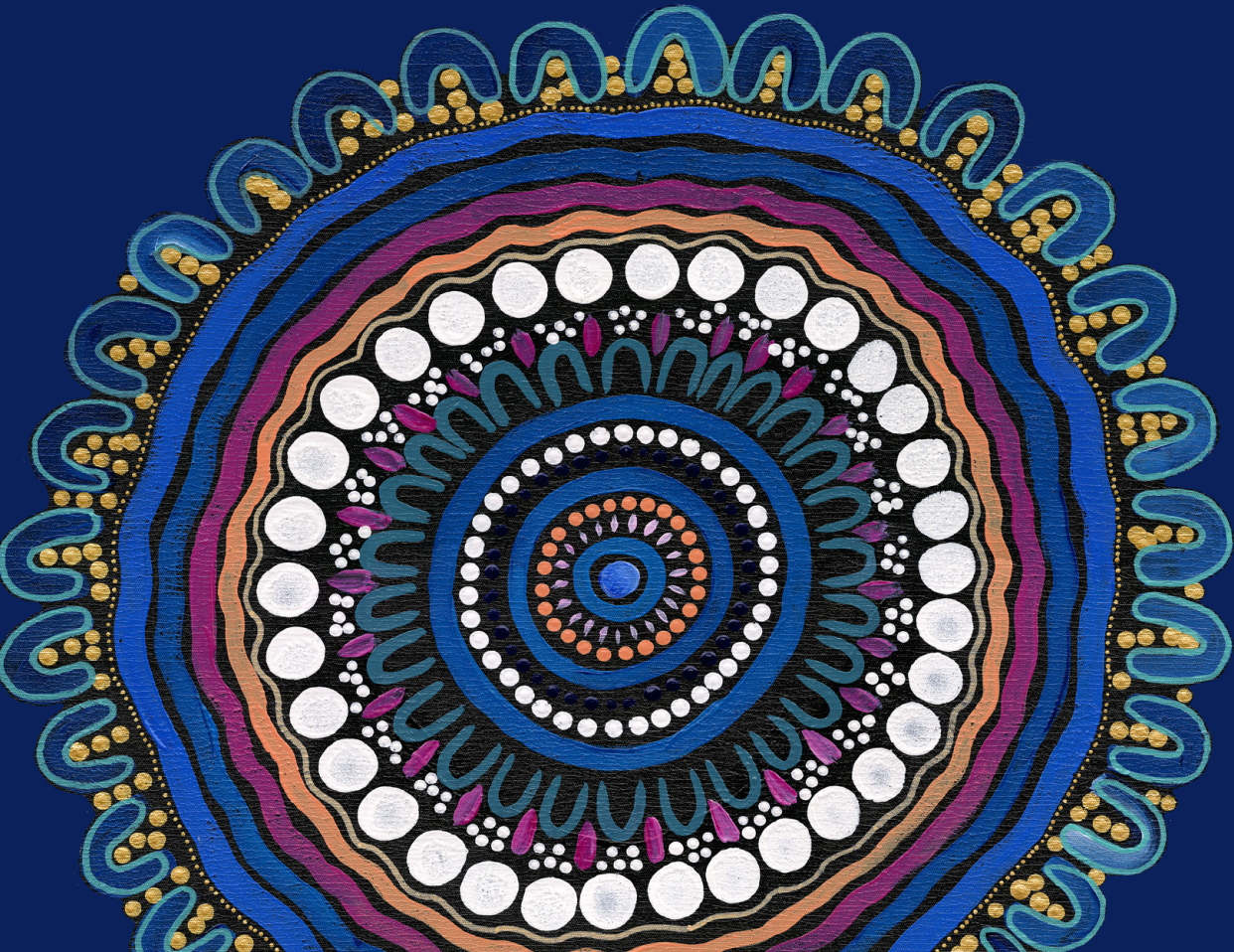


GOVERNANCE

Promoting First Nations governance is integral to how we develop and support leadership and self-determination here at RMH. Understanding and valuing First Nations governance practices is an important step in recognising and respecting First Nations peoples as decision makers in their own health.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain First Nations representation on the First Nations Governance Committee	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review and continue to apply the Terms of Reference for the First Nations Governance Committee	November 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Meet monthly to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2024 & 2025	First Nations Governance Committee
	Continuously engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March, June & September 2025 and 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Review annually and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	January 2025 & 2026	Chief Nursing Officer
15. 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 Aboriginal Health

	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Director Aboriginal Health
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Director Aboriginal Health
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June and October 2025 & 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings, annually.	June 2025 & 2026	Chief Nursing Officer
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	November 2026	Director Aboriginal Health
16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2026	Director Aboriginal Health



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