



**RURAL DOCTORS  
ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA**



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN  
INNOVATE**

# **Reconciliation Action Plan July 2020 – July 2022**

## Our vision for reconciliation

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia's vision for reconciliation is that all Australians recognise that acknowledging, understanding and respecting the traditions, cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and the whole population.

We believe that the establishment of meaningful, effective and sustainable relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stakeholders (including individuals, families and communities) is essential for a strong rural health sector and a strong healthy Australia.

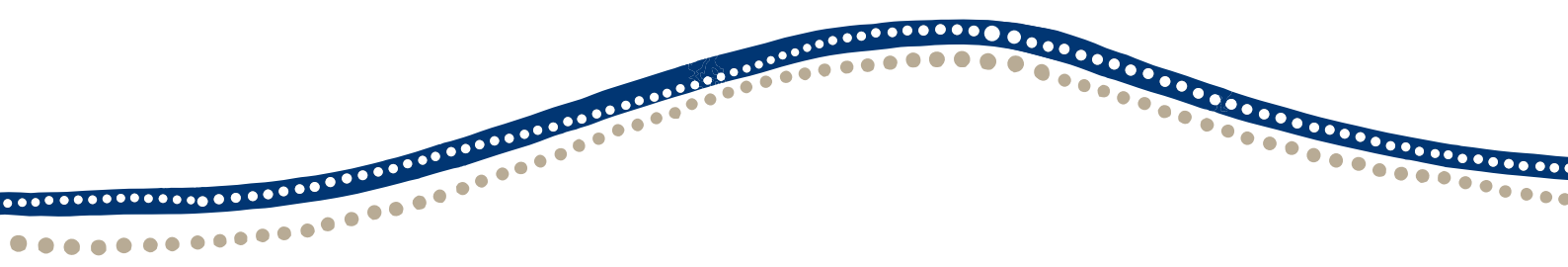
## Our business

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) was formed in 1991. It is a respected national peak body representing the interests of all rural\* medical practitioners and the communities they serve. It comprises the Rural Doctors Associations (RDAs) of each State – with the Australian Capital Territory being included in RDA New South Wales (RDANSW) and members from the Northern Territory forming a special chapter within RDAA – representing rural doctors from across the country. State RDAs are autonomous entities that negotiate with government and other bodies in their own jurisdictions. RDAA provides policy, advocacy and information services nationally and supports State and Territory RDA activities and members as required. RDAA consults widely to inform its activities and supports the work of other health stakeholders on common concerns and priorities. It also maintains a number of Special Interest Groups, including the Far North Group, the Rural Specialists Group, the Female Doctors Group and the Residents and Registrars Group.

RDAA's vision for all rural communities is for accessible, high-quality health services provided by a medical workforce comprising doctors and other health professionals who have the necessary training and skills to meet the needs of those communities.

RDAA is a small organisation employing five staff (3.6 FTE). The organisation does not currently employ any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

\* For the purposes of this RAP the term "rural" includes regional, rural and remote communities.



## Our RAP

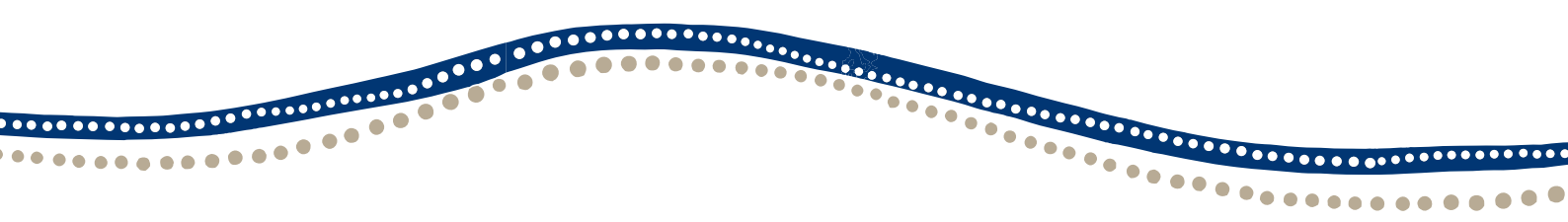
RDAA believes that as a national federated peak health body it is important to be proactive in supporting and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to lead efforts to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The widely recognised inequities that exist with respect to access to health services and in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been a concern of RDAA, its State member organisations (and their individual members) for many years. RDAA also believes that it is important to act as a leader and champion of efforts to redress health inequities within our own sphere of influence through our organisational policies, positions and advocacy activities. Historically, RDAs in various States have played a pivotal role in the development of the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula and in lobbying to ensure they became part of mainstream systems. Nationally, RDAA has also been involved in policy development and supporting the delivery of medical care to improve the health status of First Australians and seeks to continue and expand on this work into the future.

In 2015 the RDAA Board requested that a formal Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) be developed. Since the inception of its first Reflect RAP RDAA has:

- established a RAP Working Group (RWG) comprising of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Policy Advisor (RAP Champion) supported by all staff and Board members, and by input from external stakeholders, including the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA)
- maintained and sought to develop strong relationships with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
- published a position paper to define the role of RDAA in addressing the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that is regularly reviewed
- formally endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- raised awareness of key issues related to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (especially in rural and remote areas) through its media and communications channels
- promoted Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet resources and webinars
- utilised its media and communications channels to celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and NAIDOC Week and, when possible, staff have attended events
- developed a protocol for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country at key events and for acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of all the lands from which its Board members participate in its teleconference meetings
- worked with its key sponsor to offer an annual bursary to support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical student with expenses related to their studies (such as clinical placements or research projects) and attendance at the annual Rural Medicine Australia (RMA) conference
- worked with its co-host of the annual RMA conference (the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine) to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is included in the program
- organised RDAA senior leaders' attendance at AIDA conferences.

The development of our second RAP is seen as the next important step in providing direction to the RDAA in its organisational reconciliation journey. This RAP focuses on:

- continuing to enhance understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures, and the importance of these perspectives in our everyday work through our policy stances and media presence
- encouraging our member organisations to formally adopt this RAP to guide reconciliation activities in each State and Territory as well as nationally
- maintaining current and establishing new meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stakeholders, including by supporting their work to redress the health disparities that exist for First Peoples
- continuing the work outlined above, including maintaining the RWG, and identifying and implementing new actions specific to our business and our sphere of influence in order to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





## Relationships

Existing approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health have had a limited effect in improving health outcomes and life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those who live in rural areas. RDAA believes that building strong connections between individuals and organisations promotes shared understanding and purpose, and fosters the collaborative efforts necessary to redress these unacceptable health inequities.

### Focus area:

Stakeholder and community engagement is an important part of our work to improve access to health professionals and services, and health outcomes in rural Australia.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a specific section on engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders for inclusion within RDAA's Communication Plan.</li> </ul>	February 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise or attend at least six meetings each year with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to identify where RDAA can support and add value to efforts to redress health inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Progress to be reported at the RDAA Annual General Meeting in October each year.</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate links to Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials annually (when made available by Reconciliation Australia) to national and member body staff and to the broader membership through weekly newsletter.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue an annual media release promoting the theme/focus of NRW for that year.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote awareness of NRW through social media (annual).</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate a national virtual event with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health to recognise NRW (annual) and register the event on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	Administration Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise NRW in our weekly newsletter and encouraging our members to also recognise this week (annual).</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW (annual).</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2021, 2022	CEO

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a range of strategies to engage our staff and members in reconciliation activities, including through our media and social media presence and participation in meetings and other forums (ongoing).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage our member organisations to formally adopt this RAP to guide reconciliation activities in their own jurisdiction.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage our member organisations to formally adopt this RAP to guide reconciliation activities in their own jurisdiction.</li> </ul>	October 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly on our website, through our media releases and through social media (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes (ongoing):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that during the development of RDAA policy and position statements that the unique challenges and impacts on the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are considered and reflected (ongoing)</li> <li>review the outcomes and progress of the actions in relation to the Closing the Gap report and linking where appropriate to RDAA policy positions (annual)</li> <li>issue a media release on RDAA's review of the Closing the Gap report (annual)</li> <li>use social media to promote the issues and findings in relation to the Closing the Gap measures (ongoing).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021, May 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that during the development of RDAA policy and position statements that the unique challenges and impacts on the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are considered and reflected (ongoing)</li> </ul>	February 2021, 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the outcomes and progress of the actions in relation to the Closing the Gap report and linking where appropriate to RDAA policy positions (annual)</li> </ul>	February 2021, 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issue a media release on RDAA's review of the Closing the Gap report (annual)</li> </ul>	February 2021, 2022	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use social media to promote the issues and findings in relation to the Closing the Gap measures (ongoing).</li> </ul>	February 2021, 2022	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with RAC and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021, May 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with other organisations to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by seeking or providing input into relevant submissions (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021, May 2022	Senior Policy Advisor
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an organisational values statement that will include anti-discrimination as a key tenet.</li> </ul>	October 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the organisational values statement is embedded in RDAA policies, procedures and practice (ongoing).</li> </ul>	February 2021, 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a review of anti-discrimination provisions within RDAA policies and procedures, is part of the policy review cycle to address education needs, including in relation to racism.</li> </ul>	October 2021	CEO



## Respect

RDAA believes that respecting the traditions, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and must be a key concern of health service policy, provision and delivery in rural Australia.

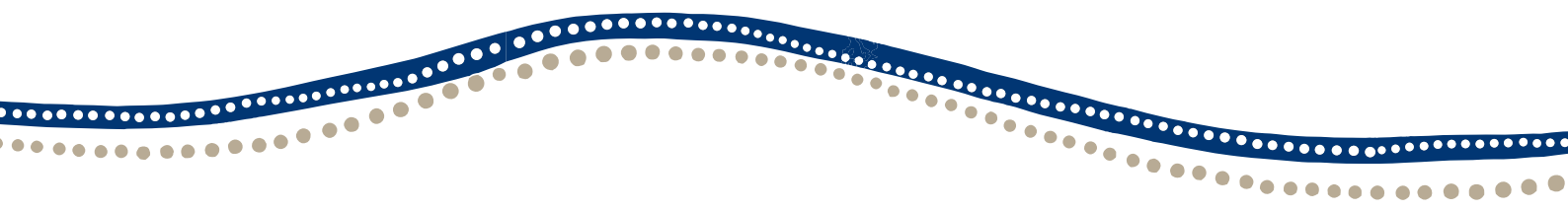
### Focus area:

Increased understanding among politicians, policymakers, doctors, other health professionals and staff of the importance of respecting the traditions, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in relation to health and wellbeing.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate cultural learning including visits for members and staff to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to hear and learn first-hand from Elders about their cultures (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate competency training for RDAA staff and Board members (ongoing)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all current RDAA staff and Board members to provide evidence of Cultural Competency training</li> <li>all new staff and Board members to provide evidence that they have undertaken Cultural Competency training within 12 months of appointment (ongoing).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 2021	CEO
		October 2021	CEO
		October 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs (biennial).</li> </ul>	June 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to develop, document and implement a cultural learning strategy for staff and on the most appropriate cultural training for health professionals and staff.</li> </ul>	June 2022	CEO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide links to online cultural competency and appropriate employment orientation modules on our website.</li> </ul>	January 2021	Media & Public Affairs Manager	

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> </ul>	August 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and amend cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an Acknowledgement of Country and other appropriate protocols at the commencement of all important RDAA meetings</li> <li>an Acknowledgement of Country in RDAA email signature blocks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	August 2020	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in the RDAA office.</li> </ul>	August 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate NAIDOC materials to our staff when they are made available (annual).</li> </ul>	November 2020, June 2021,	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue an annual media release promoting the theme/focus of NAIDOC for that year.</li> </ul>	November 2020, July 2021,	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise NAIDOC Week in our weekly newsletter and encourage our members to also recognise this week (annual).</li> </ul>	November 2020, July 2021	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a local event or participate in an external event to recognise NAIDOC Week (annual).</li> </ul>	November 2020, July 2021	Administration Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff (annual).</li> </ul>	November 2020, July 2021	CEO





## Opportunities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is a key part of rural health. Work to improve access to culturally appropriate health services through education and training and continuing professional development, and to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health care professions are critical aspects of this.

### Focus area:

Ensuring doctors, other health professionals and staff have the opportunities to undertake the necessary education, training and skills for the communities they serve.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the work of the AIDA and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to increase the numbers of trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and other health professionals in Australia (ongoing) and:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and other health professionals to inform future employment and professional development opportunities (ongoing).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all RDAA HR and recruitment procedures, policies and advertising encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for vacant positions in our workplace (ongoing).</li> </ul>	July 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage members to ensure that all HR and recruitment procedures, policies and advertising encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for vacant positions in their workplaces (ongoing)</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible consider Supply Nation providers for events and office supplies and services (ongoing).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a link to the Supply Nation website to members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	August 2020, June 2021, 2022	Administration Officer
10. Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be empowered and work in partnership with other health professionals and organisations to improve health outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with RDAA's major sponsor to provide a bursary to support an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander medical student (annual).</li> </ul>	February, October 2021	Media & Public Affairs Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue a standing invitation to AIDA to participate on the annual RMA Conference Presidents' Breakfast panel to raise and discuss critical/topical issues of the day.</li> </ul>	February, October 2021	CEO





## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a RAP Working Group comprising of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Policy Advisor supported by all staff and Board members, and by input from external stakeholders (ongoing)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet at least four times each year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG and input into pertinent organisational RAP activities (ongoing).</li> </ul>	August, October 2020. February, May, August October 2021. February, May 2022	CEO
		October 2020, 2021	Senior Policy Advisor
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation (annual).</li> </ul>	July 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage our Board and staff in the delivery of RAP commitments (ongoing).</li> </ul>	October 2020, 2021	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a system for all staff to track RAP activities.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Senior Policy Advisor
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	September 2020, 2021	Senior Policy Advisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report RAP progress to Board at each scheduled meeting.</li> </ul>	August, October, December 2020	Senior Policy Advisor
		February, April, June, August, October, December 2021	
		February, April 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.</li> </ul>	December 2020, 2021	CEO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer</li> </ul>	May 2022	Senior Policy Advisor	
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	November 2021	Senior Policy Advisor



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