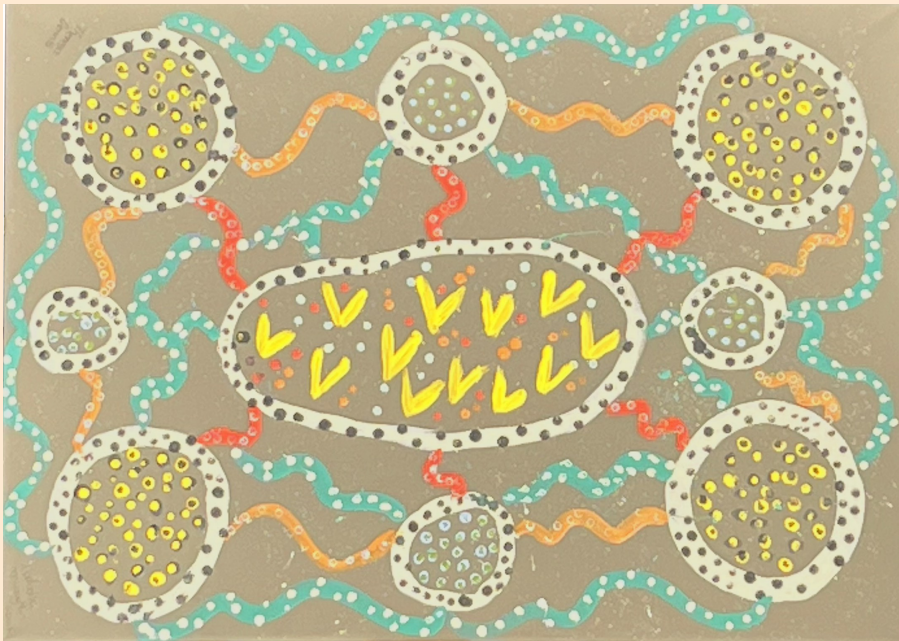




Reflect – Reconciliation Action Plan

April 2024 – April 2025



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

HAAG joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables HAAG to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations HAAG, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine,
Chief Executive Officer,
Reconciliation Australia



Teresa Jasper from HAAG speaks with representatives from Mini Mob Yarrawonga on Yorta Yorta Country.

Our business

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) is a member-based organisation that specialises in the housing needs of older people. Our mission is to engage and work with older people through community activism, services & advocacy to achieve social change and housing justice. We have over 800 members Australia-wide.

HAAG delivers a housing support service in Victoria called “Home at Last”. The service provides a one-stop shop of housing information, support, advice, and advocacy for Victorians over 50 years of age (45 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). This assistance is provided through an intake and referral service assisting over 1,000 people per year. We also provide support to re-house older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness into long term affordable, age-appropriate housing.

HAAG takes an early intervention and prevention approach to homelessness, which involves providing community and professional education to alert people to what places older people at risk of homelessness and pathways to support. Since 2015, we have had a strong culturally and linguistically diverse focus, and a team of bilingual workers who provide community education to groups of older people from a non-English

speaking background. We recently expanded this program to include peer educators who have a lived experience of homelessness, and community educators from the LGBTI community.

HAAG's office is located on the first floor of Ross House in Flinders Lane, Naarm (Melbourne). Centrally located and accessible, our office allows older people to drop in and access housing information and support. Our Ross House location also enables HAAG to connect and partner with a range of community and not-for-profit organisations also located in the building. To further our reach and accessibility for clients, HAAG also has three regional project workers based in the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria and a worker that provides information and support in the Barwon region

HAAG has 27 employees with an employee EFT (effective full-time) rate of 20. HAAG currently has 36 volunteers working with us in a variety of roles, including our committee of management, providing peer and community education, participating in one of our diversity reference groups or engaging in various forms of advocacy. HAAG currently employs 1 Aboriginal staff member and 2 Aboriginal volunteers.



HAAG worker Melis Cevik welcomes visitors to the Naarm-Melbourne office on Wurundjeri Country

Our RAP

HAAG is an organisation built on human rights and social justice principles and is committed to Reconciliation . We recognise First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of these unceded lands. We acknowledge and respect their ongoing connection to land, water and culture.

HAAG, as part of our strategic plan, seeks to 'Change the System', particularly when current systems are unjust, rooted in colonialism and result in people experiencing poverty and homelessness. Colonialism, racism, the impact of stolen generations, dispossession from land, culture and traditional social structures, have contributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experiencing disproportionately high levels of financial stress and homelessness. HAAG believes in a society where all older people have access to safe, secure, appropriate and long-term housing; and our First Nations Elders have a fundamental right to have such housing on Country.

As an inclusive organisation, HAAG strives to provide culturally appropriate services and to remove barriers to access. With the disproportionate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing housing stress and homelessness, we want to ensure Elders can access appropriate support. Where possible, we partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled services and community members to ensure our service provision is culturally appropriate and respectful and doesn't detract from Aboriginal Controlled Organisations providing a similar service. We firmly believe in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination and the need for Treaty.

Our RAP Champion is the Executive Officer, Fiona York, who is responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the RAP. HAAG has established a RAP Working Group to develop our plan and to coordinate the delivery of activities under our RAP with our Committee of Management, staff, volunteers, and HAAG members. To ensure this happens effectively across the whole organisation, the RAP working group is comprised of individuals at all levels, including management, staff and volunteers including one of our staff members and a volunteer who identify as Aboriginal people. Equally, responsibility for action items has been allocated to a range of roles / individuals across the organisation.

In April 2022 we registered with Reconciliation Australia to begin our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. We established a working group to assist with process of scoping organisational capacity for reconciliation. Using the Reflect RAP template, we began drafting a plan to consider initial actions to be taken, identifying stakeholders and resources that we would need for our RAP.

In our service delivery, we engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to assist people to access housing and housing support, for example, by referring to Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Aboriginal Advancement League, Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk program or the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. In our Goulburn Valley Hume Regional Pilot project we have engaged with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative and delivered community education to Mini Mob in Yarrawonga. We have also joined the Reconciliation Action Plan Network and the Voice Education Network to further our engagement and community partnerships.

To ensure that our workplace engages respectfully with First Nations people and communities, we have begun training to increase our knowledge of the historical context that continues to impact on equal participation in a range of life opportunities, and to understand what barriers might affect access to our services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This has included staff participation in the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia's online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence Foundation Course; and a cultural education workshop facilitated by Mirri Mirri. Staff have also participated in a Birrarung Wilam (River Camp) Walk organised through the Koorie Heritage Trust to learn about the Aboriginal history of the Birrarung Wilam and form an appreciation of the significance this river and surrounding land hold for people of the Kulin Nation.



Original artwork by HAAG workers Teresa Jasper and Natasha McLaughlin

About our artists



Teresa Jasper Dennis (left) and Nat McLaughlin (right) completing their collaborative artwork.

Teresa Jasper Dennis

I am Teresa Jasper Dennis, a proud Mutti Mutti woman from north and west of Balranald in NSW.

I am also very proud to say I have six beautiful children and most work within Aboriginal organisations and community.

I grew up mainly in foster care, so family is the MOST important thing to me and keeping culture at the forefront of our lives is paramount.

I studied Drug and Alcohol Support Services as well as Forensic Community Services and worked alongside Child Protection Services, all while having Dyslexia.

But passion for my family, culture and community are most important to me, important too for all our futures.

Nat McLaughlin

My name is Natasha McLaughlin and I prefer to be called Nat.

I am of Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba Aboriginal Descent.

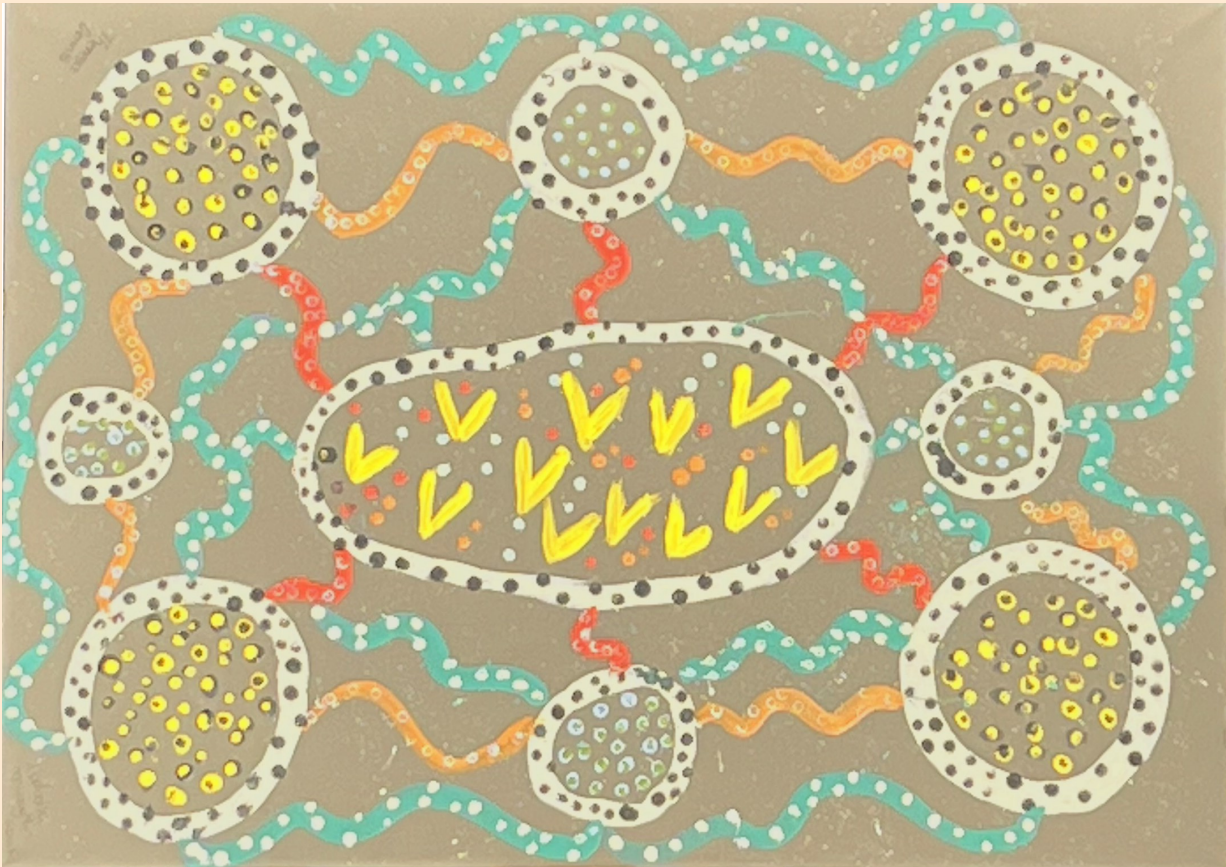
I come from a large family and am the youngest of eight children.

I grew up in Echuca, which is based on the Victoria NSW border and sits on Yorta Yorta land.

I have a Diploma in Childcare & Community Services and spent nineteen years working in childcare and then moved to Community Services. I worked with youth residential housing for families alongside Child Protection Services.

I love supporting anyone in need, especially older people, as I feel they have experience and knowledge and if not for them, we would not be where we are today.

About the artwork



This is a journey of teamwork that involved housings our elders of all diversities.

The bigger and smaller outer circles represent Metropolitan and Regional workers of Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) working together, and with the members of HAAG, to share information and spread the news of the wonderful teamwork.

Working together and sharing information and knowledge to have the best possible outcome for older people in our community, always showing and sharing respect to each other.

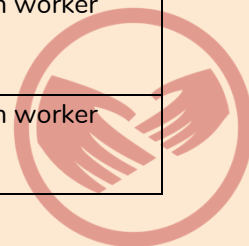
Sometimes we feel frustrated, and this is shown in the orange lines leading to the big and small circles. The empty ones depict where we are trying to achieve outcomes for clients and due to the lack of housing and other issues things are working very slowly.

The inner blue lines represent us gathering information about housing suitable for clients from services and advocating in the best way we can with teamwork and respect.

The big circle in the middle is the success and celebration of the goal being achieved and having a safe secure roof over the elderlies.

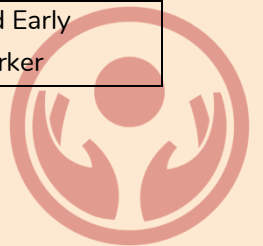
Building Relationships Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	July 2024	Administration worker/s
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	July 2024	Participation and Early Intervention Worker
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2024	Lead: Digital Communications Support: Worker Participation and Early Intervention Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May-3 June 2024	Lead: Participation and Early Intervention Worker Support: Digital Communications Worker and Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May-3 June 2024	Executive Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	May 2024	Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	September 2024	Lead: Regional Workers Support: Participation and Early Intervention Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	September 2024	Participation and Early Intervention Worker
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	May 2024	Finance & HR Admin worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	May 2024	Finance & HR Admin worker



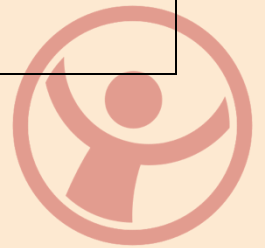
Building Respect Plan

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"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	October 2024	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a formal cultural learning strategy for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. . 	October 2024	Executive Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	April 2024	Regional Project Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	May 2024	Regional Project Worker
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 	June 2024	Participation and Early Intervention Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	June 2024	Participation and Early Intervention Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	First week in July, annually	Participation and Early Intervention Worker



Creating Opportunities Plan

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"> Develop a plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	November 2024	Lead: Finance & HR Admin worker Support: EO and Regional Project Worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	November 2024	Lead Finance & HR Admin worker Support: EO and Regional Project Worker
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	June 2024	Finance & HR Admin worker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement procurement plan, investigate suppliers specifically addressing our purchasing requirements 	June 2024	Regional Project Worker



Governance Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate our RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	April 2024	Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	April 2024	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	May 2024	Executive Officer
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	May 2024	Lead: Executive Officer Support: Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	June 2024	Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the feedback and engagement of our RAP Champion's progress 	March 2024	Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	June 2024	Executive Assistant
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. 	August annually	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September annually	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	January 2025	Lead: Client Services Manager Support: Executive Assistant





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