The Western Region Alcohol & Drug Centre Inc.





REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan October 2021 - October 2022



COVER ART

The front cover and throughout the document features a mural painted for WRAD's mural wall:

Fiona Clarke – Indigenous Mural

The back cover features a painting by: Fiona Clarke - Butterfly Tears

Butterfly Tears is about Indigenous and non-Indigenous carers of people with drug and alcohol problems.

Whilst the carers love and care unselfishly, at the same time the carers may suffer loss or grief and despair for the freedom they no longer have and the loss of the 'person' they care for. The carers have watched or are watching their partner, friend, child or parent slowly slide downhill into a net they can't get out of.

The carers may feel boxed in, like the people they care for and sometimes wish they could fly away like a butterfly. But the carers suffer emotionally in silence, in tears and in despair.

The light behind the figures of the two main carers in Butterfly Tears is a sign that there is hope.

WATERMARKS

Adapted from artwork by **Fiona Clarke**

OUR VISION

The WRAD Centre's vision is to advance the health and wellbeing of all people in the South Western Region of Victoria affected by addictive behaviours.

WRAD seeks to promote optimal enjoyment of life for people of all gender, age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ability, cultural or language background.

WRAD seeks to provide comprehensive, holistic support and treatment to individuals and others affected by addictive behaviours and associated issues.

The philosophy of harm minimisation underpins the delivery of all programs offered by WRAD and recognises the unique needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples and peoples who identify with LGBTIQA+. The harm minimisation principle recognises that people in our society use both licit and illicit drugs, and that drugs can be used in ways that are more or less harmful to individuals, families and society. Harm minimisation offers a number of options designed to reduce the harm of drug use to the user and society.

WRAD works in the areas of demand reduction and harm reduction and offer an array of services that fit within these two policy areas of harm minimisation.

WRAD values the uniqueness of all individuals and recognises the need to provide a flexible, accessible and acceptable service model to all individuals within our community.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE WRAD DIRECTOR AND THE OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Western Region Alcohol and **Drug Centre have operated specialized** services for clients and families who struggle with alcohol and other drug problems for over 30 years.

During that time we have strived to provide quality treatment and outcomes for those engaged in the recovery process. We have sought to make service improvements to better meet the needs of our client group. In developing our Reconciliation Action Plan we acknowledge that we can improve on our service response for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is paramount that we provide respectful and culturally appropriate programs for these clients.

The 'Reflect' RAP represents our commitment to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to develop meaningful and connected partnerships to achieve this. Our plan identifies key strategies and actions designed to achieve these important goals.

Our journey so far has involved developing relationships with a number of individuals and organisations and we are grateful for their input, advice and support to date.

We thank our project partners who include the following:

Mendia Kermond *Gunditjmara Aboriginal* Cooperative, Cultural Safety Advisor -Strengthening Cultural Safety who was instrumental in assisting our agency to start its journey to become more aware of the cultural safety needs for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Amy Smith the Senior RAP Officer for Reconciliation Australia was a great support in helping us refine our Reflect RAP to where it is today.

Leigh Brown, Cultural Advisor Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative who supported us in our journey and cultural awareness training and convened the "Yarn with WRAD - cultural safety meeting". This provided a broad and emotive discussion about the rich cultural history of First Nations peoples and their experiences of living as an Aboriginal person in this country and devastating impacts of colonisation. A special thanks to Uncle Kevin Harrison Senior cultural Safety Advisor -Southern VACCA who during these yarning sessions provided a unique perspective on the histories and cultures of First Nations people and the discrimination and exploitation through colonisation to today.

A special thank you to Uncle Rob Lowe who is a local community Elder whom we have known for many years. Uncle Rob is a great inspiration through telling his story and aid our understanding of the history of this region. He has spoken to the rich cultural history of the Peek Whurrong people and also to the tragic impacts locally of colonisation on this beautiful culture that has existed for 60000 years. WRAD as an agency more profoundly understand and support the statement "Always was and always will be Aboriginal land"

A special thanks to our members of the Cultural Safety and Diversity committee that together have supported and driven the changes within our organization to becoming a more welcoming and safe agency to the members of this community. The committee members include; Geoff Soma, Angela Alexander, Leanne Nicholson, Anna Pike, Michelle Cameron and Mark Powell.

Geoff Soma Director WRAD

Mark Powell Operations Manager **WRAD**

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes
Western Region Alcohol and Drug
Centre to the Reconciliation Action
Plan (RAP) program with the formal
endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre joins a network of more than 1,100 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 over 2.3 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 Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre 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 Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre, 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

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WRAD AND HANDBURY **MEDICAL SUITES RECONCILIATION STATEMENT**

OUR UNDERSTANDING

WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and the Traditional Custodians of this land.

We embrace reconciliation as a way to build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations so that together, we can continue to mutually support strong and sustainable organisations that can provide quality services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We recognise the crucial role that the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector plays in upholding the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and in closing the unacceptable gap in life expectancy.

WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites acknowledge and share with you our feelings of shame and horror of actions and atrocities that were perpetuated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma experienced as a result of the act of genocide committed through colonisation, the Stolen Generations and the legacy of social, systemic and economic disadvantage, which continues to affect many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today.

OUR COMMITMENT

WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites are committed to conducting our business and providing programs, products and services that reflect mutual respect, goodwill, equity and social justice. We are committed to doing our part in hearing the voice and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve:

"A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides Justice and Equity for all" (Vision of Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation 1997).

Our decisions and our actions when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations will be guided by our Reconciliation Statement, Reconciliation in action for WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites will focus on working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to implement culturally appropriate accreditation processes. Through our programs and services we will work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and organisations to strengthen the cultural safety and cultural diversity of our own organisation and the organisations who engage with us.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Acknowledging, respecting and promoting cultural safety and diversity in our operations;
- Consulting with the relevant organisations in the development and evaluation of programs;
- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support strong organisational systems that achieve and maintain accreditation;
- Supporting the inclusion of cultural safety, respect and competence in standards and accreditation systems;
- Working closely with Boards and staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure the accreditation process recognises the role of culture and community control;
- Supporting the role of Aboriginal organisations, through quality improvement, capacity building and accreditation services;

- Increasing the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through consultation, feedback, decision making and quality improvement within WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites;
- Increasing training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assessors:
- Increasing the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, cultures and experiences within QIP;
- Identifying key contacts within AGPAL and QIP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to raise issues of concern and liaise on issues of importance to them;
- Actively working to identify and eliminate any racism in the workplace;
- Developing, implementing and reviewing a Reconciliation Action Plan based on this statement.



WRAD and Handbury Medical Suites hope that the spirit and practice of reconciliation will be nurtured and grow strong amongst all Australians.

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WRAD **VALUES**

RESPECT

We acknowledge, value and protect the diversity of beliefs, and support the rights of others in delivery of health services.



EXCELLENCE

We act with professionalism to bring the highest quality of care to meet the needs of our clients.



TEAMWORK

We work constructively and collaboratively within Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre as well as with external partners to deliver integrated care to our clients.



COMPASSION

We are caring and considerate in our dealings with others.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We will be responsible for the care and client outcomes provided by Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre and the consequences of our actions.



ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Staff act with integrity, professionalism, transparency, honesty and fairness to earn the trust of those we care for.



WRAD REFLECT **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

OCTOBER 2021 - OCTOBER, 2022

OUR BUSINESS

- Western Region Alcohol and Drug centre (WRAD) is a community based alcohol & drug service providing a comprehensive range of interventions within a harm minimisation philosophy with clinical interventions for youth, adult, Dual Diagnosis as well Needle Syringe Program (NSP), pharmacotherapy and post withdrawal support and a non-residential rehabilitation program. WRAD also operate a comprehensive medical practice with 6 general practitioners and a practice nurse.
- WRAD employs in total 28 staff and at present no staff self-identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
- WRAD services cover 3 Local Government Area's (LGA) but are also part of a consortium that spans across 5 LGA's in southwestern Victoria servicing a population of over 110000 people and has within this area 4 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's (ACCO's)
- WRAD have only one office located in Warrnambool, Victoria.
- WRAD acknowledge the land of the Gunditimara peoples and acknowledge that this land was never ceded.

OUR VISION

• Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that embraces unity between Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, and a national culture that represents equality and equity. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and accept the rich history of the people who walked this land before colonisation. WRAD acknowledge the terrible history of early colonisation and racism and seek to see an Australia where there is historical acceptance of our shared history and removal of negative race relations. WRAD want to see a community where there are equal health outcomes for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, and an inclusive and diverse workplace that is not just culturally safe, but culturally rich and proud.

OUR RAP

- The RAP working group consists of the Director of WRAD Geoff Soma, Operations Manager Mark Powell, Coordinator of non-residential day rehab program Angela Alexander, Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) clinicians Anna Pike and Leanne Nicholson and administration representative Michelle Cameron. This group also are part of our Cultural Safety working group.
- The RAP champion is the Operations Manager who is also part of the senior executive and been a strong advocate around cultural sensitivity and has worked previously in ACCHO's as a mental health nurse. We are now seeking to invite a community member or members to be a part of our RAP working group and have already had approval from the management to support a paid role.

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- The board and staff of WRAD have become increasingly aware of the need to acknowledge and express sorrow and regret for the past mistreatment and injustice of First Nations peoples. WRAD want to be part of the solution to bringing about a meaningful reconciliation of those past wrongs in the hope that we are part of a greater positive future.
- WRAD have been working with the Gunditimara Aboriginal Cultural Safety Officer to develop an action plan to improve our cultural sensitivity, safety and acceptability to people who self-identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
- WRAD have completed a self-audit with support from the Gunditimara Aboriginal Cultural Safety Officer which identified a number of things as an agency that have been done and what can be improved to make WRAD a more culturally safe organisation. WRAD have developed an equity policy and a policy of recognition for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. WRAD have also sought to build stronger relationships with the local Traditional Owners Eastern Maar however not been successful to date. WRAD established a bi-monthly meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and drug (AOD) services staff to build networks and support. WRAD have also commissioned art works by a local Indigenous artist. We have installed signage promoting cultural awareness and welcoming messages. WRAD have provided a statement of reconciliation on our website. We have featured respective flags acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the site.



Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that embraces unity between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, and a national culture that represents equality and equity.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- In regards to community partnerships WRAD have met with the local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) to start forming working relationships and build personal connections with the local community but also recognise we have a lot of work to do in this space. In part the local ACCHO delivers its own AOD services so the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community is not solely reliant on our services and the vast majority of community peoples attend the ACCHO. WRAD do recognise however there are times when community people don't want to attend their local ACCHO which is why WRAD believe it's important to develop a culturally safe workplace and environment regardless as it reflects our commitment to the Traditional Custodians of this land
- WRAD are working actively to implement initiatives and activities supporting our move towards reconciliation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. WRAD have formed a Cultural Safety working committee which has already been undertaking activities to align with our vision and publicly celebrating dates of cultural significance to our local community. Examples of these events have included NAIDOC week last year given the COVID restrictions the group were unable to hold a face to face event however with endorsement of our local Aboriginal Cultural Safety Officer put up the respective flags and in big letters wrote Ngatanwarr (which is the local language for welcome) on the front of our building. We have put up symbols and art work in our waiting area and had a large mural painted on the side of our building by local Aboriginal artist Fiona Clarke. WRAD regularly post items of relevance onto our Facebook page and website as well to acknowledge and celebrate important dates or events within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We were involved in local events for National Reconciliation Week this year however our latest COVID lockdown only saw participation in the opening ceremony and flag raising event at our local South West TAFE institute. We will continue to have an active involvement in Wata Waetnanda which is a local committee of participating services who are working together to learn about local Aboriginal culture and build relationships. Wata Waetnanda means 'come together' in Peek Whurrong language. All WRAD staff participated in a "yarning session" with a range of cultural safety officers as part of the cultural safety workshop on 29th of April 2021 with a follow-up session on 20th May 2021 which provided a rich discussion on the background and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the experience and impact of colonisation on culture, language and identify. WRAD celebrated national Sorry Day as an agency and were a partner in National Reconciliation Week activities. WRAD also have on the agenda for the cultural safety committee a calendar of events for the year.

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ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. (key agencies include Gunditjmara, Kirrae Health)	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	December 2021	Operations Manager and RAP working group member Sliding Doors facilitator
	• Build relationships with local Elders and develop and strengthen relationships with local Peek Whurrong Elder Uncle Rob Lowe who provides cultural tours and is very active in the region along with Uncle Locky Eccles in promoting the history and language of the Peek Whurrong peoples.	October 2021	Operations Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 27th – 3rd June 2022	Operations Manager
	 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	May 27th – 3rd June 2022	Operations Manager
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 27th – 3rd June 2022	Director of WRAD
	 Encourage committee of management attendance at an event along with clinical staff to celebrate NRW 	May 27th – 3rd June 2022	Chairperson Board



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation via a video post to our social media and website during NRW and to all staff through monthly staff meetings.	May 27th – 3rd June 2022	Director of WRAD
	 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	June 2022	Operations Manager
	 Engage with Wata Waetnanda group and forming links with local hospital and WDEA an agency that is currently undergoing RAP 	November 2021	Operations Manager
	 Invite local community representatives to attend a launch of the acceptance of our Reflect RAP including invitation to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patron 	January 2022	Director
	 Develop a statement of reconciliation and submit to Committee of Management and upload to our website. 	October 2021	Director
	 Review statement of reconciliation with committee of management 	March 2022	Director
4. Promote positive race relations through antidiscrimination strategies.	 Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	January 2022	Operations and Finance managers
	 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	March 2022	Operations Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	October 2021	Operations Manager
	 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Promote and deliver annual cultural awareness and safety training in partnership with local providers. 	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Purchase books of recognition and significance about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories for staff to have access to. 	October 2021	Administration Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	 Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	October 2021	Operations Manager
	 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	October 2021	Operations Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	 Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 	July, 2022	AOD clinicians
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July, 2022	Operations Manager
	 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event we will identify in partnership with Wata Waetnanda a local event to partner in. 	July, 2022	AOD clinician



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2022	Operations Manager
	 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	December 2021	Clinical Coordinator
	 Develop a policy on equity in the workplace and actively encourage people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to apply 	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Invite an Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander person speaker to talk about employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the AOD sector. 	December 2021	Clinical Coordinator
	• Explore the viability of having WRAD agency staff volunteer as mentors at a primary/secondary school with a significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment. (Standing Tall or Clontarf)	December 2021	Clinical Coordinator
	 Arrange meeting with Worn Gundidj which is a local Aboriginal Cooperative commenced operation in 1992 that works to provide economic opportunities to Indigenous people through assisting individuals into employment and creating sustainable, 	October 2021	Operations Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	 Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses where possible first priority will be given to purchase from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	December 2021	Operations and Finance managers
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	October 2021	Finance Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2021	Operations Manager
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	December 2021	Operations Manager
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2021	Operations Manager
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2021	Operations Manager
	 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	October 2021	Operations Manager
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 30 2022	Operations Manager
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing WRAD's next RAP.	June 2022	Operations Manager

CONTACT DETAILS

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POSITION: Operations manager

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