



ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The St Vincents & Mater Health Response

Our vision for a reconciled Australia is one in which all peoples and communities share in the health and prosperity that this nation has to offer.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision for a reconciled Australia is that all our peoples and communities share in the health and prosperity that this nation has to offer.

Leading the way, St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) is Australia's first healthcare group to commit to reconciliation and formalise its responsibility to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with its Reconciliation Action Plan. St Vincent's Health Australia acknowledges that its health, aged care and research facilities are built on traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.

St Vincent's Health Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan sets out a vision for the future in which we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The plan gives life to the national vision for reconciliation and our commitment to this journey.

At St Vincents & Mater Health, we commit to working with our partners to go forward together in the spirit of reconciliation to close the gap through improved access to healthcare and health outcomes as well as furthering employment opportunities, professional development and career pathways.

Acknowledging that many steps have been taken, we recognise that many steps still remain.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

As we walk the journey of learning and healing together we aim to establish relationships and demonstrate respect for our country and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritages.

Through these foundations we will discover and identify opportunities as we work towards justice and equity for all.

A living document, the plan acknowledges, celebrates and shares significant achievements that have already been made towards reconciliation and provides realistic and achievable goals and objectives. The plan is dynamic and reviews will be undertaken annually to refresh and energise this commitment. As our vision comes to life we will communicate our achievements through various mediums including our intranet, websites and staff publications.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Through the Reconciliation Action Plan we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to foster and support equity and access to healthcare by providing culturally safe environments; developing capacity within our facilities and in the community; and developing partnerships which aim to close the gap on health inequities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community. Such programs will incorporate:

- building respectful relationships,
- providing educational opportunities,
- supporting employment opportunities, and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training for staff.

Key to the success of the reconciliation program is input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Individuals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin have contributed ideas, opinions and feedback from their respective communities. In particular, they have been vital in ensuring the plan addresses the real needs and aspirations of their communities and is grounded in reality, respectful of culture and inclusive in nature.

The continual enhancement of relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is crucial in bringing our vision to life.

The plan enables us to now set the challenge and commit to targeted outcomes in the areas of relationships, respect, cultural appreciation, employment and training. The Reconciliation Action Plan paves the journey towards reconciliation.

RELATIONSHIPS

We seek to work alongside our brothers and sisters in the community of the human family, striving to achieve an equitable and just society for all.

Our mission commits us to developing and maintaining relationships with one another, and with those we serve, working collaboratively with others in open dialogue to provide a relevant and dynamic health service. Strong relationships lead to better understanding and communication and result in an enhanced patient experience and improved health outcomes. Our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will provide the foundations for our successful contribution to closing the gap through the provision of diversified healthcare services. These relationships are essential to the realisation of our mission and the future of our nation.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

St Vincents & Mater Health has varying levels of engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is aimed that through broadly raising awareness and encouraging development of strong foundations we will foster meaningful local relationships across the group.

OUR COMMITMENT

- We recognise the Traditional Owners of the land and elders and leaders within our local communities and continue to build relationships that are mutually beneficial and respectful.
- Respectful relations are being established and mechanisms developed to ensure that the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is at the forefront of our services.
- We are seeking opportunities for advocacy and collaboration.



As we continue to build relationships, our commitment can already be seen in initiatives including:

- A partnership with Pius X Aboriginal Corporation in Moree to provide an ear, nose and throat clinic.
- A cardiology clinic in conjunction with Condobolin Aboriginal Health Service.
- An outreach orthopaedic rehabilitation program that is provided onsite at Redfern, in partnership with Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service.
- Connections, a women's Aboriginal art therapy group that meets weekly and expands accessibility to mainstream mental health services for Aboriginal women, carers and their families.
- The development of vocational education programs through relationships with the Catholic Education Office.

We strive for human dignity - respecting the uniqueness of each person created in the image and likeness of God and justice - respecting the rights of all.

Success in realising our commitment to a just healthcare system for all requires us to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. To ensure we are able to engage, develop trust and deliver the most appropriate level of healthcare and support to meet community needs we will raise awareness and ensure our facilities and places of business make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel welcome.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND

The delivery of a culturally sensitive Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Land is an important first step in developing a broad level of respect across the organisation. This ritual has been developed in consultation with the Traditional Owners in the communities in which we work as a sign of respect and a means of starting a conversation with local communities.

OUR COMMITMENT

- Acknowledgement of the traditional owners is standard practice at gatherings.
- In accordance with the Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners' protocol, we look for places in which we can prominently display the acknowledgement of traditional land owners.

CREATING A SAFE AND WELCOMING SACRED SPACE

Our mission framework clearly identifies a commitment to providing space to meet the spiritual and worship needs of all. Through developing sacred spaces we aim to ensure a respectful space is created at each facility to promote a quiet place for people to pray, gather, contemplate or just take time out to enjoy something of beauty. The inclusion of fully acknowledged local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks is one step towards providing a respectful welcoming environment for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, visitors and staff.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To include a sacred place or quiet area at each of our facilities.
- We continue to grow our collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks across facilities.

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

In ensuring we are respectful of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures it is felt necessary that all staff require a level of training, appreciation and exposure to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to ensure they can meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, visitors and staff.

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

OUR COMMITMENT

To develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness package for inclusion in our orientation program.

- Our healthcare professionals are invited to participate in an online cultural orientation program that can be accessed through clinical workstations. Accredited by the Australian Royal College of Nursing, the program looks at cultural perceptions and is designed to create better understanding of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.
- We host and participate in significant events of cultural education and celebration with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.



In working together for healthier communities for the love of Christ we aim to stay innovative and strive for excellence in all aspects of our healing ministry.

Through investing in the commitment and talents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we continue to form relevant and strategic relationships that ensure our health services continue to grow, provide quality care for all and ultimately improve patient experiences and health outcomes.

SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We aim to provide staff with a workplace that nurtures spirituality and creates an environment that is conducive to healing and wholeness.

We will ensure the needs of our Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff are considered and support the development of a culturally safe work environment.

OUR COMMITMENT

- Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness program within our mandatory Workplace Health Safety and Culture program.
- Enhance the current work environment by exploring initiatives to improve access to programs for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including development of a mentoring program.

- Enable the creation of a support network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to ensure that culturally sensitive issues are addressed through the appropriate channels.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Make a long term investment to enhance our inclusive and diverse workforce through developing programs and strategies that provide employment and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

OUR COMMITMENT

- Develop targeted recruitment strategies through our university and traineeship partners with a view to providing ongoing employment upon successful completion of studies.
- Enhance recruitment strategies through the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media, local communities and schools and promote opportunities for employment.
- To offer scholarships, training and internship programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a view to increase access to higher education.
- Expand the role of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer to provide support across all of our facilities. Their guidance will assist in the development of culturally appropriate support pathways for staff that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

For enquiries on the Reconciliation Action Plan
contact the St Vincents & Mater Health
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**St Vincents
& Mater Health**
Sydney



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