

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan



Progress Report

JUNE 2022 – JULY 2023



Acknowledgement to Country

COORDINARE acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which we live and work.

We offer respect to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the vital role of Aboriginal people, their culture and customs. We recognise and value the ongoing enriching contribution of Aboriginal people and communities across our region. The impacts of colonisation, trans-generational trauma, racism, discrimination, marginalisation and disadvantage while having devastating outcomes, have diminished neither Aboriginal peoples' connection to country, culture or community nor their resilience, strength and wisdom.

Vision

COORDINARE's vision for reconciliation is an Australia that embraces unity between First Nations peoples and other Australians, embedded in a shared national identity that represents equality and equity, and underpinned by acceptance of our shared history.

Message from the CEO

Our INNOVATE RAP signifies our dedication to partnering with First Nations Peoples as we work together advancing and embracing health, well-being, and equity for and with First Nations Peoples.

An Innovate RAP runs for two years. It is internally focussed and centres on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal peoples. In May 2023, we had either completed or were on track to complete 94% of the actions in our RAP plan. The COORDINARE Board subsequently approved an extension of our Innovate RAP until June 2025. This additional time will allow us time to further strengthen our internal culture as well as work externally to be seen as a local advocate and influence for reconciliation.

I invite you to read and share this important record of our ongoing commitment.



Prudence Buist, CEO





Relationships

Our relationships are founded on mutual acknowledgement, honesty and learning. By recognising and respecting diversity of local First Nations communities we will continue to build strong mutually beneficial partnerships, working together to deliver shared community benefit.

This year we maintained and grew a diverse and inclusive RAP working group who meet regularly and yarn about opportunities for reconciliation.

COORDINARE RAP members are:



Terry Hill
Chair



Catherine Poutasi
Co-chair



Kay Stewart
COORDINARE



Melody Charnock
COORDINARE



Kaleena Webbe
COORDINARE



Jade Webb
COORDINARE



Paul Lillyman
COORDINARE



Tracey Fredericks
COORDINARE



Emma Wooldridge
COORDINARE



Sandie Mertens
COORDINARE



Caroline Morley
COORDINARE



Alfie Walker
Community
Representative



Jennie Gordon
Community
Representative



Maria Maher
Community
Representative



Working with community

- ▶ We invited in and listened to community tell their stories during Truth Telling Yarning Sessions.
- ▶ Created an opportunity for local Aboriginal people to recognise and advocate for their mob and community by participating in the development of the videos celebrating 'For Our Elders' as part of NAIDOC 2023.



- ▶ Watch the video by scanning the QR code or clicking this link <https://vimeo.com/834252936>

- ▶ Partnered with local Aboriginal people to share their voice to promote and encourage reconciliation and greater understanding.



- ▶ Watch the video by scanning the QR code or clicking this link <https://vimeo.com/831363956>



Lully Brown from our NAIDOC video



Uncle Ken Campbell from our NAIDOC video

- ▶ Undertook ongoing engagement with local community to encourage joining Mudjingaal Djama COORDINARE! (Friends talk at COORDINARE). *Mudjingaal Djama provides an opportunity to yarn with local communities about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.*
- ▶ Updated our internal processes to ensure every staff member has an individual reconciliation goal, documented in their annual work plan. Reconciliation is everyone's business.
- ▶ Created an Aboriginal focussed page on our internal social media – Workplace - called the Koori Grapevine. The page has 75 internal staff members and is a space for staff to post relevant content relating to our RAP, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing.
- ▶ Facilitated general practice visits with our Community Engagement Consultant | Aboriginal Health to support practices on their journey towards reconciliation and culture of safety.
- ▶ Supported a General Practice 'Community Day' as part of our Koori co-design initiative.
- ▶ Reviewed our Human Resources policies and provided all staff with 1 paid day per year to participate in cultural events.
- ▶ Co-designed 2 services with local Aboriginal Medical Services.



Yarning to foster RELATIONSHIPS

Following their success in 2021 the Reconciliation Action Working group organised 2 internal webinars aimed at enhancing staff awareness of the journey towards reconciliation. Community members were invited to yarn across a range of topics. Community RAP members were invited to join internal staff for the webinars. The themes were:

Session 1: Constitutional Reform

Wiradjuri man, Geoff Scott provided insights on the Uluru Dialogues, the case for an Indigenous Voice and the Road to Referendum.

Session 2: Uluru Statement from the Heart

Ngunnawal woman and RAP member Jennie Gordon yarned with staff about her experience as a signatory to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Jennie hopes that...

'... the people of Australia will see the referendum for a Voice to Parliament as a personal invitation to walk with us in true reconciliation and recognise from the Statement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to be recognised as equals in this society.'

This provided staff with an opportunity to connect with community. It also highlighted the important history of reconciliation as well as created space for staff to reflect on the different ways they can contribute to reconciliation.

Participation in the RAP working group webinars was not compulsory for staff. Despite this, the two virtual Truth Telling Seminars attracted significant attendance across the organisation, with a total of 72 staff attending.

Staff felt privileged to learn from Jennie and described the session as 'passionate' and 'moving'.



Jennie Gordon



Spending time in Community

During the past year staff have participated in a variety of events including NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.



Sorry Day Bridge Walk in Batemans Bay

Feedback from staff was positive:

"It was a wonderful community celebration of Aboriginal culture and reflection as Jillian, Louise, Terry, Nerida, Nathan and myself joined the Sorry Day Bridge Walk in Batemans Bay on Friday."



Darren Marcus, Samantha Karmel, Simone Jones and Clare Lesley

"A little chilly and wet for today's Nowra Sorry Day walk. Some special moments for us once we got to the Bomaderry Homes. Grateful to hear stories and share memories with others."

Staff used their paid day of cultural leave to participate in various events across our catchment. 1 staff member used their leave to undertake cultural immersion by volunteering in a remote Northern Territory community.

Feedback from the staff member was very positive:

"I am humbled every time I visit these communities. These kids and their energy, their enthusiasm, their love, their openness, their ingenuity, their resilience, is utterly overwhelming and heart-warming. I learn so much being in community and hope to bring a small part of that back to my work."



RAP working group member, Kaleena Webbe volunteering in remote Aboriginal community.



Respect

Our vision for respect states:

Genuine respect involves the learning about and observing cultural protocols, histories and lore guided by traditional custodians. We are guided in our shared journey toward identifying culturally safe and holistic approaches to achieving improved health outcomes. By doing so, we address racism, build stronger relationships and develop mutual trust.

We wanted to support RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.

To support this, we have:

- ▶ Reviewed our HR policy to provide all staff with 1 paid day of Cultural leave to remove barriers with attending Cultural events.
- ▶ Supported our RAP Working Group to hold a stand at a local NAIDOC event.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about the experience:

"I feel like our colouring competition was fantastic. I loved engaging with the little ones. Personally, I took a walk around the grounds and had a yarn with a few providers to network and let them know about my role in COORDINARE, and I found that really helpful. It was such a privilege to work with, and amongst, the team who was rostered on the stand, not only to get to know our staff better - but to share our joy, our knowledge, and our passion for Aboriginal Health together."



RAP working group members Tracey Fredericks and Terry Hill awarding our winner.



Improving Cultural Competency

This year, we wanted to support our staff to increase their understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning. To support this, we have:

Conducted a review of staff Cultural learning needs

- ▶ An organisation-wide survey rolled out in March 2023 received an excellent response. Of most interest to our staff were: learning about Dreamtime stories specific to our region, learning more about local Aboriginal languages including learning a short Acknowledgement to Country in language, and understanding what it is like to be a young Aboriginal person today.
- ▶ The RAP Working Group will continue to develop and roll out activities and events which have been informed by the results of the March survey.



Cultural Educator Errolyn Strang (right) with Truth Telling Panel member Joanne Simon

We wanted to source and facilitate Cultural Awareness and Safety training for primary care providers. This year we have:

- ▶ Provided 6 face to face Cultural Immersion training workshops for 56 GPs and general practice staff.

Cultural Immersion training provided a safe space for GPs and general practice staff to learn more about how the ongoing impacts of colonisation and structural racism can affect the quality and access to care that Aboriginal people receive. Local Aboriginal community members were invited to be part of a truth telling panel yarn to share their experiences.

Feedback from participant was positive finding the sessions informative, helpful and stimulating:

"Being so open to questions made it much easier to address areas where I was lacking knowledge."

"Very informative, was very happy that even sensitive questions could be asked without offending."

"Errolyn helped me understand the feeling, emotion of what has and had been taken away."



Observing Cultural Protocols

We wanted to support our staff to increase their understanding, of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. To support this, we have:

Unveiled our Acknowledgement to Country

- ▶ The plaques are visible on entry to all our office. They are a way we show our respect for the Traditional Custodians on which we work and live.

Reviewed and updated our Cultural Protocols

- ▶ Cultural protocols are observed in day-to-day work and are regularly reviewed with community participation.

Observed protocols with Welcome to or Acknowledgment of Country

- ▶ Every event run by COORDINARE in the past 12 months has been preceded by either a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement to Country
- ▶ Local Traditional Custodians were invite to our All Staff retreat to provide a Welcome to Country and traditional dance.



Walbunja Elder Terry Hill (RAP Working Group Chair) giving instruction to cultural group MULADHA GAMARA prior to performance.

We wanted to co-design culturally safe and appropriate models of care and service delivery in consultation with First Nations communities.

This year we have:

- ▶ Continued our work with five mainstream general practices who were commissioned to co-design improvements to their service delivery in partnership with Aboriginal people who are regular patients of their practice.
- ▶ Commissioned a Soft Entry Approach Activity with Katungul incorporating trauma informed care, cultural activities, and community development activities.
- ▶ Commissioned a review of the palliative and end of life care supports available for Aboriginal communities. From the review, key recommendations have been developed, with implementation to be supported through the establishment of a working group.



Co-designing with community

Aboriginal consumers as partners in designing care

5 mainstream General Practices continued their partnership work to enhance the culture of safety within their practices. To date, 28 Aboriginal community members have participated in co-design training and over 23 co-design meetings. As partners in the process, Aboriginal community members have been instrumental in identifying areas for change and improvement. Practices have been implementing these community driven changes and some highlights to date include:

- ▶ Practice logo updated to include Aboriginal artwork and language
- ▶ Use of Aboriginal art and language on uniforms
- ▶ Aboriginal specific clinics
- ▶ Community open day at practices to encourage connection with Aboriginal consumers
- ▶ Aboriginal practice staff undertaking Aboriginal Health Worker course
- ▶ Outreach covid clinic at First Nations events
- ▶ Practice websites updated to include Aboriginal specific page
- ▶ Local council approval and installation of a community bus stop out the front of the practice to improve access
- ▶ Flag poles installed with Aboriginal flag
- ▶ Quality improvement activity to improve the administration process for recording ethnicity resulting in a 58% increase in the number of patients recorded as Indigenous and Aboriginal identified positions.

Additional funding has been prioritised to expand on this work throughout 2023-24.



First Nation Engagement Officer, Kylie Kowalenko in front of the flag poles installed as part of the Koori co-design initiative.



Opportunity

Our vision for opportunity states:

COORDINARE will provide identified employment opportunities for First Nations people ensuring the organisation is an inclusive employer. The PHN will develop its reputation as a culturally safe workplace and be a leader and role model for regional stakeholders to develop and embed their own model for creating culturally inclusive workplaces.

We wanted to establish a First Nations community consultative Network to inform need, contribute to design, and evaluate effectiveness of programs. Our actions this year have included:

- ▶ Establishment of our Aboriginal Health Advisory Council with 2 meetings held.
- ▶ Establishment of our internal Aboriginal Health Operational Advisory Group creating a forum to enable Aboriginal leadership, advice, and guidance to support Aboriginal health activities across the organisation.

We wanted to develop commercial relationships with First Nations businesses. This year we have used First Nations Business to:

- ▶ Print our new RAP shirts
- ▶ Provide catering for functions and events
- ▶ Provide Cultural performances at events
- ▶ Undertake consultancy work

Our organisation aims to provide culturally safe employment for Aboriginal staff who contribute to deepening our understanding of the meaning of cultural safety.

We have 2 identified staff roles which are critical in promoting culturally safe health services:

- ▶ Service Development and Performance Manager-Aboriginal Health
- ▶ Aboriginal Community Engagement Consultant
- ▶ Updating the cultural leave section of our Leave Policy to support the needs of employees participating in cultural or religious holidays by:
 - ▶ Offering one day of paid leave per annum to participate in cultural or religious holidays
 - ▶ Acknowledging or celebrating cultural days of significance holidays in the workplace
 - ▶ Agreeing to flexible working arrangements, such as a change to hours, patterns, or locations of work to accommodate Cultural needs.



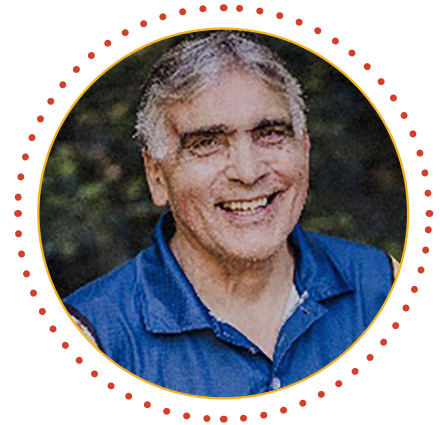


Aboriginal Health Operational Advisory Group

Terry Hill

Community Engagement Consultant, Aboriginal Health

As the Community Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Health, Consumer Engagement, Terry provides a vital link between members of the Aboriginal community and COORDINARE. Terry provides valuable support to all program areas and our corporate services to ensure continuous cultural learnings and cultural safety competencies for staff. Terry is the Chair of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.



Kay Stewart

Program Officer Integrated Team Care

As the Integrated Team Care (ITC) Program Officer (SE NSW), Kay provides leadership and support to the ITC workforce through the planning and implementation of regional approaches to enhance the program. The role maintains the formal and informal collaborative relationships with service providers and supports achieving quality outcomes for the management of chronic conditions under the ITC program. Kay is a member of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.



Melody Charnock

Business Systems Administrator

As our Business Systems Administrator and Events Coordinator Melody plays a lead role in supporting the roll out of our Cultural Competency Training. Melody is a member of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

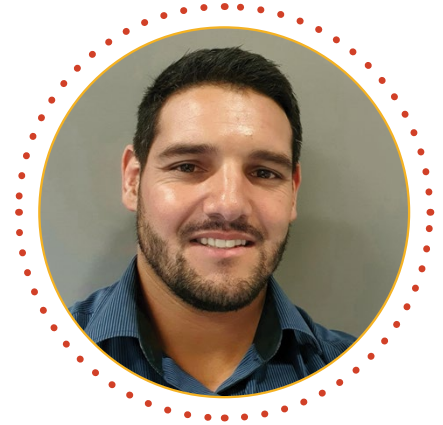




Nathan Deaves

Service Development & Performance Manager, Aboriginal Health

As the Service Development and Performance Manager – Aboriginal Health and member of the Commissioning team, Nathan collaborates with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), mainstream service providers, and relevant communities to foster engagement and ensure best practice commissioning of Aboriginal Health related initiatives.





Governance

Our vision for governance states:



Voices of First Nations people are respected and valued in decision making at all levels across the organisation.



We said we wanted to maintain and improve aspects of our Reconciliation Working Group. This year we have:

- ▶ Maintained our membership with high engagement from our Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal community members regularly participating. An activity of the Aboriginal Health Operational Advisory group is to engage additional external members to participate.
- ▶ Held 5 meetings of the Reconciliation Working Group to plan activities, align work across the organisation and sector, build trust and accountability and celebrate achievements.

RAP meetings have been well attended by staff with people finding the meetings positive and productive:

'I found the conversations inspiring and am excited to see what the future holds for Aboriginal health within COORDINARE'.

Mr Paul Knight

Board member

The COORDINARE Board appointed Mr Paul Knight in 2021. Paul is taking a lead role in establishing COORDINARE's Aboriginal Health Council.





In closing

This RAP journey has been marked by deep introspection, meaningful conversations, and genuine collaborations. It is a journey that challenges us to confront our past, to acknowledge the injustices that have been perpetrated against Indigenous communities, and to ensure that they are never repeated. But it is also a journey that inspires us to celebrate the rich cultural heritage, resilience, and wisdom of Indigenous peoples. This report is not an end, it is a promise to continue this transformative journey towards a united, inclusive, and just future for all. And as we do, let us remember the inspiring words of an Indigenous proverb:

*“Don’t walk behind of me: I may not lead,
Don’t walk in front of me: I may not follow,
Walk beside me that we may be one.”*

For 2022-2023 - that’s a RAP!





COORDINARE – South Eastern NSW PHN

Phone: 1300 069 002

Website: www.coordinare.org.au

Email: info@coordinare.org.au



Artist: – Loretta Parsley

The artwork used in the document was painted by Walbunja woman Loretta Parsley. She is a traditional Custodian of Yuin country and has a strong connection to the South East coast of NSW. Loretta paints under the name DAWN, which stands for Doing Art With Nature.

The painting is in the form of a cultural map and depicts the South Eastern NSW PHN region. It will be used by COORDINARE to reflect internal cultural protocols and management of cultural awareness for staff.

The areas in the painting are defined by local government territories and include 12 places of significance. They are: Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Jervis Bay, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Snowy/Monaro, Queanbeyan, Goulburn/Mulwaree, Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan Shire.

“The feet represent services walking to the epicentre of COORDINARE. I have used colours that are easily decoded to unlock the physical, emotional and spiritual mood for services in health.

“RED is the colour for self-love! ORANGE is for living in the present! YELLOW connects us to humanity! GREEN maintains a strong connection to Mother Earth! TURQUOISE is a gateway to spiritual belonging! BLUE is the expression of freedom and self-worth! INDIGO is a model for openness and knowledge! MAGENTA influences one's personal development and spiritual awareness!

“The main circle in the centre is the beginning of a journey to provide good health for all the community. The single free spirit is a journey that takes us through life! The hands are always helping and healing.”

– Loretta Parsley