



Guide Dogs Victoria

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
January 2022 – January 2023

Guide Dogs.





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Guide Dogs Victoria
acknowledges Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
peoples as the First
Peoples and the Traditional
Owners and Custodians of
the lands and waters on
which we live and work.

We pay our respects to their Elders,
Knowledge Holders and Leaders,
past, present and emerging and
extend that respect to all Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

About our artwork.

**Artist:**

Tomo, Wurundjeri people

Title:

Sacred Place 2020

“I’m an old soul in a young mind carried by a weary body. My paintings are a reflection of my feelings and views towards cultural and political issues, my love for the country and the colour changes throughout the seasons.”

Artwork description:

A painting made up of many small dots in pink and orange hues. In the centre is a circular shape made up of lines of white and red ochre dots. A dotted rainbow line undulates behind and in front of the circular shape.

The centre is a representation of a sacred place or area, and the multi-coloured streams represent the different cultures passing through, with the travellers going behind and the future going over, with the Traditional Owners and Elders watching over.

Shared journeys, shared outcomes.

As Guide Dogs Victoria sets out on its journey towards improving vision outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we pay our respects to the journeys of Traditional Owners and Elders, past and present. This artwork was chosen not only because it represents the paths already taken and still to be traversed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We also see this artwork as a reflection of the varying and winding paths our Clients take to regain their skills, confidence and independence, and the roads we walk with them, and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as we work together towards more inclusive, accessible and positive outcomes for all.



Image description:

Iain Edwards, Interim CEO of Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors, at the International Guide Dog Day awards ceremony. He is smiling, standing in front of a Guide Dogs branded banner.

A message from our Interim CEO.

It is my privilege, as Interim Chief Executive Officer of Guide Dogs Victoria, to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

For over 60 years, Guide Dogs organisations around Australia have provided high-quality supports for people with low vision or blindness. This work could not have begun or continued without close collaboration between our organisation and the Clients we work with, our supporters or the wider community. These are the relationships that enable us to fulfil our mission, strengthening our commitment towards greater equity of access and outcomes for all.

With such an iconic history, and such trust placed in us by our Clients and supporters, Guide Dogs Victoria has a duty to embed accessible, culturally safe and responsive services. Guide Dogs Victoria will ensure our commitment to reconciliation is embedded across the organisation. Our Reflect RAP is a demonstration of the journey we are on to create an environment where our community and our connections including Clients, staff, volunteers, and donors feel safe,

respected, and welcome. A space where everyone belongs and everyone can receive the support they need.

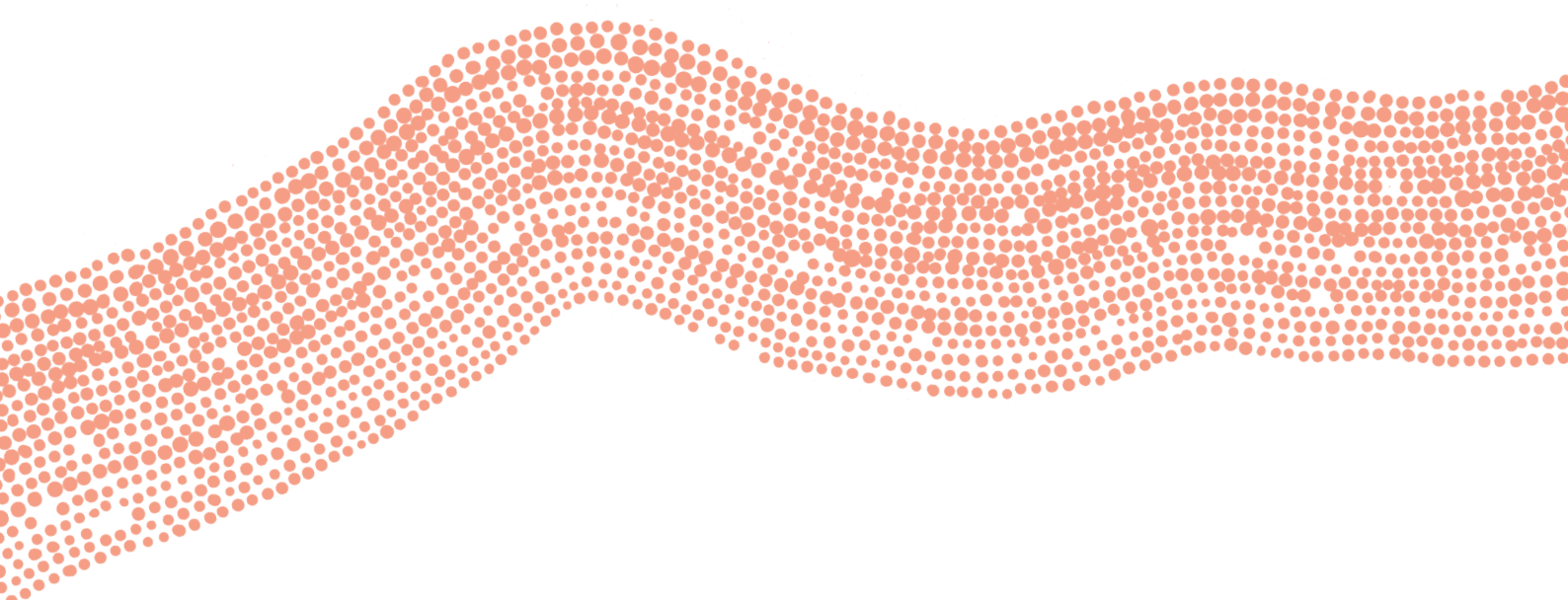
Over the last 18 months alone, Guide Dogs Victoria has taken great strides towards strengthening our plans to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with low vision or blindness and, I am proud to be the Champion for Guide Dogs Victoria's inaugural RAP. I am confident that at Guide Dogs Victoria, we are moving forward together and moving in the right direction.

I have the unanimous support of the Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team, and all Guide Dogs Victoria employees in the implementation of our Reflect RAP, and our aspiration to meaningfully engage and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advance equity of access to services and supports for those living with low vision or blindness.

Iain Edwards

Interim Chief Executive Officer
Guide Dogs Victoria

A message from our Board of Directors.



On behalf of the Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Guide Dogs Victoria Reflect RAP, and to support Guide Dogs Victoria's commitment to reconciliation.

Guide Dogs Victoria recognises that genuine and respectful relationships with Traditional Owners is important to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through greater understanding of, and collaboration with, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we will be able to shape our services to best meet the needs of our community.

Our Reflect RAP is the first step in our ongoing commitment to recognising and supporting diversity in our communities and our workplace, and represents our pledge towards improving vision outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community.

While Guide Dogs Victoria has relished a rich 60-year-old history, we are by no means trapped in the past. As a strong, values-based organisation, much of the success we have enjoyed can be directly attributed to our agility, our innovation, and the strength of the networks we have built.

Further, by building strong relationships with community and working closely with peak bodies, national partners and government departments, we can continue the vital work of advocating for Victorians living with low vision or blindness and play a valuable – and collaborative – role in championing access to supports and services, in an active partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

David Cochrane

Chair, Board of Directors
Guide Dogs Victoria

A message from Reconciliation Australia.



Image description:

Karen Mundine, CEO of Reconciliation Australia is standing outdoors and smiling at the camera.

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Guide Dogs Victoria to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Guide Dogs Victoria 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 Guide Dogs Victoria 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 Guide Dogs Victoria, 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

Our business.



Since 1957, Guide Dogs Victoria has provided vital support for Victorians living with low vision or blindness, regardless of their age, level of vision, financial situation, background, and other lifestyle factors.

In that time, our support has grown far beyond our beloved dogs to include a wide range of community initiatives, and training and education programs.

We work to ensure people with low vision or blindness are active and involved members of the community by teaching practical skills to help children and adults reach their personal potential and regain their confidence, freedom and independence. These skills are developed under our Orientation and Mobility training programs and with the support of Orthoptists, Assistive Technology specialists, Occupational Therapists and Support Coordination.

At Guide Dogs Victoria, we want to see a world where everybody who needs

support, gets support and, as such, our services are provided regardless of funding. If a Client is ineligible for government funding, we will provide our services at no cost to them, supported by the generosity of our donors and the philanthropic community.

Guide Dogs Victoria currently employs 151 people and operates state-wide from metro Melbourne and across regional Victoria. While the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not known, we will work within this RAP to determine culturally appropriate ways to understand this.

Guide Dogs Victoria currently has three hubs: a campus in Kew, Melbourne, located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and regional hubs in Geelong, located on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people and Bendigo, located on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

Our mission.

To be the first choice provider of services for people with low vision or blindness enabling a lifetime of independence.

Our values.

Our Clients come first in everything we do.

We believe everyone should have access to the support and tools required to live a free and independent life.

Lead with head and heart.

Forever focused on our purpose and mission, we combine care and careful planning to deliver successes worth celebrating.

Never stop exploring.

We're fearlessly creative. We've always asked and answered the tough questions and if there's a better way, we'll find it.

Walk the talk.

The buck stops with us. So we keep our word and keep going, no matter what.

Lift each other.

From a guiding hand to a high five, we unleash and acknowledge everyone's potential.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan.

As a service provider, it is our role to actively seek out, elevate and support the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, leaders and organisations.

In 2020, Guide Dogs Victoria began work on our first RAP. Our Reflect RAP will allow us to scope and develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, identify our vision for reconciliation, and explore our sphere of influence. This process will help us implement future RAPs – and indeed organisational strategies – that are both meaningful and sustainable.

At Guide Dogs Victoria, we know reconciliation is not one single act, but a journey that requires a commitment from non-Indigenous Australians to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning and their role in the process of reconciliation. Our first RAP is just one step in this journey towards talking, walking, and working together to improve vision outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As a vision services provider, Guide Dogs Victoria will take a partnership approach to implementing our RAP, including working alongside local Aboriginal-controlled organisations and participating in sector wide initiatives to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can always exercise their right to culturally safe and responsive supports and services.

One of the ways we will do this is through our relationship with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) to enhance, and to improve access to, low vision services and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which is central to Strong Eyes, Strong Communities (SESC): a five-year plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health and vision care 2019-2024.

In Victoria, the goals of Strong Eyes Strong Communities are aligned with Korin Korin Balit Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027. The purpose of Korin Korin Balit-Djak is to realise the vision for ‘Self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities’ in Victoria.

Specifically, we have committed to our external partners and stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and disability sector that we will:

- launch our Reflect RAP in 2022;
- establish meaningful and relevant partnerships; and
- ensure all staff have completed or refreshed cultural safety training.

“To help ensure that Guide Dogs is known in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a welcoming service for all and is synonymous with breaking down barriers, and a key player in closing the health care gap.”

Eamon Quinn
Guide Dog Mobility Instructor

Our reconciliation journey.

- Ensuring Acknowledgement of Country is noted as an opening agenda item at the commencement of Board, Executive and all staff meetings as well as public and formal events.
- Displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at our Kew campus.
- Displaying an Acknowledgement of Country on all staff email signatures.
- Updating value for money, tender and procurement policies and procedures to reflect our commitment to increasing supplier diversity and reconciliation.
- Updating our referral processes to include an option for Clients to be identified as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Providing training to our frontline Customer Service Team on the importance of 'Asking the Question' to improve service delivery with appropriate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week every year as part of our organisational calendar.
- Recognising National Close the Gap Day and National Reconciliation Week as part of our annual organisational calendar.
- Re-establishing our place on the Victorian Aboriginal Eye Health Stakeholder (AESG-V) Group.
- Providing secretariat support to the AESG-V Group to support the transition towards self-determination.
- Being appointed to the Vision 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.



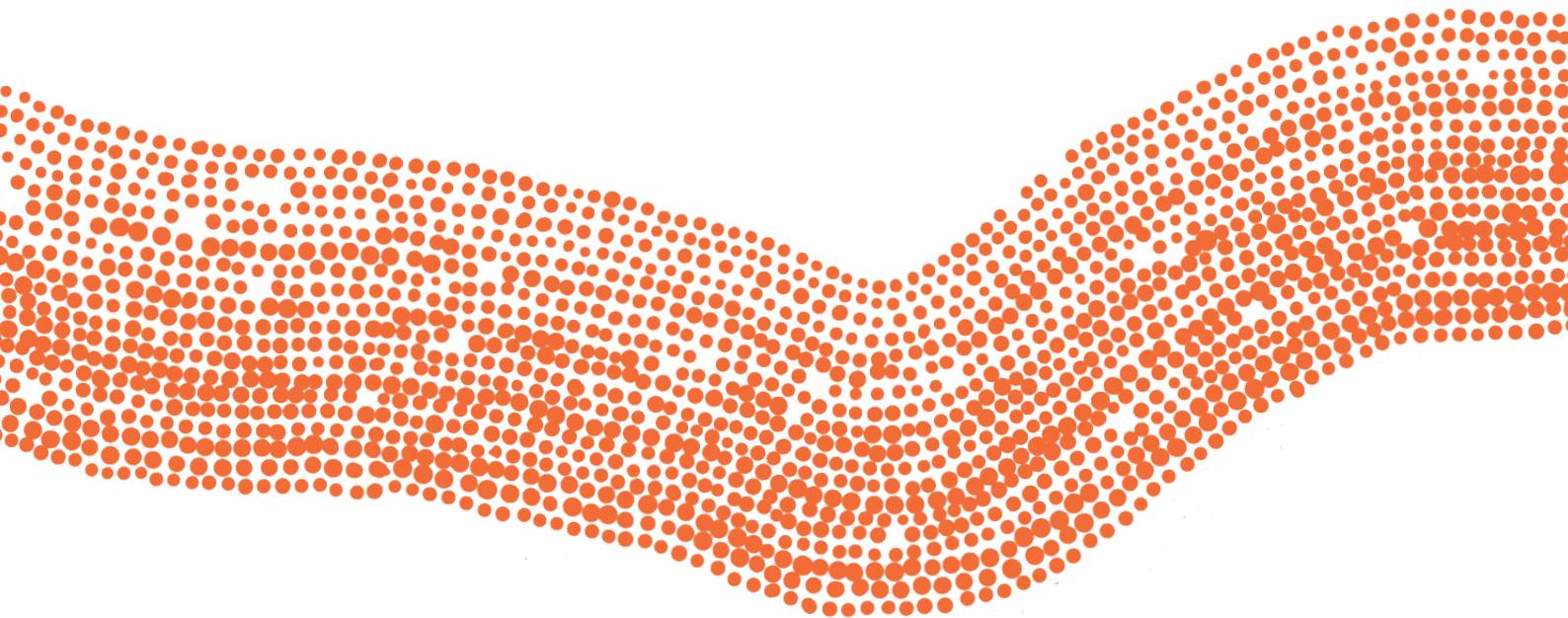
Image description:

Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Perry, performs a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country at our Kew campus in 2019.

“I simply want to contribute to Guide Dogs Victoria moving towards being an organisation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe, respected and engaged with.”

Simon McDonald-Kerr
Regional Team Leader

Our emerging partnerships.



Guide Dogs Victoria has developed external and emerging partnerships, and secured membership on key state stakeholder groups and federal policy committees. This recognises our role as a low vision service provider in delivering the vision sector's five-year plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health and vision, Strong Eyes, Strong Communities.

Vision 2020 Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.

In 2020, Guide Dogs Victoria was appointed to the Vision 2020 Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee. Vision 2020 Australia is a part of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight, an initiative of the World Health Organisation and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body for the eye health and vision care sector, representing member organisations, including Guide Dogs Victoria.

In October 2020, the Vision 2020 Board approved Guide Dogs Victoria's participation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee resulting in Guide Dogs Victoria's representation on two of Vision 2020's four committees. Guide Dogs Victoria staff also participated in the First Nations People with Disability Issues Paper and submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

Since 2020, our relationship with VACCHO has grown from strength-to-strength. As the peak body for health and wellbeing in Victoria with 32 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations as Members across the state, VACCHO Members support over 25,000 Aboriginal people in Victoria. See page 16 for more information about our relationship with VACCHO.

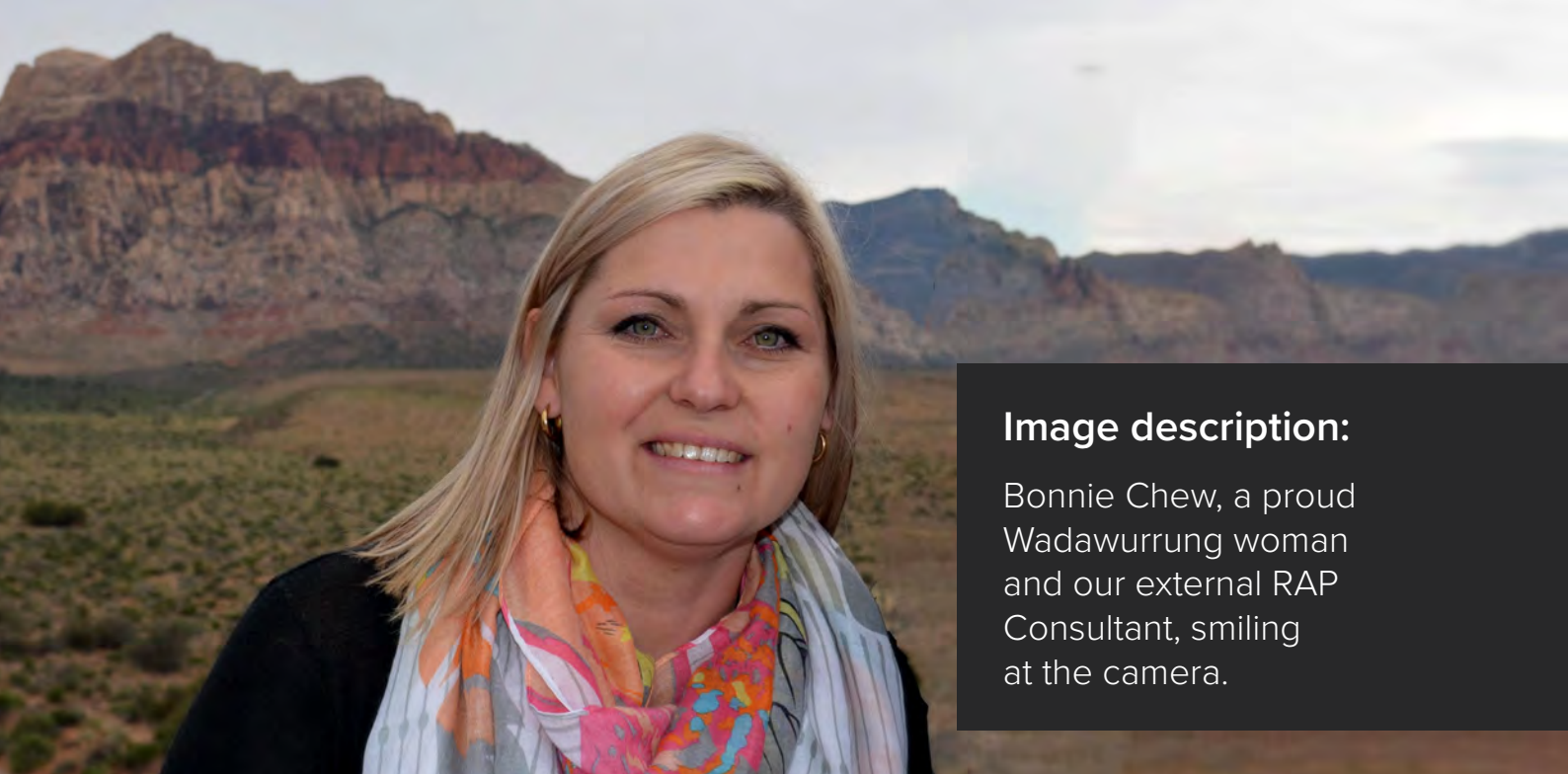


Image description:

Bonnie Chew, a proud Wadawurrung woman and our external RAP Consultant, smiling at the camera.

Bonnie Chew – RAP Consultant.

To develop our Reflect RAP, Guide Dogs Victoria has partnered with Bonnie Chew, a proud Wadawurrung woman who runs Mirriyu Consulting, based in Ballarat.

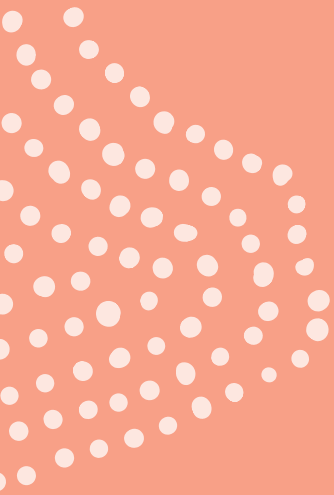
“It has been a pleasure to work with Guide Dogs Victoria since mid-2020 in the development of their first RAP. For Guide Dogs Victoria, it is about so much more than simply identifying how key members of their workforce can contribute towards improving vision outcomes. For Guide Dogs Victoria, it is about embedding a culture of reconciliation and respect across their entire organisation.

Since partnering with Guide Dogs Victoria, I have seen first-hand the commitment of their Interim CEO and Board as they champion the company’s inaugural RAP, and heard the passion each member of the RAP Working Group has for this process and the organisation’s overall journey.

I have been asked to attend several all staff Zoom sessions to host a “You Can’t Ask That” style forum as an opportunity for staff to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life and culture in a uniquely informal and safe forum, to judge their “NAIDOC Nailed It” damper-making competition, and to offer more context and lived experience to their journey.


I have seen the RAP Working Group put in the time and hard work to socialise their RAP and their commitment to reconciliation among their colleagues, I’ve seen staff become more engaged, and I am confident they will achieve their deliverables and take big steps towards improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living with low vision or blindness.”

Our emerging partnerships.



“As a member of the RAP working group, working with a Client was an opportunity to draw on the stories, knowledge and experiences that I had listened to and learnt, to provide the most respectful and meaningful service I could. And this didn’t mean that it had to be an outcome that I was familiar with, but some rapport developed for something further down the track.”

- Khoa Nyugen, Orthoptist



In June 2020, Guide Dogs Victoria refreshed its membership of the Victorian Aboriginal Eye Health Stakeholder Group, co-chaired by VACCHO.

VACCHO participated in our Masterplan Redevelopment Project Control Group Meeting to discuss the campus redevelopment and sensory garden as an opportunity to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In late 2020, VACCHO, Guide Dogs Victoria and Diabetes Victoria worked on developing a self-assessment of functional vision tool specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who could not access optometry or orthoptic services during prolonged coronavirus lockdowns.

Guide Dogs Victoria were on the inaugural working group and participated in the first Victorian Aboriginal Eye Health Regional Stakeholder Forum on 26 November 2020. A report and recording of the forum can be found online.

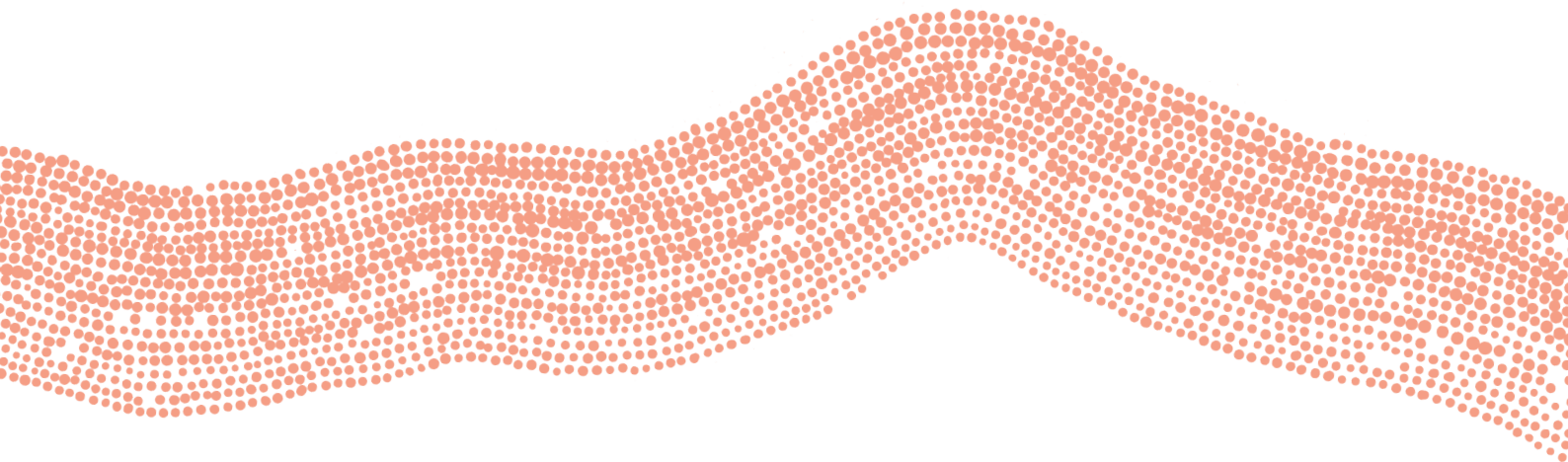
In 2021, VACCHO was awarded the Community Access Award for going “above and beyond in access, inclusion and customer service” as part of Guide Dogs Victoria’s 2021 International Guide Dog Day Awards.



Image description:

VACCHO staff, Casey Gurry holding a trophy, and Dr Noela Prasad holding a framed certificate of the Guide Dogs Community Access Award with Iain Edwards, Interim CEO Guide Dogs Victoria, standing in front of a white wall with the Guide Dogs logo.

Our RAP and reconciliation journey.



Our RAP is championed by our Interim CEO, our Board and our Executive and Senior Leadership Teams. Staff across the organisation have been involved in the RAP Working Group and in the development of the RAP as key champions and allies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and champions for improved eye health for Australia's First Peoples.

RAP Working Group members

Bonnie Chew

Aboriginal Community Representative
(external)

Abe Ropitini

Guide Dogs Victoria volunteer (external)

Annette Ferguson

Client Communications Coordinator

Eamon Quinn

Guide Dog Mobility Instructor

Gemma Hillis

Corporate and Internal
Communications Manager

Gwyn Low

Project Manager

Iain Edwards

Interim CEO, Reflect RAP
Executive Sponsor

Jaklina Michael

Diversity and Inclusion Specialist

Joanna Stavrou

General Manager, People and Culture

Khoa Nguyen

Orthoptist

Prudence Betros

HR Business Partner

Rachel Knight

Chief Financial Officer

Simon McDonald-Kerr

Orientation and Mobility Specialist /
Regional Team Leader, Geelong

Shesh Panneerselvam

Relationship Administrator, Gifts in Wills

“I have a responsibility to make sure I am actively involved in engaging local Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations, and supporting staff with their involvement in the roll out of the RAP and contributing to what will be an organisation wide culture change.”

Simon McDonald-Kerr
Regional Team Leader



Building and maintaining mutually respectful and beneficial internal and external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, businesses and community representatives will be fundamental to the success of Guide Dogs Victoria's reconciliation journey.

Khoa's story.

When I first put my hand up to be a part of Guide Dogs Victoria's RAP Working Group, I wasn't sure what I would be able to contribute. I just knew that I am passionate about improving services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that, in my capacity as an Orthoptist, I might be able to learn more about what this means. I never thought I would be putting my learnings into practice so soon!

In late 2020, I received a referral to provide an Orthoptic service to a young male Client in a regional area who identifies as an Aboriginal person. As a member of the RAP Working Group, I saw this as an opportunity to draw on the stories, knowledge and experiences that I had listened to and learnt throughout our RAP journey so far, to provide the most respectful and meaningful service I could. And this didn't mean that it had to be an outcome that I was familiar with but it could have been a meeting and some rapport developed for something further down the track.

Connection with this Client was via a support worker whom he trusted and the visit was in her home. The Client had a lot of apprehension about my visit and our service but was willing to meet me and have a listen to what I had to say. He admitted he didn't expect much. So after a couple visits, we decided on a reasonable and necessary piece of assistive technology for us to request funding for through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This young man was speechless and brought to tears when he saw his hand and signature and showed me what he could draw with this electronic magnifier. His posture changed, his speech was more positive and hopeful. He said "I'm glad I went through with this appointment, because I was going to cancel."

As I mentioned, I initially (and often) questioned my role as one of the practitioners on the RAP Working Group, and how – or if – I was contributing. As any practitioner will tell you, we all do what we do, because we are committed to supporting Clients to achieve their goals.



Image description:

Khoa, one of Guide Dogs Victoria's Orthoptists, smiles at the camera while holding a magnifying glass.

Throughout this experience, I have learnt the importance and value of time, my learning from the experience with this Client and through conversations and stories reiterates the importance of connections and trust.

If I was to tell other practitioners and staff one thing they could take from engaging with us on our journey towards reconciliation it would be the importance

of dialogue. Always learning, always listening. Every encounter is important. Every interaction is meaningful. Have patience and you will open doors for many.



Action

Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local/ regional areas and within our sphere of influence.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, Client and Vision Services Support: Regional Team Leaders
Research best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, stakeholders and organisations.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, Client and Vision Services Support: Project Manager
Develop partnerships with organisations involved in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through representation at eye health sector forums.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, People and Culture Support: Corporate and Corporate and Internal Communications Manager

Action

Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish NRW as part of our organisational calendar and circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, People and Culture Support: Corporate and Corporate and Internal Communications Manager
Host an internal event for NRW as part of our All Staff Meeting to ensure attendance by all staff.	Complete	Lead: Corporate and Internal Communications Manager Support: RAP Working Group
Ensure our RAP Working Group members participate in an external NRW event.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer



Action

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff, volunteers, Clients and stakeholders including donors and referrers.	Review September 2022	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Head of Marketing and Communications Centre of Excellence
Promote our Reconciliation Action Plan and our vision for reconciliation through our social media platforms and websites, industry and sector publications.	September 2022	Head of Marketing and Communications Centre of Excellence
Include Reconciliation Australia's ' Share our Pride ' online tool in Guide Dogs Victoria's induction of all staff and volunteers.	Complete	General Manager, People and Culture
Display a 'Statement of Reconciliation' at each office location.	September 2022	Lead: Regional Team Leaders Support: Office Coordinator
Identify like-minded external organisations and stakeholders including associations, businesses in the RAP partner network to collaborate with and engage on our reconciliation journey.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, Client and Vision Services Support: Regional Team Leaders
Ensure our vision for reconciliation is reflected in Guide Dogs Victoria's Interpreting and Translation Policy.	Complete	Lead: Quality Manager Support: Customer Service Manager

Action

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Research best practice anti-racism policies to proactively inform organisational equity and inclusion, policies and strategies.	August 2022	General Manager, People and Culture
Conduct a review of existing People and Culture frameworks, policies, procedures, materials and resources to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future anti-racism additions.	September 2022	Lead: General Manager, People and Culture Support: RAP Working Group
Support and sign "Uluru Statement from the Heart" and "Racism. It Stops with Me." (RISWM)	Complete	General Manager, People and Culture



We are committed to building awareness and capability among our staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, challenges and achievements, in order to develop and maintain authentic, relevant, and respectful services, supports, employment and emerging partnerships.

NAIDOC Week in a time of lockdown.

We all know 2020 had its challenges and for those of us in Melbourne, that included being in lockdown for a large part of the year. At Guide Dogs Victoria, we were still committed to marking the importance of NAIDOC Week and using this as another opportunity to build awareness among staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, challenges and achievements.

That's when our RAP Working Group came up with the idea of "NAIDOC Nailed It" – a challenge staff could undertake from their own homes that would allow us to acknowledge, celebrate, and learn more about our nation's story. So, we put the call out for challengers to bake their best damper, using native ingredients.

We provided the base recipe and some suggestions, then it was over to the staff to pull out all the stops – and they absolutely did. We awarded four prizes – including a voucher for Clothing the Gap, a Kinya Lerrk gift voucher and a native plant – but it was a tough decision. Thankfully we had our RAP Consultant, Bonnie Chew, on hand as guest judge! We received incredibly positive feedback about this activity, and it was a fantastic chance to educate, engage with, and take tangible action to better understand the histories, stories, and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Image description:

Guide Dogs Ambassador Dog, Willow, poses next to a serving of homemade damper decorated with the Aboriginal flag and the Australian flag.



Action

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: General Manager, People and Culture
Conduct a review of cultural awareness and safety training in our organisation.	Complete	General Manager, People and Culture
Implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety training as part of Guide Dogs Victoria's inductions for new staff and volunteers.	December 2022	General Manager, People and Culture
All staff to attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training.	December 2022 (all staff) and within 3 months for new starters	General Manager, People and Culture

Action

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area including regional areas to strengthen partnerships.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country and/or smoking ceremony for at least one designated major event such as the launch of the new Kew campus and significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.	January 2023	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Develop and implement protocols that raise staff's awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	November 2022	Corporate and Internal Communications Manager
Include significant dates of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of our organisational Calendar of Events and communicate these to staff.	Complete	Lead: Corporate and Internal Communications Manager Support: General Manager, People and Culture



Action

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Raise awareness and share information among staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, People and Culture Support: RAP Working Group
Host an internal NAIDOC Week celebration as part of the All Staff Meeting to ensure attendance by all staff.	Complete	Lead: Corporate and Internal Communications Manager Support: RAP Working Group
Implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety training as part of Guide Dogs Victoria's inductions for new staff and volunteers.	Complete	Lead: General Manager, People and Culture Support: Corporate and Internal Communications Manager
Introduce and encourage our staff to participate in NAIDOC Week by promoting external community events in our local area.	Complete	General Manager, People and Culture
Ensure our RAP Working Group to participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: and RAP Working Group

Action

Demonstrate respect towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in our service provisions.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate the accessibility of vision service offerings to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within metro, regional and remote areas.	Complete	General Manager, Client and Vision Services
Review Guide Dogs Victoria materials for cultural appropriateness in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.	December 2022	Head of Marketing and Communications Centre of Excellence



Together we will identify and act upon opportunities to improve the accessibility and relevance of our supports and services, and explore ways to increase employment, training and procurement opportunities among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses.

Creating connected communities.

An integral part of our reconciliation journey is the partnerships we are forming with relevant and knowledgeable stakeholders. As well as current partners mentioned previously in this document, we are continuing to explore opportunities to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led or owned organisations, and communities, to embed cultural awareness, sensitivity and respect into our consciousness, our practices, and our service delivery, and to encourage diversity in our employment.

We are also committed to identifying opportunities to work in conjunction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contractors, suppliers, and subject matter

experts, building robust and authentic partnerships with the aim of improving long-term social, financial and health outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.

This commitment also extends to finding ways to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our physical space, for example through flags, artwork, and other tangible and accessible displays of understanding and respect. As well as reaching out to The Torch to obtain unique and traditional artwork for our Reflect RAP, we were also honoured to engage the services of 100 percent Aboriginal-owned business Little Rocket for the design of this document.



Action

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing levels to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2022	General Manager, People and Culture
Investigate employment and professional development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to join our organisation, including recruitment strategies such as cadetships, traineeships roles and appropriate recruitment partners.	December 2022	General Manager, People and Culture
Investigate improving the cultural safety of our organisation to ensure retention of future Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.	December 2022	General Manager, People and Culture
Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	December 2022	General Manager, People and Culture

Action

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop a business case and an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Complete	Chief Financial Officer
Explore opportunities to commission Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists to provide artwork and design for our Campus redevelopment including the sensory garden and landscaping.	December 2022	Chief Executive Officer
Investigate Supply Nation and Kinaway Chamber of Commerce memberships.	Complete	Chief Financial Officer

Action

Improve low vision service provision in the broader eye health sector for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Support Aboriginal Eye Health Sector initiatives through working with representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the eye health and vision services sector.	December 2022	Lead: General Manager, Client and Vision Services Support: Project Manager
Apply for appropriate grants to further opportunities to improve the cultural safety of our services and suitable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.	Complete	Grants Manager



We are committed to reporting on all the actions in our Reflect RAP. We will develop an effective governance structure and establish processes to inform and guide the implementation of our Reflect RAP deliverables. We will monitor our progress by continually learning through reporting tools and systems to reflect our values. The ability to report on the progress of our RAP is pivotal to our accountability to our Clients, and the communities and stakeholders within our sphere of influence.

Action

Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain an RWG to govern RAP implementation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation, comprised of staff across the organisation.	Complete	Lead: Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors Support: Project Manager
RWG to meet monthly to champion, monitor progress and report RAP implementation.	Complete	Project Manager
Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Complete	Lead: Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors Support: Project Manager
Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on RWG.	Complete	Lead: Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors Support: Project Manager



Action

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: General Manager, People and Culture
Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Complete	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: RAP Working Group
Define and set up appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments and provide regular dashboards and insights	Complete	Lead: Chief Financial Officer Support: Project Manager

Action

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Complete	Project Manager
Formally launch the RAP internally and externally to celebrate and build momentum while promoting accountability.	December 2022	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Head of Marketing and Communications Centre of Excellence

Action


Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP (Innovate).	Complete	Project Manager





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Guide Dogs.

