

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2015–2017



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

CatholicCare Wollongong's vision for reconciliation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community will be restored to a place of equity, dignity and respect.

To play our part, we will provide culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, increase service access to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and improve community awareness of CatholicCare.

OUR BUSINESS

CatholicCare is the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong. We focus on client needs, offering people and communities opportunities for growth, healing and hope.

Our services are available to all in the community; we are an inclusive organisation committed to helping anyone in need regardless of religious beliefs.

- We employ 185 staff and we have 200 volunteers
- We have two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees
- We cover the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Macarthur and Southern Highlands regions of NSW

Respect is one of CatholicCare Wollongong's five core values. Our other values are: empowerment, integrity, safety, innovation and collaboration. We are committed to respecting the dignity, diversity, cultures and beliefs of all people.

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, live and prosper.

We act in partnership and in collaboration with:

- individuals, families, organisations and groups within the Catholic church, particularly the Diocese of Wollongong and Catholic Social Services Australia

- individuals, families, groups, communities, networks and agencies in the broader community on issues, policies and programs that are compatible with our vision, purpose and values
- funding bodies and relevant government departments to ensure quality service delivery to those most in need, meeting governance standards

At CatholicCare Wollongong we focus on client needs, offering families, children and individuals opportunities for growth, healing, resilience and hope. Throughout the Illawarra, Macarthur, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands Regions, we offer care, support, assistance and education to anyone regardless of age, gender or religious beliefs.

Our current activities include:

- services and support for children, young people & their families through Foster Care, Access and Children's Contact
- services for individuals, families & couples through Counselling, Families and Communities Workshops, Pre-Marriage Education & School Counselling
- services and support which attend to the social, emotional & physical well-being of people who are ageing or who have disability, their carers and their families

CATHOLICCARE'S RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

OUR STORY

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is about organisations from every sector turning good intentions into real actions and rising to the challenge of reconciling Australia. A RAP is a business plan that uses a holistic approach to create meaningful relationships, enhanced respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The RAP program includes four types of RAPs, each offering a different level of engagement and support. In developing a Reflect RAP in 2013/2014, we committed to completing a variety of actions to ensure we were well positioned to implement effective and mutually beneficial initiatives as part of future Reconciliation Action Plans.

We implemented protocols around respecting the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, both through verbal acknowledgement and through visual maps and an official agency statement of commitment. Cultural awareness training was rolled out and completed by 74 of our staff members which provided staff education and awareness about the history of the Tharawal/Dharawal and Yuin people. In early 2014, a staff development day was held which showcased our Reflect RAP. The highlight of this day was the involvement of local Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander organisations that shared their journeys and stories with our staff, with many good relationships and connections established. This day built on the knowledge learnt from previous cultural awareness training and made the teachings a lot more tangible when meeting with local Elders and listening to their stories.

CatholicCare Wollongong supported staff to build relationships in the community by encouraging them to attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and community network meetings as well as participate in cultural and community events. We participated in NAIDOC week celebrations in the Macarthur, Shoalhaven and Illawarra regions, providing a stall with activities and sample bags for children and adults. Staff also participated in National Reconciliation Week events, with a number of people walking in the parade in Shellharbour with local school children.

We have been providing services onsite at various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for the community. Some of these relationships have been formalised with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being established between CatholicCare and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. This has been a highlight for us as we have spent a significant amount of time building on these relationships and providing services to the various Aboriginal community members. We are also looking at how we can support aged and disabled people in the Aboriginal community navigate consumer directed care (aged) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme through some of our participation in local networks.



We continue to support our CatholicCare Aboriginal Community Connection Committee (CACCC) which also serves as a RAP Working Party which meets monthly to support the implementation of our RAP and to work collaboratively across the agency to meet our RAP targets. The CACCC consists of a variety of staff including Executive Manager of Children & Youth Services, Executive Manager of Aged & Disability Services, Human Resource Officer, Coordinator of Children's Contact Service, Manager of Families and Communities Program, Manager of the School Student and Family Program, Group worker from Families and Communities Program and Special Project Officer who are passionate about the RAP and making our organisation accessible and respectful to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Manager of Families and Communities Program, Chair of the CACCC, is also the champion of the RAP for CatholicCare Wollongong and is provided with great assistance and support from the Committee members. The CACCC committee has expanded to include external members, including a local high profile Aboriginal community member, and Aboriginal Liaison officers from the Catholic Education Office. These external members add great value to our discussion, planning and community relationships building.

We engaged an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation to facilitate our staff development day and utilised an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander catering company to supply us with wonderful food.

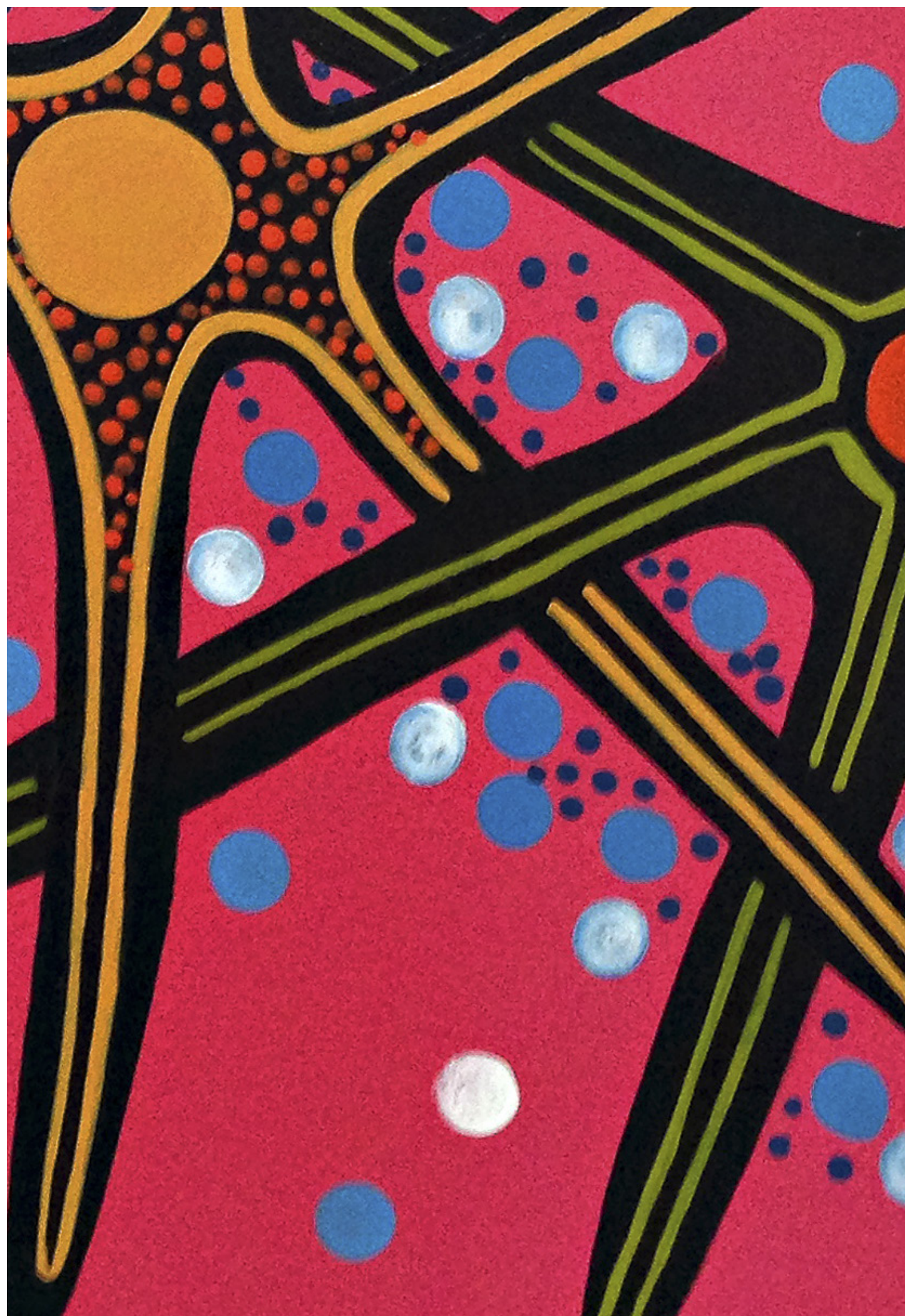
We have held a BBQ at one of our sites to welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to our office,

and provided catering by a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander catering company.

We continually consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, services and community about what their service needs are, and this has guided service development and outreach provision. This has ensured that we are delivering services in the community which are most needed and are written so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can relate to the course content. Every school term we provide outreach courses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We have experienced some challenges, especially around recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, despite utilising job agencies to assist us with this. We are looking at piloting new strategies with our relationships with the various local education and training institutes to remedy this problem. We are also committed to creating a culturally safe organisation in order to facilitate recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. In line with our commitment to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, we have made connections with some local Education institutes to raise awareness of vacant positions, work experience and placements that may be suitable for new graduates.

Although we were not able to complete all of the objectives set out in our previous 'Reflect' RAP, we will take the opportunity in our 'Innovate' RAP to move forward and address the various obstacles and pilot new strategies to achieve our RAP goals.



MOVING TO THE FUTURE

OUR INNOVATE RAP

Moving into the future with an Innovate RAP, we will identify relationships, respect and opportunities actions specific to our business and our sphere of influence.

This Innovate RAP will allow CatholicCare to focus on building relationships both internally and externally, and raise awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of our RAP within our organisation. Development of our RAP will involve consultation with staff across our organisation including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or stakeholders to achieve our vision for reconciliation.

CatholicCare Wollongong's Innovate RAP will focus on the following areas:

- We aim to engage the services of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training organisations to provide our staff with further and continued Cultural Awareness Training.
- Our organisation is committed and passionate about procuring services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and continuing our goal of further educating and growing the knowledge of staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

- We will strive to continually make our services accessible and culturally appropriate through community consultation and client feedback.
- CatholicCare Wollongong is also focussed on building our community profile and strengthening community relationships by participating in significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events. We will strive to have a coordinated approach and participation that allows for a greater cross-section of staff from the agency's different programs. Our experiences have shown that this is important as we get a variety of enquiries at these events and we would like to be able to help the community to provide them with assistance, guidance or referral.
- CatholicCare Wollongong will increase opportunities for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will include working with local Colleges/ Education Institutes on ways to employ trainees and student placements and work experience.

Over the next 2 years, our organisation commits to:

(see following pages)

RELATIONSHIPS

Our agency is committed to deepening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples, in alignment with CatholicCare's values, which include collaboration, respect and empowerment. We will equip our staff with the knowledge, time and resources to ensure that relationships are genuine. We anticipate that this will increase the accessibility and cultural appropriateness of our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
Internally promote and continue to monitor the RAP progress.	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee Chair	June 2015, 2016 December 2015, December 2016	The CACCC will meet once a month to oversee the development, endorsement, launch and implementation of the RAP.
	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee Chair Communication & Fundraising Officer	April, July, September, December 2015, 2016, 2017	Communicate RAP progress through 'JustUs' staff newsletter.
	CatholicCare Leadership Team	June 2015	The Leadership Team to endorse the Innovate RAP.
	Human Resources Officer	June 2015 – June 2017	Provide a copy of the RAP for all staff and volunteers.
	CACC Chair	Monthly June 2015 – 2017	Report on RAP implementation as part of our regular CACCC meetings.
Continue to honour National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant dates by providing opportunities for staff to build local relationships.	CatholicCare Leadership Team	27 May – 3 June 2015, 2016, 2017	Encourage staff to attend and participate in NRW community activities and celebrations across the region, including in Nowra, Wollongong, Shellharbour and Campbelltown. Each office to organise at least one internal NRW event each year. All NRW events will be registered on the Reconciliation Australia website Raise awareness of significant dates by including them on our agency calendar.
Foster and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Organisations and leaders.	CatholicCare Leadership Team	June 2015 – June 2017	Participate in local networks and projects including MacUnity, Illawarra Area Community Based Working Group and relevant cluster groups, Nowra events.
		April, June, September, December 2015 – 2017	Invite and host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to participate in our services and programs.
		June 2016	Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to strengthen service provisions
		December 2016	Establish Service agreements outlining our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.
		December 2016	Develop a list or data base of contact details of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

RESPECT

Interactions with elders from the Dharawal and/or Tharawal and Yuin traditional lands during the last 12 months has given staff a greater respect and appreciation for the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This increasing cultural awareness informs our commitment to work with and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities rather than for them.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
Continue to promote staff understanding of the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee	December 2015	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. Provide easily accessible wording for staff to use when providing an 'Acknowledgement of Country' Incorporate 'Acknowledgement of Country' into the start of all group work sessions
		June 2015, 2016, 2017	Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events including the whole of agency staff development day
CatholicCare Wollongong will provide a culturally safe and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee	December 2015	Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our offices Display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in our offices Investigate opportunities to commission Aboriginal artwork to display in our offices Explore how a Trauma Informed Care and Practice Framework may be applied to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members
Continue staff training and development to increase our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	Training Committee CatholicCare Leadership Team	June 2017	Develop a cultural awareness strategy policy which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our organisation and considers various ways of which cultural learning can be provided
		June 2016	Review and update the cultural awareness training program
		December 2015	Investigate further cultural learning activities for staff.
		June 2015, 2016, 2017	Continue compulsory staff training on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness.
		June 2015	Targeted agency program staff to participate in specific training for direct service provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
		December 2015, 2016, 2017	All new staff to complete the Share Our Pride online modules during induction
Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.	Human Resources Officer Quality Services Committee CatholicCare Leadership Team	June 2015	Review and update HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC.
		July 2015, 2016, 2017	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events. Encourage all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.

OPPORTUNITIES

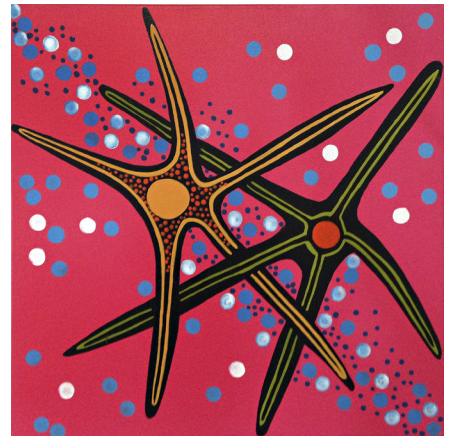
We will engage in formal and informal consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to identify and seek opportunities to support their diverse needs and address service gaps.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities at CatholicCare.	CatholicCare Leadership Team	July 2016	Prepare a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within CatholicCare.
	Human Resources Officer	July 2016	Review HR policies to Identify and address barriers to attracting appropriately qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants to vacant positions
		December 2016	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.
		December 2016	Strengthen connections with local training and education providers to directly offer opportunities for employment, work placement or internships
		December 2015	Continue to include "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with relevant experience and/or qualifications are encouraged to apply" in recruitment advertisements.
		June 2015, 2016, 2017	Utilise existing formal and informal networks to advertise employment opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander potential candidates.
		June 2015, 2016, 2017	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and committee members, to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.
		June 2017	Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leave, such as 'Sorry Business', into leave policy.
Further investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within CatholicCare.	Corporate Services	December 2016	Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that CatholicCare can procure goods and services from
	Training Committee	June 2016	Educate staff about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
		June 2017	Investigate opportunities to develop 2 more commercial relationships with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
Continue to increase culturally specific and relevant services	Families & Communities Program Manager	April, July, September, December 2015, 2016, 2017	Continue to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations about what services and programs their community need
		January, 2016, 2017	Evaluate the cultural appropriateness of CatholicCare's programs. Adapt programs to meet cultural and community needs by utilising community feedback and evaluation.
		June 2016	Consult with community Elders about the Outreach services that may be required for their community and various locations where services would be beneficial to them to easily access.
Explore opportunities to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Catholic Schools	School, Student & Family Program	June 2015	Liaise with the CEO to identify opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
		June 2016	CatholicCare School counsellors to establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal Education Assistant's (AEA'S) in schools and work together to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Systems implemented between AEA's and Counsellor's to facilitate communication
Continually review service provision across all services and regions to ensure it meets the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	CatholicCare Leadership Team	June 2016	Collect, analyse and publish data at a program and organisation level i.e. number of Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples accessing each program; any barriers encountered by clients; common presenting issues.
		June 2017	Compare client profile to community profile and identify opportunities for meeting service gaps.
		December 2017	Conduct research to identify the needs for culturally appropriate aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders as within CatholicCare

TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	TARGET
Develop Reconciliation Action Plan in consultation with staff and endorsed by CLT and CatholicCare Advisory Council (CAC).	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee	June 2015	RAP approved and displayed on our website and Reconciliation Australia Website.
Monitor RAP implementation regularly	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee CatholicCare Advisory Council CatholicCare Leadership Team	July 2015	Imbed relevant RAP strategies into the Agency's strategic, program business and individual work plans.
		June 2015	Ensure RAP meets funding body requirements.
Reporting	CatholicCare Aboriginal Connection Committee	September 2015, 2016, 2017	Submit a RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire annually to Reconciliation Australia.
Review, refresh and update CatholicCare Wollongong's RAP		June 2017	Work with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings and challenges of this Innovate RAP.
			Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.



ARTWORK

NAME OF PAINTING

The Star Fish

ARTISTS

Lorraine Brown and Narelle Thomas

PAINTING COMPLETED

November 2011

PAINTING INSPIRED BY

Stars of the ocean's edge lying in rock pools. Open Sunshine.

ABOUT ARTISTS

Lorraine Brown is the premier artist of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation. Lorraine is a Jerrinjah woman born in Bega. One of 7 children. Lorraine views her ability to paint as gift. She uses bold colours that reflect her coastal upbringing. "We're East Coast Saltwater People" Lorraine says "My colours symbolise my life. I had a great childhood, great parents and family and extended family."

Narelle Thomas is one of Lorraine's sisters and they paint together. Lorraine does the fine work and Narelle fills in the details. Lorraine and Narelle work like professional dancers, one leads and the other follows and no-one steps on any toes. It is clear they have been working together for many, many years.



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