



Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

December 2022 - April 2024





ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND OWNERS

We wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, live and play and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognize First Nations people as the custodians of the lands, seas and skies, with more than 60,000 years of wisdom, connection and relationship in caring for Country.

We work and live on stolen land and recognise that YWCA Australia has, and continues, to benefit from colonization. We have a responsibility to acknowledge harm done and to work towards respect, recognition and self determination of all First Peoples.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

We, Helen Conway and Michelle Phillips, as President and CEO of YWCA Australia, are proud to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as the next step in our journey towards reconciliation. Our team members and Board will be with us throughout our reconciliation journey.

As an organisation with more than a 140-year presence in this country, it is important for us to acknowledge that we were founded and operate on land that was never ceded – land that has always, and will always, belong to its First Peoples.

Over the years, we are proud of the strong relationships we've developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the regions in which we operate. For example, our strong ties to the Larrakia people in the Darwin region and Bundjalung people in the Lismore region mean we have worked with these communities to provide culturally appropriate programs and services that are delivering positive social outcomes. Through this RAP, we are eager to continue to build on these relationships and develop stronger ties to First Nations communities in the other areas we service.

Our first RAP comes during the early implementation stages of our new strategy, what we call the YWCA Evolve Strategy, or YeS 2026. YeS 2026 confirms our renewed focus on intersectional feminism, and with that, a strong commitment for representation of diverse voices at all levels of the organisation. It is important to us that the voices of young women, women and gender diverse people, and importantly First Nations people, are engaged during the design, planning and delivery of our programs, services and the operations of the organisation. This RAP is underpinned by this intersectional feminist work, as achieving gender equality is impossible without achieving racial equality.

We would like to thank our RAP working group for all their efforts in getting us to this point. We are also grateful for the leadership and support of Reconciliation Australia and look forward to meeting their expectations of us and contributing to their vision of a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.





MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO

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

YWCA Australia joins a network of more than 2,200 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 close to 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 YWCA Australia 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 YWCA Australia, 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



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

OUR BUSINESS

Our vision: A future where gender equality is a reality

Our purpose: Making young women's leadership and women's housing our priority for gender equity in Australia

Our long-term outcomes

1. Young women and women experience increased well-being, safety and security in their homes
2. Young women lead policy and systems change for effective housing pathways and social supports

YWCA Australia is an evolving intersectional feminist women's specialist not-for-profit organisation, and part of the YWCA global movement. For over 140 years, we have challenged the systems, structures and policies that act as barriers to women, especially young women, achieving their full potential.

Today, we operate a high number of evidence-based programs and services that are inclusive of all young women, women and gender diverse people and offer support with housing, homelessness, safety, well-being and lived experience expertise. We are one of Australia's leading women's specialist housing providers, delivering safe and affordable accommodation.

We have operations in 16 locations across the country, including on Larrakia (Darwin), Eora (Sydney), Wurundjeri (Melbourne), Bundjalung (Lismore) Giabal and Jarowair (Toowoomba), Whadjuk (Perth), Kurna (Adelaide), Turrbal and Jagera (Brisbane), Gugu Badhun (Townsville) Dharawal (Wollongong and Campbelltown), Gundangara (Nowra) and Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung (Bendigo) Country. Our 260 YWCA team members are spread across these locations in a variety of roles, and approximately 5% of our team members identify as First Nations people.

Under our YWCA Evolve Strategy (YeS 2026) we are focused on five core activities:

- **Create tailored leadership pathways for young women with lived experience in homelessness and housing risk.**

We recognise the principle of 'nothing about us without us', and that young women with lived experience have unique and valuable knowledge and expertise to share. We will ensure young women can both speak and be heard and start to lead systems change through supported leadership opportunities.

- **Deliver safe and affordable housing and referral pathways for young women and women.**

We will work towards recognition that we are a leading provider of solutions that achieve sustainable housing outcomes for women. In recognition of the fact that the risk factors for housing insecurity are gendered, we will grow our national housing presence and bolster referral pathways to ensure wraparound support for our clients and residents.

- **Provide case management and support to young women and women at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.**

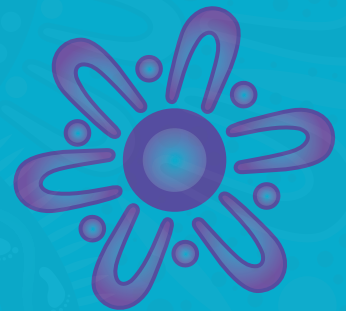
We can become Australia's only national women's housing and homelessness organisation through an uplift in service delivery capability, tailoring services to meet our beneficiaries' specific needs and progressively incorporating our intersectional feminist approach. We can deliver high-impact services and progress towards our long-term outcomes by piloting programs and partnerships that grow our evidence base and incorporating those insights across housing and service delivery. We can achieve growth by offering specialised evidence-based services and strengthening our government relationships.

- **Apply an inter-sectional feminist approach to achieve sustainability and impact.**

We are true to our values, culture and purpose, delivering impact and sustainability for a strong and enduring future. Inter-sectional feminism will be our culture in action, and we will maintain financial viability and self-sufficiency. We will increase our impact and achieve our long-term social outcomes.

- **Strong advocacy in collaboration with members for young women and women's housing, support services and systems change.**

Our reputation and credibility are tied to and advance our purpose, strengthened by focused advocacy to inspire and drive systemic change. To support the change we want to see, we listen and learn from young women with lived experience of homelessness and housing risk, build active member communities to amplify our reach, deliver consistent brand positioning and communications and develop a strong evidence base.



OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Vision Statement

YWCA Australia's vision for reconciliation is a future where First Nations peoples are recognised and respected as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, seas and skies of Australia. We acknowledge that reconciliation can only be achieved when there is equity in life outcomes between First Nations and non-First Nations Australians.

As we work towards a future where gender equality is a reality, it is our ambition that First Nations young women and women experience increased well-being, safety, and security in their homes and those at risk of housing insecurity and homelessness have access to culturally appropriate housing pathways and social support.

This must be guided by the voices of First Nations young women, women and gender diverse people, whose right to and capacity for self-determination we recognise.



In December 2021, YWCA established a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to take a leadership role in creating our Reconciliation Action Plan. This Group was chaired by Joanna Mallon, Director Organisation Capability and People and YWCA's RAP Champion and was supported by external First Nations leader and advisor Kristal Kinsela.

YWCA Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Members

- Belinda Goglia, Housing
- Bronwyn Tracy, People and Culture
- Christie McDonald, Service Delivery – Homelessness Services
- Joanna Mallon, Organisation Capability and People
- Jon Ackary, Song Hotel
- Joseph Nipperess, Service Delivery – Homelessness Services
- Rachel Avery, Communications and Engagement

Moving forward, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, our CEO and Board will play an active role with the implementation of YWCA's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. We are committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard, valued and respected throughout our reconciliation journey.

Why are we developing a Reconciliation Action Plan?

As a national non-profit women's specialist organisation, YWCA provides programs, services and has a national advocacy footprint that progresses gender equity for young women, women and gender diverse people. In line with our Vision and Purpose, we truly want to make gender equality a reality by amplifying and elevating the voices of young women with lived experience of homelessness and housing risk, including First Nations young women. We are committed to action and ensuring our services, program and ways of working are culturally appropriate, accessible and safe.

In keeping with our commitment to self-determination, we acknowledge that we need to invest in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' needs and ambitions. We must build and strengthen our relationships with stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who will guide us as we work towards our Reconciliation Action Plan Vision. We are at the very start of our reconciliation journey, and we believe this is a crucial step towards helping us achieve our organisation's vision of a future where gender equality is a reality, because gender equality cannot be achieved without First Nations justice.

The next 12 months

Over the next 12 months, YWCA will undertake authentic reflection and review of our ways of working and relationships to develop a meaningful understanding of how we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members, members, clients, residents and communities. We will strive to ensure reconciliation lives in the hearts, minds and actions of all our teams, our Board Members and our members. We commit to being open and transparent on our reconciliation journey and recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and leadership will be key to our success.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

YWCA has a range of partnerships with First Nations communities in the regions we operate, and we hope, through this formal commitment to reconciliation, we will strengthen the existing relationships and develop new ones.

In Darwin, we have a high number of First Nations clients across our programs and services. For some programs, such as our Women's Housing Program, this number is as low as 17%, but for our medical accommodation programs, this number is as high as 80%. We also recently transitioned a handover of our Youth Diversion program to be operated by local Aboriginal community-controlled organisation Danila Dilba as a more culturally safe and appropriate service provider and to maximise impact for First Nations clients.

In Lismore, we have strong links to the local First Nations community through our programs and services. Through our Communities for Children program, our Community Partners are Jarjum Centre and Murwillumbah Community Centre. We have collaborated with Rekindling the Spirit as well as Ngunya Jarjum, Agency in Design and We Al Li on programs or projects, and we work with the Murwillumbah Community Centre on the Kids Caring for Country program.

Our Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngers (HIPPY) program has provided opportunities for First Nations parents and carers to gain meaningful employment and quality training as a Mentor through the HIPPY program, with the aim to overcome barriers to future career and study pathways beyond working for the program. Another one of our programs in the Lismore region is the Goonellabah Transition Program, also called Ngulliboo Muggi. The program provides a play-based, early learning program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the year before school, designed to give children the skills needed for a successful transition into school and to give families the information they need to succeed.



We are proud of the legacy of both of these programs, which we have operated for more than 10 years, and are in the process of transitioning both programs to local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to ensure the services remain culturally appropriate and maximise outcomes for clients.

We are also especially proud of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Women's Leadership program in Adelaide, which has been operating for 8 years. This program works with First Nations women under 30 with lived experience of housing insecurity, homelessness and/or domestic violence to build their knowledge, practical skills, confidence and networks so they can amplify their voice and expertise to enact change.

In Bendigo we have developed a Memorandum Of Understanding with the traditional owners Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation that outlines our long term partnership in the development of social housing for the Central Victorian region. This partnership involves the traditional owners providing input into the design of our new social housing development, providing housing outcomes for a min of 50% First Nations women and supporting ongoing business development opportunities beyond the project completion. In the development of this partnership, we have been guided by the principles in Community Housing Industry Association Victoria's Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.

11% of our YWCA National Housing residents identify as First Nations people. We recognise that the housing needs of First Nations Australians are unique, and that First Nations voices are best to lead the solutions required for addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in their communities.

As part of our YeS 2026 strategy, we are committed to ensuring our operations, design and acquisition of housing is informed by those with lived experience, including First Nations women, so that they are targeted towards and address the needs of women in all their diversity.

On a national scale, we now ensure that a Welcome to Country is performed at all major events and an Acknowledgement of Country at all minor events and meetings to promote reconciliation and cultural understanding. As we progress through our reconciliation journey as guided by our first RAP, we are eager to explore and strengthen our formal and informal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including our YWCA team members, members, clients, residents and communities.



OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)





RELATIONSHIPS



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence, maintain knowledge of key stakeholders on our client management system and ensure knowledge is shared with local teams. | June 2023 | Grants & Funding Manager |
| | Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations through our evolving inter-sectional approach. | Dec 2023 | Director Organisation Capability & People |
| 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). | Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | May 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Communications |
| | RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May-3 June, 2023 | Director Organisation Capability & People |
| | Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May-3 June, 2023 | CEO |
| 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. | October 2022 And 27 May 2023 | CEO |
| | Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | May 2023 | General Manager Service Delivery & General Manager Housing |
| | Investigate branding of our refurbished hotel (Song Sydney) with commissioned artwork, renaming restaurant and providing information to hotel guests to demonstrate YWCA's commitment to reconciliation. | February 2023 | General Manager Song Hotel |
| | Identify RAP organisations in the RAP network and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | May 2023 | General Manager Service Delivery & General Manager Housing |
| 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | June 2023 | Senior Manager People & Culture |
| | Conduct a review of HR training, policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | June 2023 | Senior Manager People & Culture |





RESPECT



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning. | Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. | Jan 2023 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation and develop training plans for various locations and roles across the organisation. | Feb 2023 | Senior Manager People & Culture |
| 6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols. | Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. | June 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Comms |
| | Develop guidelines on how we acknowledge and communicate this in our locations. | June 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Comms |
| | Investigate changing letter templates, submissions to government and our invoicing to include information on which First Nations countries we are located. | June 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Comms |
| | Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | June 2023 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Ensure Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony occur for social and affordable housing development openings. | As openings occur Review practice October 2023 | Senior Manager Property Development |
| | Obtain feedback from our First Nations team members to inform updating of cultural protocol procedures and communicate to all employees. | October 2023 | Director Org Capability & People |
| 7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week including ensuring activities are posted on internal website. | June 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Comms |
| | Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. | June 2023 | Senior Manager Marketing & Comms |
| | RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July, 2023 | Director Org Capability & People |



OPPORTUNITIES



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|--|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development. | Review existing business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | December 2022 | Senior Manager People & Culture |
| 9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes. | Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. | December 2022 | General Manager Song |
| | Investigate Supply Nation membership. | July 2023 | General Manager Song |
| | Develop increased knowledge with managers with purchasing responsibilities on opportunities to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander businesses. | June 2023 | General Manager Song |





GOVERNANCE



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| 11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. | December 2022 | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | March 2023 | Director Org Capability & People |
| 12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally. | Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. | June annually | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. | 1 August annually | Director Org Capability & People |
| | Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. | 30 September, annually | Director Org Capability & People |
| 13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP. | Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | February 2024 | Director Org Capability & People |





Residents of CASY House, Darwin





THE ARTWORK - PATHWAYS TO RECONCILIATION



The artwork represents the connection YWCA has with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture, overall it is the focus on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by developing respectful, trusting and mutually beneficial relationships.

The artwork centrepiece represents the YWCA establishment as a whole, within the design the different elements represent the different programs and services they offer including support for women with housing and homelessness. The "U" shapes represent people, with the inner people representing the women cared for by YWCA, and the outer people representing the staff of YWCA that care for them.

The 5 elements circling the centrepiece along the pathways represent YWCA values - feminism, inclusion, excellence, innovation and integrity.

The 16 smaller gathering symbols represent the 16 locations YWCA has across Australia that offer young women and gender diverse people with support for housing, homelessness, safety and lived experience leadership.

The purple pathways represent tailored leadership pathways and continued future of YWCA's reconciliation journey.

The 3 purple rings represent the voices of women on gender equality.

The colours chosen in this artwork were used from the company colour palette. They symbolise the strength of women and YWCA.

THE ARTIST - LANI BALZAN (ABORIGINAL ART BY LANI)



Lani Balzan is an Aboriginal artist and graphic designer specialising in designing Indigenous canvas art, graphic design, logo design, Reconciliation Action Plans design and document design.

Lani is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her family originates from Mudgee but she grew up all over Australia and lived in many different towns starting her business in the Illawarra NSW and recently relocating to Mid-North Queensland.

In 2016 Lani was announced as the 2016 NAIDOC Poster Competition winner with her artwork "Songlines". This poster was used as the 2016 NAIDOC theme across the country.

Lani has been creating Aboriginal art since 2013 and has continued success across the country. One of her biggest goals and inspirations with creating Aboriginal art is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation; bringing people and communities together to learn about the amazing culture we have here in Australia.

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Contact (for public enquiries about our Reconciliation Action Plan)

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