

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

May 2022 – May 2025



Government of South Australia  
Department for Child Protection

# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department for Child Protection (DCP) acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's First Peoples and Nations, and recognises them as Traditional Owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia. Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters.

We also acknowledge the impact of laws and policies of past governments that led to the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families and communities, and that the effects of these are still strongly felt today. We pay respect to the survivors and descendants of the Stolen Generations and recognise their strength, dignity and courage. This is why reconciliation must be at the heart of what we do; working in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.



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# Message from Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the South Australian Department for Child Protection (DCP) on its continued commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program provides a framework for organisations to contribute to the reconciliation movement. With the creation of this Stretch RAP, DCP continues to be a member of the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

This Stretch RAP is built on the learnings and experience DCP has gained on its reconciliation so far. Successes from its previous RAPs include initiatives aimed at ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are key decision makers in child protection services, creating a Family-led Decision-making Framework and investing in Family Group Conferencing. DCP has worked to involve First Nations young people in important events, such as National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week, with Connection to Country cultural camps, among other activities. It has also strengthened its internal cultural safety, with its Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program educating staff on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and the far-reaching ramifications of colonialism.

The Department continues to embed and expand on these initiatives in this Stretch RAP, particularly focussing on developing strong, two-way relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.



This includes creating a Kinship Carer Support Program with three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, providing support to kinship carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children and young people. It is also partnering with Reconciliation South Australia to conduct interviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders with lived experience of the child protection system, to be included in a documentary on reconciliation in the sector. DCP is also committing its Senior Leaders to becoming more central in the implementation of its RAP and engaging their directorates on reconciliation. These initiatives, among others, show DCP taking crucial steps to build reconciliation into its every day.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend DCP on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Reconciliation Australia

# Message from the Chief Executive

I am delighted to present our Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2025. This is our second RAP since becoming a standalone agency in November 2016, and our first Stretch RAP. It builds on the steps that we have taken in our reconciliation journey so far and commits us to making additional active efforts to promote reconciliation.

The commitments in our RAP are underpinned by a genuine desire to bring about change. Over the last 5 years we have not shied away from change. Indeed, we have enacted wholesale child protection reform with a view to improving outcomes for all South Australian children and young people. Reconciliation is a key factor in the success of this reform. We must continue to pursue reconciliation with courage, boldness and determination.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to everyone involved in the development of our RAP. If we are to achieve the goals and targets set out in our RAP we must work collaboratively with all stakeholders, and I look forward seeing what we can achieve together.

**Cathy Taylor**  
*Chief Executive*



# Message from the Co-RAP Champions



We are extremely proud to have jointly led the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-25.

When envisioning what we want child protection to look like in South Australia, we know that it requires an unprecedented shift in the way governments work. It will require shared decision-making on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. It requires us to build further partnerships and establish new ways of working together. We will work to embed community representation and governance processes, including effective engagement with Aboriginal communities and community-controlled organisations in all that we do. We will gather evidence, both to better understand the current landscape and identify better practices. This evidence can then be used to inform the transformation of child protection in this state.

We are fully committed to building a system that supports better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people; encourages self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, and promotes respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



It is really important for us to challenge ourselves and our ways of working and aim high. Through this RAP we will advance reconciliation throughout our organisation, and right across our sphere of influence. We will do so by working towards measurable targets, implementing long-term strategies, and embedding governance and accountability.

We are incredibly proud that under this RAP, young people in care or with a care experience will be involved in RAP governance. This is a first in our RAP program and is a crucial step to ensuring that the voices of children and young people inform, and are a central part of, our reconciliation agenda.

We are both deeply committed to reconciliation, both personally and professionally, and we see this commitment reflected daily in our staff and in our partners. It's inspiring and energising to be surrounded by so many like-minded individuals and organisations. We look forward to working with you to achieve our reconciliation ambitions.

**Fiona Ward and Tracy Rigney**  
*Deputy Chief Executive and Director,  
Aboriginal Practice*  
Co-RAP Champions

# Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people to be united in a common purpose – to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care have a strong sense of identity, and are connected to family, culture, community and Country.

This vision will be brought to life through our commitment to the five dimensions of reconciliation:

## RACE RELATIONS

Our organisation, and our partners, understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences

We are committed to stamping out racism and building relationships based on trust and respect

## EQUALITY AND EQUITY

We believe that child protection outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families should not be worse than for non-Indigenous children and families

We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle as a key pillar of our practice

## UNITY

We actively listen to and respect the cultural authority and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

We value and recognise the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and child rearing practices

## INSITUTIONAL INTERGRITY

All areas of our organisation – from individual workers – to local offices – to regional and corporate directorates – to executive – will actively support reconciliation

## HISTORICAL ACCEPTANCE

We acknowledge and learn from the wrongs of the past that led to the forced removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and we acknowledge that the impacts of these wrongs are still felt today.

# Our Business

We work in partnership with vulnerable families, government and non-government organisations, foster carers and the community to care for and protect at risk children and young people by addressing abuse and neglect and keeping them safe from further harm.

Where children cannot safely stay in the family home we will find a safe place for them to live, preferably with kin or foster care families.

We aim to give young South Australians in our care every opportunity to reach their full potential. In all that we do, we value children's voices and reflect their views.

Service delivery is provided through the Out of Home Care directorate and four regional directorates, with offices right across South Australia. These directorates are supported by a number of corporate directorates located centrally, which have a focus on driving strategy, quality and performance across the department.

As at 31 December 2021, DCP had 2,575 employees, with 124 (4.8%) identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE:

### Achieving Practice Excellence

Staff are supported to develop and use best practice in their work with children, young people, families and carers

### Honouring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

We will address the disproportionate number of children in care by involving Aboriginal families and communities in decisions about the care of their children

### Partnering with carers

Carers are respected and valued as partners in the care team and are supported to meet the needs of children and young people in their care

### Supporting our staff

We recruit, develop and support our staff with systems, processes and workplaces that enable them to be effective and efficient in their work and maintain their wellbeing

### Working together

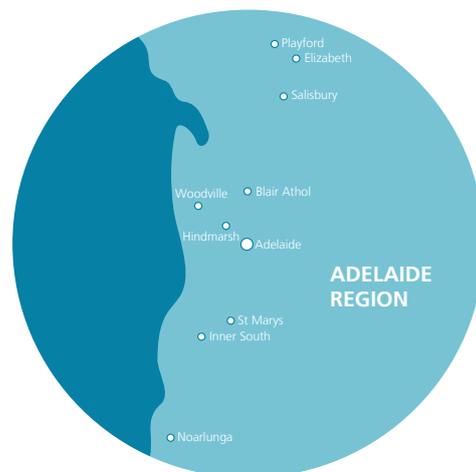
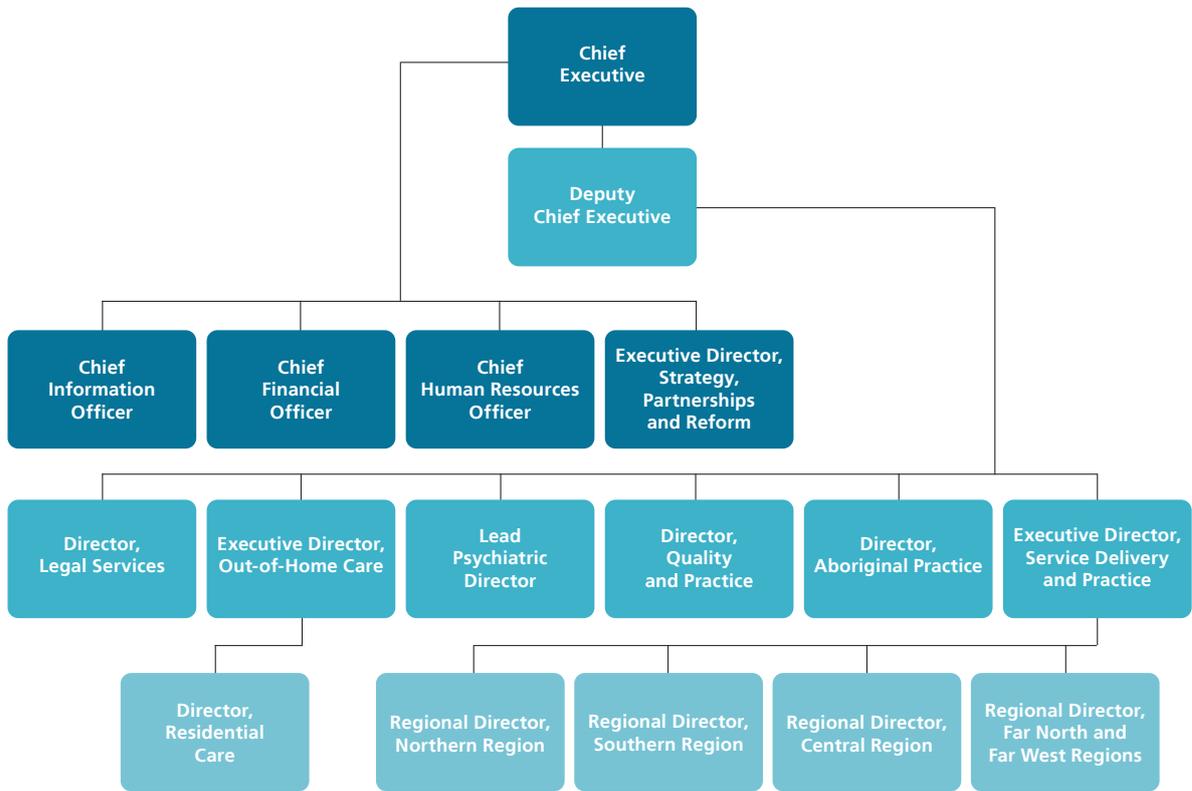
We team up with our service partners to improve outcomes for families, children, young people and carers

### Designing a care system based on need

The individual needs of children and young people are well understood and inform the services and support we provide

### Delivering quality and safety

We are accountable and transparent in the services we provide and invest to strengthen quality and safety.



## Our RAP

Building on our Innovate RAP June 2019-June 2021, our Stretch RAP sets out the actions that we will take to advance reconciliation through the areas of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities – and how these actions link to our Strategic Priorities. It embeds commitment to reconciliation across all areas of the department.

The Stretch RAP is overseen by the DCP RAP Working Group (RWG), and is informed by our reconciliation journey.

The functions of our RWG include:

- Providing oversight to RAP development, implementation and evaluation
- Consulting with internal and external stakeholders on RAP development, implementation and evaluation
- Ensuring that RAP activity aligns with our strategic priorities, action plans and other key initiatives
- Coordination of RAP reporting internally and externally
- Embedding ownership and accountability for our reconciliation agenda across the department

Our RWG is co-chaired by our RAP Champions – the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director, Aboriginal Practice, and supported by the RWG Executive Officers (the Principal Project Officer, Executive Services and the Principal Project Officer, Aboriginal Practice). The RWG comprises of at least one senior representative from the following business units:

- Aboriginal Practice
- Communications & Engagement
- Executive Services
- Finance
- HR
- ICT & Information Management
- Legal Services
- Out of Home Care
- Quality & Practice
- Service Delivery and Practice (regional representation)
- Strategy, Partnerships & Reform

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation is assured through the RWG's ToR, with the group working towards 50% representation from across the department, under this RAP (currently 30%).

# Our Reconciliation Journey

## **2016 – 2019 ESTABLISHMENT OF DCP**

In November 2016, DCP was established as a standalone statutory child protection agency and took the initial steps in our reconciliation journey. This included a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and creating a culture which supports the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through:

- Commitment to an ultimate goal of 10% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment
- Introduction of policies allowing for cultural leave, and to encourage all staff to participate in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events
- Participation of DCP's Senior Executive Group (SEG) in an Aboriginal Learning Circle
- Launch of the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint Program

We also implemented a range of measures to strengthen service delivery through:

- Establishment of the Aboriginal Practice Directorate, appointment of 10 Principal Aboriginal Consultants and an Aboriginal Lead Practitioner

- Implementation of Aboriginal practice tools including the Winangay kinship carer assessment tool, the Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool (ACIST) and Aboriginal Life Story Books
- Development of fact sheets providing staff with information on the importance of, and differences between, Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country

In this period we also established our RWG and commenced membership of the South Australian Government Reconciliation Network to share information and build relationships to advance reconciliation across the South Australian public sector, and across the state.

## **2019 – 2021 DCP INNOVATE RAP**

In July 2019 we launched our Innovate RAP. This focused our reconciliation efforts by supporting us to increasing our understanding of reconciliation, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation activities, strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, and promote strategies to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and procurement opportunities.

## Our Reconciliation Journey

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

Development and implementation of annual Aboriginal Action Plans to drive our commitment to improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care

Launch and implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2020

Development of the Aboriginal Engagement Plan

Establishment of the Expert Aboriginal Child Protection Advisory Committee

Launch of a dedicated intranet page to engage staff in reconciliation

Embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle as a key pillar of our practice

Focusing on ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families not only participate in, but lead child protection decision-making through the introduction of a Family-led Decision-making Framework and investing in Family Group Conferencing services

Improving service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with disability and developmental delay

Implementing changes to our connected client and case management system to allow for more accurate recording of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity that reflects the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities

# Spotlight on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement

In 2019, DCP launched its Aboriginal Procurement Policy which set targets for minimum spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations:

**5% in 2019-20**

**6% in 2020-21**

**7% in 2021-22**

Driven by our RAP, the DCP contract reform, and efforts to build and strengthen commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, these targets were reached early with 7.9% achieved in 2020-21.

### HOW DID WE ACHIEVE THIS

Investing \$3 million to engage Aboriginal Family Support Services; Kornar Winmil Yunti in partnership with Lutheran Community Care; and InComPro in partnership with Uniting Care Wesley to support kinship carers of Aboriginal children and young people

Investing \$1 million to engage Aboriginal Family Support Services to deliver a family group conferencing service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

### RECOGNITION

In recognition of our work to increase and expand our procurement and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, DCP won the Supplier Diversity category at the 2020 Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply Australasia Awards.



**NEXT STEPS**

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are best-placed to lead culturally safe and responsive service delivery, providing better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This is why our RAP contains a commitment to continue this trend, increasing by 0.5% per annum for the next three years.

# Commemorating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week



Throughout the period of our RAP we have been searching for new ways to commemorate and celebrate NRW and NAIDOC Week – including promoting events for staff and our partners.

One of the most important aspects of these weeks for our business is to ensure that children and young people in care have the opportunity to participate. Some of the activities undertaken by children and young people include:

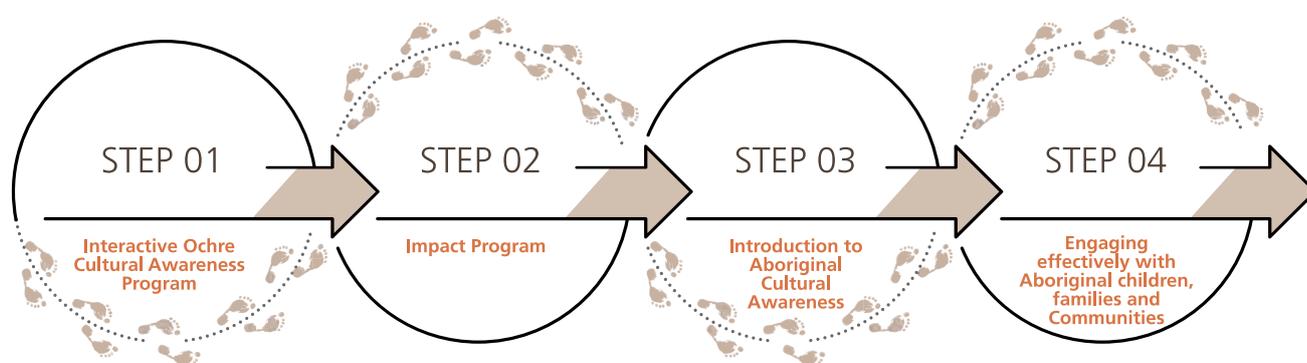
- Connection to Country cultural camps
- Creation of a quilt based on the theme of 'in this together'
- Cultural bushwalks
- Making traditional crafts
- Participating in reconciliation themed colouring in competitions
- Exploring Aboriginal foods

We want to thank the carers and the child protection workers who have, and continue to, encourage and facilitate the involvement of children and young people in NRW and NAIDOC activities – and we hope to be able to highlight more of these instances throughout the period of this RAP.



# Evaluating the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program

The Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program aims to create a workplace culture that understands, respects and values the skills, experience and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It also provides non-Indigenous staff with knowledge, skills and understanding to utilise when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The program recognises that cultural capability is an ongoing process and has been designed as a four-step journey, involving both face-to-face and online learning.



In recognition of the importance of this training, DCP has made it mandatory for all staff, and is actively monitoring completion.

We've asked staff what they've gained from the program:

...an understanding of the importance connecting Aboriginal [and Torres Strait Islander] children in care with their families and culture, and letting Aboriginal [and Torres Strait Islander] families take the lead

...an appreciation that the hurt and damage caused historically will continue to be present, and that our practices as a department need to continually improve and find new ways to address and acknowledge this in our day to day work

...a lot more in-depth knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history across Australia and more specifically South Australia

...an understanding of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and cultures

...learning more about the impact of intergenerational trauma of the Stolen Generations and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today

We are reviewing staff feedback on each step on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement.

# 2021 Development of the DCP Stretch RAP

Development of our Stretch RAP has been informed through the implementation and evaluation of our Innovate RAP. There were a number of key challenges identified through this process:

- Ensuring the voices of children and young people in care are reflected in the RAP
- Communicating our RAP achievements and challenges externally
- Ensuring our commitment to reconciliation is visible throughout all levels of the department, particularly at the local level
- Aligning RAP commitments with departmental strategy and action plans
- Promoting the RAP program across the child protection sector

Evaluation also included an engagement process involving consultation with staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to better understand how DCP can further advance reconciliation.

Additionally, we recognise it is critical that our RAP is informed by the voices of children and young people in care. This is why we engaged Reconciliation SA to undertake consultation with No Capes for Change – a group of young people aged 15-25, with lived experience of the child protection system, who work to inspire, create change, educate DCP and advocate for all children and young people. No Capes for Change membership comprises both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous representation.

DCP would like to thank everybody who contributed to the development of our Stretch RAP, and especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations (and in particular Inconpro, Kornar Winmil Yunti, Narrunga Nation Aboriginal Corporation), and children and young people in care, or with a care experience.





## Relationships

Child protection is a highly complex and challenging area, exacerbated by a history of racism that saw the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families and communities. This is why reconciliation must be at the heart of what we do, working hand-in-hand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to establish and maintain relationships underpinned by trust and respect. Ultimately, it is these relationships that build our capacity to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in contact with the child protection system, and to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care have a strong sense of identity and are connected to family, culture, community and Country.

### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO:**

- Genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Working together to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- Bringing our stakeholders along with us on our reconciliation journey
- Standing against racism
- Celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

- Working together
- Honouring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- Partnering with carers

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal Practice
	1.2 Implement our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Plan.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal Practice
	1.3 Review and update our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Plan, including a key focus on supporting and strengthening local-level engagement.	December 2022	Director, Aboriginal Practice
	1.4 Establish and maintain five formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships & Reform
	1.5 Finalise and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with Nunkuwarrin Yunti to improve information sharing practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	May 2022	Director, Legal Services
	1.6 Implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Northern Territory and Western Australia to improve child protection practice in the tri-state region.	June 2022	Director, Far North Far West
2. Build relationships through celebrating NRW.	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in at least three external NRW events.	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SA National Reconciliation Week Breakfast</li> <li>Events hosted by our partners</li> <li>Local events</li> </ul>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive
	2.4 Each year, organise at least six internal NRW events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One in each of the four operational regions</li> <li>One in Residential Care</li> <li>One organisation-wide NRW event</li> </ul>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive (Lead) All Regional Directors
	2.5 Partner with SA Government agencies to organise at least one cross-government NRW event.	May 2022 April 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
	2.6 Register all corporate NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May, 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
	2.7 Register all corporate NRW events in the SA Government's NRW calendar of events.	May, 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</p>	<p>3.1 Implement strategies to engage all staff to drive reconciliation outcomes, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly updates to the dedicated reconciliation intranet page</li> <li>Quarterly reconciliation communiques to all staff from the RWG</li> <li>Display of NRW screensavers in the lead up to, and during, NRW</li> <li>Hosting 'Lunch and Learn' sessions</li> </ul>	<p>November 2022, 2023 March 2023, 2024 June 2022, 2023, 2024 August 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>RWG Executive Officers</p>
	<p>3.2 Develop a template for a presentation to catalyse reconciliation conversations across the department that prompt directorates to identify current and new reconciliation activities.</p>	<p>May 2022</p>	<p>RWG Executive Officers</p>
	<p>3.3 Senior leaders to facilitate reconciliation conversations in their directorate, utilizing the presentation developed in action 3.2.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>
	<p>3.4 Publicly communicate our commitment to reconciliation, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring our RAP and a reconciliation statement are available on the DCP website</li> <li>Providing reconciliation updates on DCP's social media accounts</li> </ul>	<p>May 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>
	<p>3.5 Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes, including through promotion of reconciliation and distribution of reconciliation resources through the carer portal; and carer and sector newsletters.</p>	<p>May 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships &amp; Reform</p>
	<p>3.6 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service requirements within relevant contracts and contract management processes to ensure that services provided by non-Indigenous businesses are culturally safe and responsive and contribute to reconciliation.</p>	<p>July 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief Finance Officer</p>
	<p>3.7 Hold connection to Country camps for children and young people in care.</p>	<p>July 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Executive Director, Out of Home Care Director, Residential Care</p>
	<p>3.8 Collaborate with the SA Government Reconciliation Network through quarterly meetings to advance reconciliation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting a joined-up SA Government approach to reconciliation</li> <li>Monitoring the progress of SA Government agency RAPs</li> <li>Sharing RAP challenges and achievements</li> <li>Organising joint events during NRW</li> <li>Sharing best practice in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and procurement</li> </ul>	<p>February 2023, 2024 May 2022, 2023, 2024 August 2022, 2023, 2024 November 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>RWG Executive Officers</p>
	<p>3.9 Review the induction process for new staff to ensure it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes our RAP and commitment to reconciliation</li> <li>Informs staff of mandatory training, including the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program</li> </ul>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Implement and communicate our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and Cultural Safety Procedure with particular emphasis on anti-discrimination and anti-racism.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	4.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to continuously improve our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and Cultural Safety Procedure.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	4.3 Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	4.4 Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive
	4.5 Investigate opportunities to partner with Reconciliation SA on anti-racism education for children and young people in care.	June 2023	Executive Director, Out of Home Care Director, Aboriginal Practice



## Respect

Promoting respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights is central to our work. We are committed to improving our understanding in these areas, and promoting ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people can come together to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

By demonstrating and promoting pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, we will further strengthen the identity and self-esteem of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care. We are also committed to celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promoting reconciliation and understanding of our shared histories amongst non-Indigenous stakeholders, both internally and externally.

### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO:**

- Valuing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Increasing understanding and recognition of the deep impacts of past policies and practices relating to forced removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week
- Commemorating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- Providing culturally safe and responsive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait children and families

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

- Honouring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- Achieving practice excellence
- Delivering quality and safety
- Designing a care system based on need

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<p>5.1 Continue implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program including evaluation of Steps 1-4, updating the program with feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and non-Indigenous staff on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>June 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>5.2 Require all staff to participate in the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program. For new staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1 to be completed within two weeks of commencement</li> <li>• tep 2 within two months</li> <li>• Step 3 within three months</li> <li>• Step 4 for all service delivery staff</li> </ul>	<p>June 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>5.3 Report annually to SEG on the level of participation in the Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program and improve on the baseline for steps 1-3, with the goal of 100% by June 2024.</p> <p>Baseline (as at June 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1 – 87% [online]</li> <li>• Step 2 – 54% [face-to-face]</li> <li>• Step 3 – 35% [face-to-face]</li> </ul>	<p>June 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>5.4 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</p>	<p>July 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>5.6 Commit all RAP Working Group members, HR managers, SEG and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning, both online and face-to-face.</p>	<p>June 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>5.7 Investigate opportunities to provide cultural immersion and on Country cultural learning opportunities for staff.</p>	<p>September 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>
	<p>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</p>	<p>6.1 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</p>	<p>June 2022</p>
<p>6.2 Develop and implement a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including specific protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</p>		<p>December 2022</p>	<p>RWG co-Chairs  Manager, Communications &amp; Engagement</p>
<p>6.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol for at least four significant events each year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large staff forums and training days (including State-wide Aboriginal Training forums)</li> <li>• Cultural camps for children and young people in care</li> </ul>		<p>December 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chair, SEG with all SEG members</p>
<p>6.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of formal meetings, including external facing meetings, SEG meetings, and regional directorate meetings.</p>		<p>December 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Chair, SEG with all SEG members</p>
<p>6.5 Staff and senior leaders will provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public events.</p>		<p>December 2022, 2023, 2024</p>	<p>Manager, Communications &amp; Engagement</p>
<p>6.6 Continue to display Acknowledgment of Country plaques or posters in all DCP offices.</p>		<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Chair, SEG  Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice</p>

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	7.1 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	7.2 Review HR policies and procedures annually to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2022 April 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	7.3 Support all staff to participate in at least two NAIDOC Week events in their local area including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SA NAIDOC award ceremonies and balls</li> <li>• NAIDOC marches and family days</li> <li>• Morning and afternoon teas</li> <li>• Events hosted by local partners</li> <li>• Online activities – including films, quizzes</li> </ul>	First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive Director, Aboriginal Practice
	7.4 Support children and young people in care to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.	First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, Service Delivery and Practice Executive Director, Out of Home Care
	7.5 In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support at least two external NAIDOC Week events each year, including the SA NAIDOC Ball and march.	First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive Director, Aboriginal Practice
	7.6 Communicate NAIDOC Week information and resources to all staff through intranet updates, all of staff emails and screensavers.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
	7.7 Register all corporate NAIDOC Week events in the SA Government's NAIDOC Week calendar of events.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
8. Commemorate and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.	8.1 Implement strategies to engage all staff to commemorate and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of staff communicate providing information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, including distributing SNAICC resources</li> <li>• Updates to the intranet and display of dedicated screensaver</li> </ul>	August 2022, 2023, 2024	Manager, Communications & Engagement
	8.2 Partner with and provide funding to Reconciliation SA to run a colouring in competition, and promote it to children and young people in care.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive Manager, Communications & Engagement
9. Increase visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within our workplace.	9.1 Conduct a stocktake of ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are visible across each office, including posters, maps, events and other initiatives.	December 2022	RWG co-Chairs
	9.2 Building on deliverable 10.1, consult with staff to develop a strategy to increase the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are visible across each office.	June 2023	RWG co-Chairs
	9.3 Implement the strategy developed under deliverable 10.2 to increase the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.	December 2023	RWG co-Chairs

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>10. Provide culturally safe psychological services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.</p>	<p>10.1 Establish a working group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and psychologists for the purpose of ensuring DCP's psychological services are culturally safe.</p>	<p>May 2022</p>	<p>Lead Practitioner, Quality &amp; Practice</p>
	<p>10.2 Develop detailed guidelines for psychologists to support the provision of culturally safe psychological services.</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>Lead Practitioner, Quality &amp; Practice</p>
	<p>10.3 Monitor the efficacy of the guidelines' implementation through regular reviews, undertaken by the working group.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Lead Practitioner, Quality &amp; Practice</p>
<p>11. Improve service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with a disability.</p>	<p>11.1 Prioritise identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care with a disability to receive a NDIS Plan through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased visits to rural and remote areas</li> <li>• Delivery of training and education to case managers to assist their understanding of the key indicators of developmental delay</li> <li>• Provide guidance regarding pathways for assessment of developmental delay and disability</li> </ul>	<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships &amp; Reform</p>
	<p>11.2 Ensure that NDIS planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is undertaken in a culturally safe and sensitive manner (including through the development of a pre-planning checklist for case workers).</p>	<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships &amp; Reform</p>
	<p>11.3 Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care receive culturally safe and responsive disability services by regularly updating case workers regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NDIS service providers.</p>	<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships &amp; Reform</p>
<p>12. Facilitate truth-telling and reconciliation in the child protection sector.</p>	<p>12.1 Partner with Reconciliation SA to facilitate interviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders with lived experience of the child protection system, to be included in a documentary on reconciliation in the child protection sector.</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>Director, Aboriginal Practice</p>
	<p>12.2 Partner with Reconciliation SA to finalise and publish a documentary on reconciliation in the child protection sector.</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>Director, Aboriginal Practice</p>
	<p>12.3 Develop a joint communications strategy with Reconciliation SA to promote the documentary across the child protection sector.</p>	<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>



## Opportunities

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations are best placed to deliver services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations lead or are involved in child protection service design and delivery, this increases the cultural safety and responsiveness of these services, and leads to better child protection outcomes. This is why, DCP is committed to providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and procuring services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO:**

- Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes through implementation of our Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers to deliver child protection services through implementation of our Aboriginal Procurement Policy
- Being led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in relevant child protection decision making

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

- Supporting our staff
- Working together
- Honouring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	13.1 Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders in the implementation of phase 3 of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2022: evaluation, reflection and adjustments.	June 2022	Chief HR Officer
	13.2 Review and update the Aboriginal Employment Strategy with learnings from the 2019-22 strategy, to strengthen recruitment, retention and professional development.	June 2022	Chief HR Officer
	13.3 Advertise job vacancies to ensure they effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pools</li> </ul>	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	13.4 Regularly review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	13.5 Identify and implement opportunities and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer
	13.6 Implement a cadetship program to support practical training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates into professional roles.	December 2023	Chief HR Officer
	13.7 Review recruitment and exit processes to ensure that they are culturally safe, inclusive and respectful.	December 2023	Chief HR Officer
	13.8 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have access to culturally safe and appropriate counselling services through the Employee Assistance Program.	December 2023	Chief HR Officer
	13.9 Investigate opportunities to recognise and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (i.e. development of an awards program).	December 2023	Chief HR Officer Director, Aboriginal Practice
	13.10 Provide support for Aboriginal staff to participate in at least two conferences, training and other professional development opportunities (including DCP's State-wide Aboriginal Training forums and SNAICC conferences).	December 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal Practice
	13.11 Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by 10% annually (this represents approximately 12-15 additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees per year over the life of this RAP).	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief HR Officer

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	14.1 Regularly review and update DCP's Aboriginal Procurement Policy to support the procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.2 Regularly review and update DCP's procurement policies and practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders business.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.3 Implement DCP's Aboriginal Procurement Policy.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.4 Continue to use and promote the SA Industry Advocate's Aboriginal Business Directory.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.5 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.6 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships & Reform
	14.7 Train all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.8 Nominate and support two DCP representatives to attend every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business expos/trade fair held in South Australia (or online).	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.9 Maintain commercial relationships with at least four Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
	14.10 Maintain a 7% minimum procurement spend with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses in 2021-22, with an increase of 0.5% per annum.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Finance Officer
15. Improve child protection policy and practice to support better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	15.1 Implement annual Aboriginal Action Plans to guide DCP's work to improve child protection outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive Director, Aboriginal Practice
	15.2 Provide funding to SNAICC to undertake a scoping study and community consultations to present options to establish a SA Peak Body to represent the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.	June 2022	Deputy Chief Executive
	15.3 Implement a model for a SA Peak Body to represent the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.	June 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive
	15.4 Co-lead the development of the SA Government's implementation approach to Closing the Gap Target 12 to reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Deputy Chief Executive

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	15.5 Co-lead the finalisation and implementation of Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance and a targeted implementation plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships & Reform
	15.6 Seek strategic advice from the Expert Aboriginal Protection Advisory Committee on SA Government child protection priorities and initiatives relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive
	15.7 Provide strategic advice, oversight and endorsement of SA Government priorities relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care through participation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aboriginal Affairs Executive Committee</li> <li>• The Portfolio Management Board</li> </ul>	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive
	15.8 Maintain Kumangka Wangkanthi – an internal committee of senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform DCP's business through the provision of cultural advice and project leadership.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal Practice
	15.9 Continue to work with the Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation to implement the child protection commitments in the Buthera Agreement.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Regional Director, North Director, Aboriginal Practice
16. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations to deliver assessment, training and support to kinship carers through the pilot Kinship Carer Support Program.	16.1 Implement the Kinship Carer Support Program with three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to provide assessment and support to kinship carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children and young people.	December 2022	Executive Director, Out Of Home Care
	16.2 Provide training on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to all kinship carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.	December 2022	Executive Director, Out Of Home Care
	16.3 Evaluate the efficacy of the Kinship Carer Support Program, with a particular focus on outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.	June 2023	Executive Director, Out Of Home Care
17. Support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in relation to child protection decision-making.	17.1 Implement the Family-led decision making framework, with a particular emphasis on supporting Aboriginal families.	June 2022	Director, Quality and Practice
	17.2 Monitor the number of Aboriginal families referred to a Family Group Conference service, including the number referred to an Aboriginal-specific service, to ensure utilisation of these services, and identify any unmet need.	June 2022	Director, Quality and Practice



## Governance

### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO:**

- Providing accountability and oversight of RAP commitments
- Communicating RAP achievements, challenges and learnings
- Maintaining a relationship with Reconciliation Australia
- Ensuring the continuity of our commitment to reconciliation

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
18. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	18.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG, working towards 50%.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	18.2 Apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG to be reviewed annually.	December 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	18.3 RWG to meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March 2023, 2024 June 2022, 2023, 2024 August 2022, 2023, 2024 November 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
19. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	19.1 Identify and embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	19.2 Embed key RAP actions in directorate business plans.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair, SEG with all SEG members Regional Directors
	19.3 Embed commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in performance expectations of senior management.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Officer
	19.4 Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	19.5 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair, SEG
	19.6 Include commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people as a standing agenda item at fortnightly SEG meetings.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair, SEG
20. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	20.1 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	20.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date so that we are receive important correspondence.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	RGW Executive Officers
	20.3 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	February 2023, 2024 May 2022, 2023, 2024 August 2022, 2023, 2024 November 2022, 2023	RWG co-Chairs
	20.4 Report RAP progress to No Capes for Change annually.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG co-Chairs
	20.5 Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive
	20.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2022 April 2024	RWG Executive Officers
21. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	21.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2024	RWG Executive Officers

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
22. Ensure that the RAP and RAP reporting are accessible to a range of audiences.	22.1 Produce a one page document to sit alongside the RAP summarising key commitments using plain language and a pictorial format.	May 2022	RWG Executive Officers
	22.2 Produce a one page document summarising reporting against RAP commitments using plain language and a pictorial format (to support action 19.3).	July 2022, 2023, 2024	RWG Executive Officers
23. Embed reconciliation across departmental strategic documents and in key meetings.	23.1 Ensure RAP commitments are included within the DCP Strategic Plan and associated action plans, including the Aboriginal Action Plan.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair, SEG with all SEG members
	23.2 List reconciliation as a quarterly standing item on corporate and operational directorate meeting agendas.	February 2023, 2024 May 2022, 2023, 2024 August 2022, 2023, 2024 November 2022, 2023	Chair, SEG with all SEG members Regional Directors





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle by Elizabeth Close

## ARTIST

Elizabeth Close is an Anangu woman from the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language groups in the APY Lands in outback South Australia. She was born in Adelaide but spent much of her upbringing in remote communities, re-learning her language and receiving cultural education.

The evolution of her artwork reflects this. Elizabeth's work is a vibrant fusion of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal art styles; using vivid warmth to express her deep connection to the Central Australian landscape that she calls home, and bold designs that bring about awareness of issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## ARTWORK

DCP has partnered with Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara artist Elizabeth Close and Ochre Dawn Creative Industries – led by Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri woman Rebecca Wessels – to create an art piece that represents our journey to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people through holistic implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle. Each image represents a different element of the Principle and symbolises our commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait children are front and centre in everything we do. A single thread ties all of these elements together, representing the journey of the child and young person in care, and highlighting the importance of all of these elements collectively to enhance our practice and drive system change.



### IDENTIFICATION (precursor)

Identification is a precursor and prerequisite to the application of the Principle where we ask – is the child or young person of Aboriginal descent? If so, we must apply the Principle. Selfidentification by a child or their family is the only requirement for practitioners to begin applying the Principle in their casework with children and families.

Here the artist has placed Aboriginal children front and centre, which is how we approach our work. The circles in the middle represent the importance of maintaining a strong identity for each child and young person as they grow.



### PREVENTION

The prevention element of the Principle seeks to protect each child's right to grow up in family, community and culture.

The artist has used five circles, nested one within another to illustrate this element. What's important is the symbolism that these circles hold. The solid dot in the middle represents the Aboriginal child, reflecting the foundation of the Principle to keep the child at the centre of everything we do. The second circle represents their family and the third circle is their community, signifying the importance of keeping Aboriginal children close to their family and community. The fourth circle represents the services that support them, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, while the last circle represents the department.



### PARTNERSHIP

Partnership is an important element of the Principle, ensuring that community representatives actively participate in decision-making. The element is illustrated using two boomerangs, each containing circles that represent children and young people at the centre of every decision.

When you throw a boomerang, it comes back to you and you catch it. This symbolises the way we need to communicate with community representatives. When we go out and deliver information, we need to give them time to digest the information, and come back to us with questions, insights or for more conversation. This is a sign of respectful engagement that will help us to continue to strengthen our partnerships.



### PLACEMENT

The element of placement ensures that Aboriginal children in care are placed in line with the placement hierarchy, with family and community coming first wherever it is safe and possible.

Children of all ages are represented in the image – babies, children, young people, and young people transitioning into adulthood. As with other elements children are at the centre and the department is around the outside. In this way, the artwork shows the range of factors we must consider when looking at placing Aboriginal children and young people in care, including their age and who they are as individuals.



### PARTICIPATION

The fourth element is participation, which ensures children, parents and family members can participate in, and have the opportunity to lead, decision-making to keep children safe.

The artwork for participation depicts meeting places as half circles. These half circles represent the various meetings that we conduct with family, with the community, with the non-government sector and with government. All these meetings are based around the child, represented by the centre circle. The three lines intersecting with the circle signify us in the department, coordinating or attending meetings which are critical in this partnership.



### CONNECTION

Connection seeks to support Aboriginal children in care to maintain strong links to family, community, culture and country. Like every other element of the Principle, this component of the artwork contains significant symbolism.

It illustrates a small hand and a big hand. This represents the child holding onto family, or us as workers, and our responsibility to make sure that the Aboriginal child is safe and connected. It also symbolises our role in guiding and helping children and young people to strengthen their sense of identity.



For enquires about this RAP please contact  
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