

familycare

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan March 2025 – March 2027



#### **Brighter Future**

#### **Story of Artwork**

Brighter Future represents the community coming together on Yorta-Yorta Country and shaping the way for a brighter future. Leaving our footprints on the land is showing that next generation that we belong on this land, and we are going to walk with them.

#### Artist

Tammy-Lee Atkinson is a Yorta-Yorta artist. She is a proud Aboriginal woman who loves to learn and share personal and familial stories about her culture. Being able to express her own story through painting, design, drawing and photography. She attaches strong symbolic meaning to images that represents her traditional culture in contemporary art contexts.

Tammy-Lee has been creating for almost 10 years. She has done many things during this time. Tammy designed the 2021 Indigenous netball dress for the Melbourne Vixens and Shepperton Bulls rugby jumpers, mural in the GV area and paintings that have been international. Tammy has also have run so many workshops, programs and projects.

Tammy-Lee also has an art studio over in Mooroopna called Maloga Studio it has been open since October 2024. Tammy-Lee has created Maloga Studio that is a culturally safe community space, that is a studio and art gallery space.



### Artist - Tammy-Lee Atkinson

# Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.



Karen Mundine Portrait by Joseph Mayers An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation Australia

#### **Acknowledgement Of Country**

FamilyCare acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Nation, Bangerang, Taungurung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways on which we work, live and support community.

We recognise that past, present, and emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Nations people of Australia.

#### Message From Board Chair And Chief Executive Officer

FamilyCare is proud to present this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. Our 2021 Reflect Plan was the first time we had embarked on such a formal commitment to reconciliation, and we have already learned much in reaching this point. We recognise the strength, diversity, and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families. Commitment to family is at the heart of First Nations cultures and an area in which we can grow and work together. This plan incorporates the commitments we have made to ourselves, to each other and to our community. We look forward to sharing our progress with you.

#### **Our Business**

FamilyCare is the trading name of Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc.

FamilyCare is the main provider of child and family services across the Goulburn Valley region in Victoria with offices in Shepparton, Cobram, Seymour and Wallan and outreach to Kinglake, Alexandra, and Kilmore. Child and Family services offer case coordination and support for families. Support includes parenting education, as well as group work to ensure that the emotional and developmental needs of the children are being met. Building strong family relationships may also include referral to other services or the community. In addition, FamilyCare provides support to families of children with disabilities, NDIS Support Coordination and a variety of carer support services including the Support for Carers Program and the Carer Gateway.

FamilyCare's range of services and supports informs a wide variety of relationships, in communities in which we work and further afield. Those relationships include participation in the Goulburn Child and Family Services Alliance and Shepparton Community Share. We actively contribute to policy development and review on issues relevant to our service users and communities.

In addition to our staff, FamilyCare benefits from a vibrant and skilful group of volunteers who enhance and supplement service delivery across all programs. In addition to these supports The Book Inn, a long running and successful second-hand bookstore in Shepparton, provides focus on the importance of literacy in our community. This venue is fully operated by enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers.

FamilyCare's operations are informed by and consistent with it's Vision, Purpose, and Values.

### Vision

Strong families and communities.

#### **Purpose**

FamilyCare works with individuals, families, and communities to increase wellbeing, build strengths, and encourage optimism.

# **Core Values**

The following values guide all FamilyCare's activities and interactions:

- Respect for all people and of their right to reach full potential
- Empowerment of clients and staff to achieve individual and collective goals
- Integrity actions consistent with beliefs
- Leadership on issues that impact adversely on individuals, families, and communities
- Communication a commitment to open and ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders
- Professionalism in all aspects of our work

FamilyCare employs approximately 214 staff and 44 volunteers, across a range of roles. We currently have one staff member who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

# **Our RAP**

FamilyCare launched its first Reflect RAP in November 2021. We learned a lot from that process and in undertaking the actions we committed to. Our Journey of reconciliation has been positive and challenging.

Positive in that there has been acknowledgment of historical injustices and challenging as we move through the crucial and sometimes confronting practice of Truth-telling. However, if we continue the learning journey via our Innovate RAP, we will continue to create a working and learning environment that has a deeper understanding of the impact and acceptance colonisation has had upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families, and children.

Acknowledgment of Country is now a part of all meetings, along with artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists being displayed in all our office locations. Staff across our organisation have participated in cultural awareness training, which is part of mandatory onboarding to the agency, which enhances service delivery and creates a deeper understanding of intergenerational trauma. This Innovate RAP continues and confirms the commitment to our reconciliation journey.

#### **Reconciliation Statement**

FamilyCare values the rich cultural heritage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live in and have connections to the Goulburn Valley region.

Building respectful and trusting partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations are essential in delivering culturally appropriate and inclusive services.

FamilyCare commits to:

- Acknowledge injustices and inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples;
- Actively engage in activities to support positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples;
- Continue to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to establish, maintain and strengthen culturally safe and supportive services;
- Respect the primary role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services undertake in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Support Self-determination in our consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples regarding their families and children; and
- Recognise and acknowledge the positive relationships that come from working together for shared outcomes.

## Our Reconciliation journey so far:

Here are some examples of activities that FamilyCare has been involved in, on our reconciliation journey, since the launch of our Reflect RAP

- A significant number of FamilyCare staff members participated in a range of important commemorative activities, for National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, across the Goulburn Valley, many attending multiple events.
- Guided tours of the 'Flats' by Uncle Ruben for FamilyCare staff, including Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony have become regular personal and professional development activities and a key part of induction for new staff.
- Cultural Tours of Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative via the Child and Family Services Alliance.
- Promotion amongst staff and volunteers of activities being conducted through Rumbalara Cooperative, including flag raising, family day, Dharnya Day and NAIDOC week.
- Involvement with 54 Reasons (Save the Children) health education day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.
- FamilyCare has purchased and commissioned a range of Aboriginal artwork displayed in FamilyCare offices as well as an Iawa Plaque representing collaboration, which was commissioned by the Communities for Children Iawa Committee.
- FamilyCare displays Acknowledgment of Country in all offices purchased from Kinya Lerrk.
- Displays of the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are prominent on reception desks.
- FamilyCare's service staff maintain close collaboration with Rumbalara Cooperative and Maternal and Child Health Nurses to increase community participation in key age stage checks and family services.
- Information circulated to staff about the difference between Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country, as well as the meaning behind the word Country.
- Mandatory Aboriginal cultural competence training for all staff is undertaken every three years.
- Two staff members attended the RAP conference in Sydney in May 2022.
- A Team Leader and Family Practitioner had the opportunity to attend a three-day conference convened by SNAICC Voices at the Top Our Children, Our Rights, Our Way which was held on Larrakia Lands (Darwin) in September 2023.

## **RAP Working Group**

David Tennant – Chief Executive Officer – Shepparton Yukako Wada – Family Services Specialist Disability Practitioner – Shepparton Ally Argus – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Shepparton Neeska Robinson – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Cobram Maire Tribble – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Seymour Susan Lazenby – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Seymour Melissa Osborn – Administration Officer, FamilyCare – Wallan Ireland Letson – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Cobram Noellene Morrow – ex-staff member and now volunteer participant Deb Walsh – Community and Cultural Advisor

There are two members of the RWG who identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons.

#### **RAP Champions**

David Tennant – Chief Executive Officer (Exec RAP Champion) – Shepparton Ireland Letson – Family Practitioner, Integrated Family Services – Cobram Janet Congues – Evaluation Research Coordinator – Shepparton Rebecca Thompson – Family Practitioner, Family Preservation and Reunification – Shepparton

### **Our Partnerships/Activities**

FamilyCare has developed and maintains cooperative relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations across the Goulburn Valley region through connections with service providers and Traditional Owner groups. One of the most important relationships is the Child and Family Services Alliance, previously known as the Child FIRST Alliance in which Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative has been a key governance and operational partner since inception.

FamilyCare engages the Yorta Yorta Nation to provide cultural education and knowledge to our staff in relation to the history of the Flats and the wisdom and significance of Smoking ceremony.

FamilyCare was also part of the Iawa Collaboration, a whole community response to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the Greater Shepparton region. Iawa was facilitated by Communities for Children Shepparton.

FamilyCare provides guidance to its staff and volunteers through a variety of processes and documentation, including:

- Culture and Diversity Policy.
- Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Land Procedure.
- Child Safe Statement, acknowledging the vital role that culture plays in the safety of Aboriginal children.
- Regular and ongoing training and professional development.
- A Team Leader and Family Practitioner had the opportunity to attend a three-day conference convened by SNAICC - Voices at the Top – Our Children, Our Rights, Our Way which was held on Larrakia Lands (Darwin) in September 2023.

### **Action Plan**

**Relationships**: FamilyCare has a strong focus on building community that is both diverse and inclusive, through creating connections and providing opportunities. Building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is essential to our vision of a caring community where everyone belongs. We acknowledge the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and we will foster open and inclusive relationships with collaboration across our service delivery catchment. We will listen, learn and act together to nurture a powerful sense of cultural belonging and realise a shared vision for healing and reconciliation.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial	<ul> <li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.</li> </ul>	January 2026	Director Service Development
relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul> <li>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	January 2026	Director Service Development
<ol> <li>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</li> </ol>	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	May 2025 and 2026	RAP Champions with support from RAP Working Group
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2025 and 2026	RAP Champions
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	June 2025 and 2026	RAP Champion
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2025 and 2026	CEO
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2025 and 2026	CEO

<ol> <li>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.</li> </ul>	January 2026	HR Manager Quality, Risk and Compliance Manager
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	March 2025 March 2026	CEO
	• Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2025 and 2026	Director Service Development
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	February 2026	CEO
	Maintain and develop support for Reconciliation Victoria.	At least quarterly throughout 2025 and 2026	CEO
	• Communicate regularly our commitment to reconciliation to all staff e.g. CEO Newsletter, HR Newsletter, Whole of staff meetings and Board meetings.	April, July and October 2025 January, April, July and October 2026	CEO
	• Engage with and raise awareness of the development of Victoria's Treaty process.	January 2026	CEO
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-	<ul> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	January 2026	HR Manager
discrimination strategies.	<ul> <li>Update FamilyCare's Culiture and Diversity Policy and develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination procedure for our organisation.</li> </ul>	February 2026	CEO Quality, Risk an Compliance Manager
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination procedure.	June 2026	HR Manager Quality, Risk and Compliance Manager
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	June 2025 June 2026	HR Manager RAP Champions RAP Working Group
	<ul> <li>Communicate regularly with external stakeholders &amp; FamilyCare employees on current Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander anti-discrimination issues locally.</li> </ul>	June and December 2025 June and December 2026	RAP Champions
	<ul> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination to ensure an education and informed workforce.</li> </ul>	June 2026	RAP Champions
5. Promote and engage with Truth-telling	<ul> <li>Seek guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Straite Islander Stakeholders about hosting appropriate, supported activities at FamilyCare offices, for staff and volunteers to expand their knowledge, understanding, sensitivity and respect.</li> </ul>	June 2026	CEO
	Investigate and promote participation in Truth-telling activities for FamilyCare.	June 2026	CEO

**Respect:** Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge, histories, and rights is critical to understand and support our staff, families and children of the communities in which we work. We will continue to cultivate a learning environment for our workforce through our organisation and beyond via learning from local Elders to gain knowledge, comprehension and appreciation of the experiences and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Action		De	liverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	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.	February 2022	Director Business Services
		•	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2021	HR Coordinator
		•	Develop and implement a cultural learning strategy for staff and volunteers.	March 2025	HR Manager with support from Director of Service Development and RAP Working Group
		•	Provide for staff to participate in cultural awareness training.	June 2026	HR Manager
		•	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform the cultural learning strategy.	March 2026	CEO
		•	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR Managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June 2025 June 2026	CEO
7.	observing cultural protocols.	•	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	December 2021	Director Service Development
		•	Increase staff and volunteer understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2026	RAP Champion
		•	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	April 2025	HR Manager
		•	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	December 2025 December 2026	CEO
		•	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	March 2025 and ongoing	CEO Senior Management
		•	Review the current mandatory training to ensure it is relevant and includes the importance of Acknowledgment of Country.	June 2025	HR Manager
		•	Increase staff and volunteers' awareness of the Country on which they conduct day to day business and acknowledgement of the specific Country.	June 2025	RAP Champions RAP Working Group
		•	Investigate and obtain plaques naming Country related to our office locations.	June 2025	RAP Champions
		•	Engage and consult with Traditional owners about options for Totems to be placed externally near all main entrances to assist people to feel welcome to enter.	December 2026	RAP Champions

8.	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	٠	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2025 and 2026	CEO
		•	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	May and June 2025 and 2026	CEO
		٠	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2025 and 2026	RAP Champion
		•	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	March 2025	HR Manager
9.	Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	٠	Research significant dates and events.	March 2025 and 2026	RAP Champions
		•	Formulate and circulate Annual Calendar of First Nations significant dates and events to attend.	March 2025 and 2026	RAP Working Group CEO
		•	Engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders regarding what significant events that they celebrate.	December 2025	RAP Champions
		•	Provide opportunities for Goulburn Family Care staff to participate in significant events related to the First Nations community.	June 2025 and 2026	CEO
		•	Ensure details are included for events to enable FamilyCare employees to register attendance and participate.	March 2025 and 2026	RAP Champions

**Opportunities:** Ensuring that opportunities are provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain employment and career progression at our organisation is seen as core business. Developing a procurement strategy specifically to prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses is also considered as essential to advance equitable procurement practices.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres	• Develop a plan that would attract applications from and provide support and inclusion for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people at each stage of the Employment Cycle, including recruitment, retention and professional development.	December 2025	Director Business Services
Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	<ul> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	June 2025 and June 2026	HR Manager
	<ul> <li>Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.</li> </ul>	June 2025 and June 2026	HR Manager
	<ul> <li>Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</li> </ul>	August 2025 August 2026	HR Manager
	<ul> <li>Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.</li> </ul>	June 2025 and June 2026	HR Manager Director Service Development
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support	• Develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses and those that employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to include as Approved Suppliers.	December 2025	Director Business Services
improved economic and social outcomes.	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2026	CEO
	<ul> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.</li> </ul>	May 2025	Director of Business Services CEO
	• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	July 2025 July 2026	Director of Business Services and Director of Service Development
	• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	July 2025	Director of Business Services

Governance				
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
12. Provide appropriate support	Maintain FamilyCare's RWG to govern RAP implementation.	November 2025	CEO	
for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Maintain and regularly review Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2025 and November 2026	CEO	
	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people representation on the RWG.	November 2025 and November 2026	CEO	
	• Meet at least five times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, April, June, August, and October 2025 and 2026	RAP Working Group CEO	
13. Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2026	CEO	
drive governance of the RAP.	• Engage senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2025 and 2026	CEO and Executive	
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2025 and December 2026	Quality, Risk and Compliance Manager	
	• Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champions from senior management.	March 2025	CEO	

14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2025 and 2026	CEO
	• 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 2025, 2026	CEO
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2025, 2026	CEO
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	June, Sept Dec, March 2025,2026	CEO
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2025, 2026	CEO
	<ul> <li>Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.</li> </ul>	February 2026	HR Manager
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our	• Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP to support the development of our next RAP.	January 2027	CEO
next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	October 2026	RAP Champions





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