



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

NOVEMBER 2021
- NOVEMBER 2022





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Acknowledgement of Country;

Carrie's Place acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we provide our services on including the Wonnarua, Worimi and Awabakal Nations.

We pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and to those of the future. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Carrie's Place Domestic Violence and Homelessness Services Inc. (Carrie's Place) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Carrie's Place joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 2.3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Carrie's Place 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 Carrie's Place, 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

A message from the CEO of Carrie's Place



Carrie's Place has been supporting individuals and our communities in the Hunter Region, since 1979. Our service addresses the issues of domestic violence and homelessness. We provide holistic services to build capacity, inclusion and resilience, with our Vision of "Our communities – zero tolerance towards violence and homelessness".

Our Mission is to increase the number of families in the Hunter Region, who are housed, safe and live free from abuse. This will be achieved by providing person centred programs aimed at empowering vulnerable people who may have experienced domestic violence and other forms of trauma and abuse.

Carrie's Place is proud to present our First Reconciliation Action Plan. This is a formal commitment to reconciliation, by strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by valuing heritage, and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.

The development of Carrie's Place Reconciliation Action Plan is a genuine commitment to providing a safe and culturally appropriate response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are proactive in what we do, and we know that ensuring respect for cultural connectedness is vital for our clients and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We have built our Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure diversity in our workforce, and by representing our community we support, and by a collaborative approach focusing on Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

It brings me great pleasure to present Carrie's Place Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, and to be part of something that can make a difference.



Jayne Clowes
Chief Executive Officer
Carrie's Place
Domestic Violence
& Homelessness Services



Our RAP Working Group



Angela Endersby
Lives on Wonnarua Country



Belinda Reed
Proud Wonnarua woman
Lives on Awabakal Country



Charna Lieben
Proud Wiradjuri woman
Lives on Wonnarua Country



Danielle Bird
Lives on Awabakal Country



Karen McKenzie
Lives on Awabakal Country



Karen Peckham
Proud Wiradjuri woman
Lives on Awabakal Country



Kasey Widders
Proud Anaiwan, Gomeroi & Dunghutti woman
Lives on Awabakal Country



Kristy Brogan
Lives on Awabakal Country



Mandy Gilbert
Proud Gomeroi woman
Lives on Worimi Country



Melissa Trindall
Proud Gomeroi woman
Lives on Wonnarua Country



Theresa Singhdeo
Lives on Awabakal Country

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members are staff from various programs and positions across the organisation who are passionate about reconciliation.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Belinda Reed
SHS Case Manager

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About the artist:

Saretta Fielding is an award winning Aboriginal artist of the Wonnarua Nation located in the Hunter Valley NSW. Her artwork versatility is seen across a wide range of public artworks and mediums including fine art, public installations and fashion.

Saretta's unique art style combining traditional symbolism and storytelling alongside contemporary artform and colour palette is fast becoming recognised nationally and internationally. Her flair for interpreting natural elements and mediums demonstrate her passion for country, instantly grabbing one's attention, inviting the viewer to savour, connect and share in the rich and alive culture of Aboriginal Australia. Saretta's loves the challenge of conveying to others, through art, how she is influenced by people, life experiences and. natures beauty.

Wola Malang - *Walk Together*

This artwork shares the story of Carrie's Place and their mission to provide holistic services to build capacity, inclusion and resilience across communities. The imagery brings an acknowledgement of the Awabakal, Worimi and Wonnarua people, as the Traditional Custodians of the land across their footprint on country and brings a welcome to all.

Central to the artwork two linked women symbols it upon a large gathering circle, reflective of Carrie's Place and a heart for the wellbeing of women. This imagery highlights opportunity to go forward alongside each other in a safe place that provides opportunity for healing and empowerment. Three gathering circles flowing across the canvas holding a significant threefold meaning within the artwork:

- They represent the three tribal groups Awabakal, Worimi and Wonnarua upon which Carrie's Place operates;
- Highlight commitment to reconciliation across three focus areas: Respect, Relationship and Opportunities;
- And celebrate the Carrie's Place journey from past, present and into a future that continues to accommodate growth and nurturing of women and community.

The eagle soars high above the design, a symbol of vision and strength and an important totem to local Aboriginal peoples, while the traditional imagery for Elders sites in prominent position at the top of the left and right side of the canvas, reflective of leadership and learning.

A pathway embraces the gathering circles and is overlaid with interwoven symbols for people, men, women and children. This imagery depicts the uniqueness and value of each person and their individual journey forward. The varying people symbol designs highlight diversity and inclusions for all, while their connected flow along the pathways reflects vision for empowering people and strengthening community.

A home created from two people symbols is reflective of Carrie's Place homelessness program and their work , towards supporting those in need.

Wola Malang is reflected throughout the design through people gathered in groups, couples or families representing collaboration, partnership and community Walking Together around shared vision for reconciliation and the wellbeing of all.



Our partnerships /current activities

Carrie's Place is committed to establishing further partnerships with services which are complementary to our core service delivery principles and practices.

- Carrie's Place partners with Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council to deliver the Inner Strengths program; a culturally appropriate domestic violence 8-week workshop. Additionally, Circle of Security 8-week parenting program has been co-facilitated by Carrie's Place and Mindaribba staff.
- Carrie's Place participates in annual NAIDOC events hosted by Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre (Cessnock LGA) and Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council (Maitland LGA).
- Carrie's Place co-facilitated a community engagement art project involving Kurri Kurri High School and Mount View High School. This activity complemented NAIDOC activities where the students produced artwork on the theme Voice, Treaty, Truth.
- Carrie's Place regularly participates in Walk A Mile Koori Style; a community event which involves a walk to raise awareness about violence against women.
- Carrie's Place is an active participant in the Koori Interagency. An interagency meeting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from various organisations and groups to share information and collaborate.
- Carrie's Place also recognises the importance of warm referral pathways to culturally appropriate services.



Internal activities/ initiatives

Carrie's Place celebrates NAIDOC week annually by embracing the theme and helping to raise awareness of the histories, cultures, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We do this by inviting all staff to participate in NAIDOC community events and internal celebrations. At community events Carrie's Place hosts interactive stalls to engage with children and families in attendance such as ball games, painting and craft. Due to COVID-19 restrictions last year, we celebrated NAIDOC week with a morning tea.

Carrie's Place also recognises nationally significant dates such as National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week by promoting awareness and discussion on our social media outlets, and within our community.

Carrie's Place undertakes the following:

- Cultural awareness training for all employees, both upon commencement of employment and regularly throughout.
- Regular staff development through cultural activities. This year we participated in a cultural weaving team activity in which we created communal artwork to be hung in a prominent space.
- Identified staff within the organisation to attend relevant conferences annually to network and generate discussions with the whole team which contribute to improved practice. Last year staff attended the Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum and the previous year attended the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation Conferences.
- Carrie's Place has established an Inclusive Practice Working Group to support the implementation of the organisations Statement of Inclusive Practice. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples focus group meets bi-monthly to ensure Carrie's Place continuously improves access to supports and strengthens practice for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Carrie's Place encourages and seeks recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in all recruitment processes.
- Carrie's Place has discussed proposal of cultural, educational healing camps for Identified staff members and clients.



Our business

Carrie's Place provides a range of culturally appropriate programs for people experiencing domestic and family violence, and/or homelessness.

Our service provides information and referral services, accommodation, case management, court advocacy and support across 8 local courts.

Carrie's Place has been providing services in the Maitland and Hunter area since 1979 and are truly a community owned organisation. We believe that everyone has the right to feel safe all the time.

Our mission is to increase the number of families in the Maitland, Cessnock, Upper Hunter, and Port Stephens regions, to be safe and live free from abuse. We aim to empower and support vulnerable people who have experienced domestic violence and homelessness by providing person centred programs which are trauma informed. We provide holistic services to build capacity, inclusion, and resilience.

Carrie's Place currently employs 35 employees within Australia, 6 of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Carrie's Place currently services regional NSW which includes the lands of the Wonnarua, Worimi and Awabakal Nations.

Carrie's Place has several office locations, with East Maitland as our head office, as well as outreach spaces in Dungog, Muswellbrook, and Cessnock.

Our Reflect RAP



RELATIONSHIPS



RESPECT



OPPORTUNITIES



GOVERNANCE

Creating a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will contribute to the national reconciliation movement by building strong relationships, respect, and opportunities within our organisation and within the community. The RAP will demonstrate our commitment to providing a safe and culturally appropriate response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who need to access our service. The RAP will provide a framework that guides our organisation towards a culturally safe response to clientele and the community. We aim to do this through community partnerships which target inequality, injustice and the need for reconciliation.

Karen McKenzie, a Senior Management leader in the organisation has been identified as our RAP Champion to drive engagement and awareness of the RAP internally. A RAP Working Group has been established with staff representatives from across all teams, made up of a number of First Nations representatives and a combination of senior management and frontline staff. A Terms of Reference will be developed to identify responsibility and accountability measures. The RAP Working Group will add the RAP as a standing agenda item at our broader team meetings, to ensure the whole organisation is included and can contribute. The Executive Management Team and the organisation's Governance Committee have approved our RAP along with the deliverables and actions required.

We will achieve our RAP deliverables by encouraging participation and engagement through robust discussions within the team. Implementing and reviewing throughout the RAP's cycle is scheduled to ensure actions are being completed within assigned timeframes.

Our organisation continues to prioritise all the relevant community events and staff training and has implemented regular cultural awareness training for all staff, including a minimum of one member of the Governance Committee.



RELATIONSHIPS

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. | Ongoing, Review December 2021 | Lead: Aboriginal Focus Worker Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a list of recognised Local Elders within Carrie's Place areas of operation as a resource for community engagement, public speaking, and promotion of local cultural protocols for employees. | December 2021 | Lead: Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Case Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | Ongoing Bimonthly meetings, Review December 2021 | Lead: Domestic & Family Violence (DFV) Specialist Worker Support: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusive Practice Group |
| 2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | May 2022 | Lead: SHS Case Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May - 3 June 2022 | Lead: Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) Case Manager Support: RAP Working Group |



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May - 3 June 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Working Group |
| 3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and stakeholders through an internal RAP launch event. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Program managers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | Ongoing, Review May 2022 | Lead: Aboriginal Focus Worker Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | Ongoing, Review May 2022 | Lead: RAP Champion/Program Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| 4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | December 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Governance Committee |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | December 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Governance Committee |

RELATIONSHIPS



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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Governance Committee |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within the organisation. | November 2021 | Lead: Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) Program Manager Support: CEO |
| 6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within Carrie's Place's operational area. | Ongoing, Review May 2022 | Lead: Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) Senior Practitioner Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staffs understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | Ongoing, Review May 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement visual acknowledgments of Aboriginal lands within our operational spaces. | November 2021 | Lead: WDVCAS Assistant Manager |



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|----------------------|--|
| 7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. | June 2022 | Lead: Aboriginal Focus Worker Support: SHS Case Manager |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. | June 2022 | Lead: Aboriginal Focus Worker Support: SHS Case Manager |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | July 4th - 11th 2022 | Lead: STA Case Manager Support: DFV Specialist Worker |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and communicate an organisational leave policy, (1 day leave entitlement for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff during the month of July for NAIDOC week). | February 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Governance Committee |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate and contribute to NAIDOC celebrations within the local government areas in which we provide services. | July 4th - 11th 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Program Managers |

RESPECT



OPPORTUNITIES

| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention within Carrie's Place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research culturally specific external supervision services and provide these options to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, in order to support retention and professional development. - Carrie's Place will encourage a bi-monthly culturally safe gathering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees which will promote support and connection. | <p>November 2021</p> <p>November 2021</p> <p>November 2021</p> | <p>Lead: CEO</p> <p>Support: RAP Working Group</p> <p>Lead: STA Case Manager</p> <p>Support: CEO</p> <p>Lead: Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Program Manager</p> <p>Support: Team Leaders</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | <p>November 2021</p> | <p>Lead: CEO</p> <p>Support: RAP Working Group</p> |



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person with the opportunity to join our Governance Committee. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Governance Committee |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees about professional development and resource needs to excel in their role. | November 2021 | Lead: Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) Case Manager Support: CEO |
| 9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business. | Ongoing, Review June 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusive Practice Group. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses and suppliers when outsourcing services and products. | Ongoing, Review June 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Program Managers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to commission pieces for shared spaces. | Ongoing, Review December 2021 | Lead: WDVCAS Assistant Manager Support: RAP Working Group |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander venues and catering services for Carrie's Place events and network meetings. | December 2021 | Lead: WDVCAS Aboriginal Focus Worker Support: Program Managers |

OPPORTUNITIES



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|---------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. | December 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Working Group |
| 10. Improve quality of service provisions at Carrie's Place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that lead to better well-being outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review procedures to ensure that all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients have access to an Aboriginal worker if requested. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: Aboriginal Frontline Staff |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Organisation's policy and procedures to ensure culturally appropriate language and safe practices are observed. | March 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Program Managers |



OPPORTUNITIES



| Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|---------------------|---|
| 11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation. | Review January 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: Program Managers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. | November 2021 | Lead: SHS Case Manager Support: CEO |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | Review January 2022 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Working Group |
| 12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Champion |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Carrie's Place has the relevant systems and resources in place to track, measure, meet and report on RAP commitments. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO Support: RAP Champion |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | November 2021 | Lead: CEO |
| 13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. | September 2022 | Lead: SHS Case Manager Support: CEO |
| 14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | February 2022 | Lead: SHS Case Manager Support: CEO |



Carrie's
PLACE

www.carriesplace.org.au



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

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