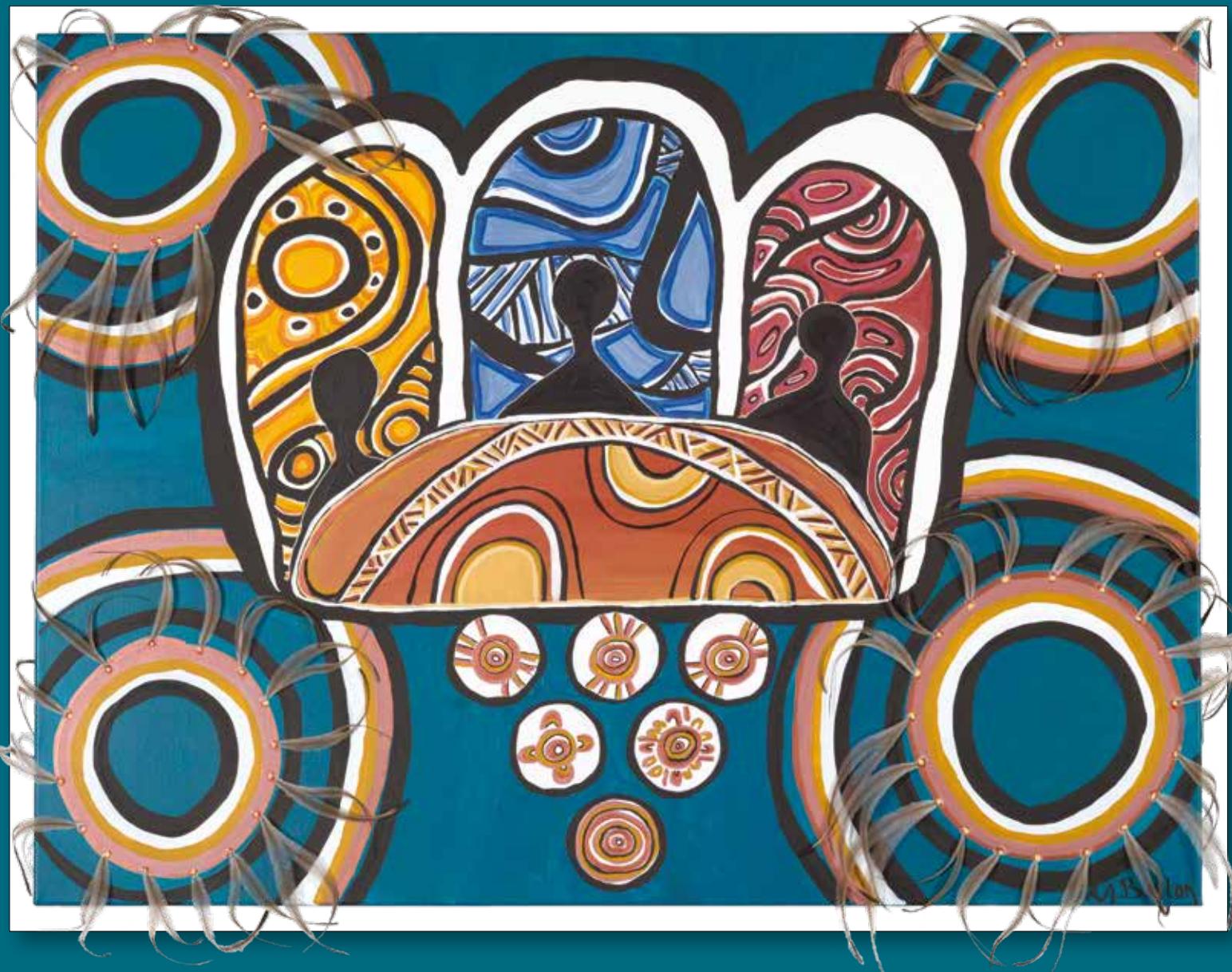


# Reconciliation Action Plan

REFLECT 2021-2022

FEBRUARY 2021







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## Acknowledgement of Country

Carers Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continuing connection to land and waters. Sovereignty was never ceded.

This land is a place of age-old ceremonies, of celebration, initiation and renewal, where Aboriginal peoples have had and continue to have a unique role.

# Artwork by Mandi Barton



## About Mandi

Mandi was born in the Western Suburbs of Sydney and grew up in Footscray, the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. She is a Yorta Yorta woman with Barapa Barapa, Wemba Wemba heritage, a mother of three daughters, an Aboriginal community member, an artist, an entrepreneur who still resides in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria.

Mandi's art aspires to strengthen identity and cultural knowledge, opportunities for storytelling, connecting communities, illustrating concepts and relationships.

She has been an artist for over 20 years and attained her Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Design at RMIT Bundoora Victoria.

Her art is classified as "Contemporary South Eastern Australian Aboriginal art". Most of Mandi's works are acrylic on canvas, however she does experiment with many other mediums, emu feathers, sand, twine, metal and photography, graphic art.

## About the Artwork

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders care for their loved ones and don't often identify as 'carers'. They are the hidden carers.

The design of this artwork explores the concepts and strengths of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer and illustrates self-care and community care (caring as a collective).

## The Design

The coolamon in the middle of art piece is the main focal point. It represents carrying and caring.

### To carry:

- › On the individual responsibility and role as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- › On the responsibility of their family
- › On the responsibility of their community
- › On their songlines, cultural knowledge and wisdom

The three people surrounding the coolamon are the carers and the people they care for and the community support.

Behind the people is Country, representing all the different Countries and Nations that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people come from. It also is a major resource for self-care. Going back and connecting to Mother Earth strengthens and revitalises us.

A dance belt with emu feathers signifies culture as a primary self-care resource. Self-care through dance and ceremony. Connection to families and communities is also a great source of self-care.

The circles under the coolamon represent culture, families and communities as the strength and foundation of caring and nurturing.

### Materials:

- › Acrylic on Canvas
- › 103cm width x 76cm height
- › Emu feathers on twine



## CEO Introduction

I am pleased to introduce Carers Victoria's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This RAP forms an integral part of Carers Victoria's commitment to reconciliation and to supporting and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our core business activities.

Carers Victoria works with unpaid family and friend carers across Victoria and I would like to acknowledge the caring responsibilities within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In particular, I would like to recognise that Aboriginal Victorians are more likely than non-Aboriginal Victorians to identify as carers and to support a friend or family member.

I am proud of the progress Carers Victoria is making on our reconciliation journey and of the commitment across the organisation, especially within the RAP Working Group. I would also like to recognise and acknowledge that more must be done to support better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Carers Victoria will focus on activities and initiatives which create meaningful opportunities to achieve the objectives of the RAP and will continue developing its commitment to the reconciliation journey.

Carers Victoria is dedicated to developing and building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria. We are hopeful that these relationships will change and enrich our organisation and help us to effectively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We strive to be an organisation that is inclusive and welcoming of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they are a carer, employee, or visitor.



**Sue Peden AM**  
*Interim CEO*  
Carers Victoria



# Our Business

Carers Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation working in collaboration with families and friends who provide care and support for someone who experiences a disability, mental health concern, is an older person with care needs or has other significant health issues.

As the peak body for unpaid carers in Victoria, our organisation works to ensure carers throughout Victoria are supported in their daily lives, while aiming to improve their health, wellbeing, resilience, financial security, choices and social connections.

For over 25 years, Carers Victoria has provided support to carers including counselling, practical advice, education and training and referrals to a range of services. We also conduct research and advocate to ensure carers needs are recognised in government policy.

We seek carer input in developing the programs and services we provide. We strive to be inclusive, culturally safe, flexible and responsive to the needs of all carers.

Carers Victoria also works in partnership with government, businesses and other community organisations to improve services, systems and supports for carers.

## **Carers Victoria Staff**

Carers Victoria currently employs between 60-80 staff members. An internal survey conducted in January 2019 showed one member of our staff identifies as being Aboriginal. As part of our actions in this RAP and future RAPs, we will conduct an annual internal survey each February.

## **Where we work**

Carers Victoria is the peak body representing all unpaid carers in Victoria. We provide education workshops, programs, events and advice for carers across the state as well as services (including counselling and respite referrals) for carers in the Western Metropolitan region of Melbourne.

Our office is in Footscray.



# Our RAP Journey

Carers Victoria is developing a RAP in order to plan a coordinated, holistic and action-based approach to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities. We would like people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to feel safe at Carers Victoria and know that their culture is valued. We look forward to undertaking this work in a way which considers the context of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' experiences and histories.

The Reflect RAP is the first step in continuing our reconciliation journey. There have been staff who have built relationships with local Aboriginal people and organisations, but this will be the first time Carers Victoria will take a coordinated organisational approach to reconciliation. We will be humble, recognising that we have a lot to learn. We will also commit to concrete actions, which will demonstrate the progress we are making. Carers Victoria will endeavour to build meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeking guidance and input from carers and communities in order to inform service design and delivery.

While this will be Carers Victoria's first RAP, our reconciliation journey commenced in 2012. Since this time, we have continued to develop relationships with Aboriginal organisations and community groups while focusing on staff education, awareness-raising and exploring ways to make our organisation and services culturally safe and responsive. The organisation's reconciliation journey has been guided by the patience and support of the HealthWest Aboriginal Project Manager, Djerrriwarrh Health Services Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Project Officer and Autism Queensland Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer.

Recent efforts to make Carers Victoria more culturally safe have included placing flags in our reception area, featuring plaques in all meeting rooms and the public kitchen to acknowledge Traditional Owners, providing an Acknowledgement of Country before all board and leadership team meetings and placing Aboriginal artworks and posters in our training room.



# Our Partnerships & Current Activities

## Community partnerships

Between 2012 and 2016 Carers Victoria was a member of the Melton Partnership, a network of Aboriginal community members, health and community organisations. From 2014 to 2016 this network ran a yearly information day for the Aboriginal Community of Melton with the aim of providing information and access to local services. Unfortunately, this network ceased in 2016 due to the HealthWest Primary Care Partnership Aboriginal Projects Manager position being defunded.

Between 2013 and 2014 Carers Victoria attended the monthly Aboriginal Foodshare event co-ordinated by the Aboriginal Health Team at Braybrook Community Centre. The purpose of attending was to connect with the local Aboriginal community and provide an easy point of access to services at Carers Victoria. This led to an increase in referrals resulting in the provision of more support for this community and strengthened relationships between Carers Victoria staff and Aboriginal workers from these services.

In 2016 Carers Victoria ran Carers Week information sessions in Wyndham and Melton for local Aboriginal community members. These activities were run in partnership with the Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre, Djerriwarrh Health Services' Aboriginal Health Team Melton and the Indigenous Liaison Officer (Victoria) Autism Queensland.

In 2017 Carers Victoria attended the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Conference in Melbourne, together with the Indigenous Liaison Officer (Victoria), Autism Queensland. In partnership with Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre and Djerriwarrh Health Services' Aboriginal Health Team, Carers Victoria ran consultations with Aboriginal communities and workers in Wyndham and Melton to inform the Victorian State Government's first Victoria Carer Strategy.

During 2018 Carers Victoria's Education Services ran sessions for the Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre during Carers Week. Representatives from Carers Victoria also attended the National Reconciliation Action Plan Conference in Melbourne.



## **Internal activities/initiatives**

Established in 2012, Carers Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group (Working Group) was the precursor to the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and had representation from across the organisation. This group had significant input from the HealthWest Primary Care Partnership Aboriginal Projects Manager (PCP Aboriginal Projects Manager), prior to this position being defunded. This group promoted the importance of cultural safety for individuals from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities among the staff and advocated for Carers Victoria to undertake a Reconciliation Action Plan. Once Carers Victoria commenced a Reconciliation Action Plan this group ceased with the formation of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

In 2013 the PCP Aboriginal Projects Manager conducted a cultural audit of Carers Victoria's reception area which led to recommendations to make the area more welcoming, culturally appropriate and a safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visiting our office. In 2014 a page for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was added to the organisation's website, an Acknowledgement of Country Policy was developed, 'Asking the Question' training for intake staff was rolled out and promotional material utilising Aboriginal artwork was developed in consultation with local Aboriginal community groups and workers.

In 2015 the organisation developed guiding principles for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Worker at Djerriwarrh Health Services and PCP Aboriginal Projects Manager. Between 2015 and 2017 Carers Victoria, in partnership with the PCP Aboriginal Projects Manager, conducted NAIDOC Week information and education sessions for staff.

In 2016 Carers Victoria staff attended 'Aboriginal Community and Cultural Awareness Education and Safety Training' organised by the PCP Aboriginal Projects Manager and the Working Group and delivered by Walya Consultancy.

During 2017 Carers Victoria conducted a Sorry Day event for staff and published an interview with the Indigenous Liaison Officer from Autism Queensland (who provides service across Victoria) in the organisation's electronic newsletter 'The Voice' which is distributed to carers and interested parties across Victoria. An 'Asking the Question' guidance sheet was developed with input from Djerriwarrh Health Services' Aboriginal Health Worker and an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners was added to the organisation's email footer. In 2017, 2018 and 2019 Carers Victoria included information on the staff intranet about the meaning of Survival Day/Australia Day to Aboriginal people.



# ACTION PLAN Relationships

FEBRUARY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

## ACTION 1

Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Engage all staff in identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	30 June 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
› Continue to meet with West Metro Alliance Aboriginal Development Officer to discuss engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations organisations.	1 February 2021	Communications Coordinator and General Manager, Carer Services
› Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	30 June 2021	Community Engagement Officer

## ACTION 2

Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	30 April 2021	Senior Manager Marketing and Communications
› RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
› Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2021	General Manager, Carer Services

## ACTION 3

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff through intranet posts, presentation at all team meetings, all staff survey around cultural safety at work.	1 February 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
› Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	30 June 2021	Senior Manager Sector Leadership and Innovation
› Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	30 June 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
› Promote Reconciliation Australia website and encourage all staff to sign up to Reconciliation News.	1 February 2021	Senior Manager Marketing and Communication

## ACTION 4

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination in the workplace.	30 June 2021	HR Manager
› Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	30 June 2021	HR Manager



# ACTION PLAN Respect

FEBRUARY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

## ACTION 5

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
➤ Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	1 June 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
➤ HR staff to undertake relevant cultural safety training.	1 June 2021	HR Manager
➤ Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	30 August 2021	HR Manager

## ACTION 6

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
➤ Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	1 March 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee
➤ Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	30 March 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee
➤ Promote to all staff our organisation's Acknowledgement of Country Policy.	1 February 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee

## ACTION 7

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
➢ Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	5 July 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee
➢ Conduct an all staff NAIDOC Week event.	5 July 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee
➢ Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	5 July 2021	Senior Manager Marketing and Communications
➢ Host a NAIDOC week event for carers.	5 July 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
➢ RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	5 July 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
➢ Highlight and promote culturally relevant dates across our organisation. These will include: 26 January; National Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week.	1 February 2021	Senior Manager Marketing and Communication



# ACTION PLAN Opportunities

FEBRUARY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

## ACTION 8

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Develop a business case related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation for consideration by Executive Leadership Team.	1 August 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
› Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	30 June 2021	HR Manager

## ACTION 9

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Develop a business case related to procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses for consideration by Executive Leadership Team.	31 March 2021	General Manager, Carer Services
› Investigate Supply Nation membership.	30 September 2021	Chair of Equity and Inclusion Committee





# ACTION PLAN Governance

FEBRUARY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

## ACTION 10

Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Review RWG membership and recruit new members.	1 February 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
› Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	1 March 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
› Establish Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	1 February 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group

## ACTION 11

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	1 February 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
› Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	1 February 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group
› Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	1 February 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group

## ACTION 12

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group

## ACTION 13

Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
› Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	30 November 2021	Chair of RAP Working Group



## For further information, please contact

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