

INNOVATE

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) template

Our vision for a United Australia

Carers Victoria's vision is for a united Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated with dignity and respect.

We aspire to advance understanding of Victoria's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander unpaid carers and improve their access to culturally safe and appropriate assistance.

We strive to be an organisation that is a strong and proactive ally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they are a carer, employee, or visitor.

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, addiction, 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 30 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 employs over 50 staff members. An internal Diversity Atlas survey conducted in 2022 showed 3.6% of our staff identify as Aboriginal. As part of our actions in this RAP and future RAPs, we will conduct an annual internal survey each February.

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

Our RAP

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.

Background

This is Carers Victoria's second RAP. Our journey commenced in 2012. We have learnt much since our original plan, which was ad hoc and relied on staff who had built relationships with local Aboriginal people and organisations.

Reflect RAP

The organisation's first reconciliation journey was guided by the patience and support of the HealthWest Aboriginal Project Manager, Djerriwarrh Health Services Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Project Officer, and Autism Queensland Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer.

Our Reflect RAP was the first time Carers Victoria took a coordinated organisational approach to reconciliation. Led by a dedicated RAP Working Group, Carers Victoria mindfully started 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.

Outcomes of the Reflect RAP include:

- Identifying key stakeholders and building relationships (e.g. VACCA, Aboriginal-led centres)
- Staff training
- Celebrating and promoting National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week annually, featuring an Aboriginal cultural tour in Melbourne for our caring community
- Reviewing our HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination and future needs.

Work on this RAP inspired us to ask staff around 26th January. This was conducted as two additional questions in our 2022 Diversity Atlas, which was well supported across the organisation. Key findings were:

- Only 16% of staff believe Carers Victoria should continue referring to this as Australia Day. Whilst the clear majority (84%) would like to see the day called something else, there was no clear consensus around what this should be.
- 61% of staff support the notion that Carers Victoria select an alternative public holiday to 26 January.

The outcome of these results included Carers Victoria referring to this day by its date, and not as Australia Day. The Board has explored appropriate alternatives to the public holiday.

We are proud to have completed all actions in our Reflect RAP and are well placed to continue working toward our vision.

Innovate RAP

This Innovate RAP paves the way for our next steps towards our vision of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with unpaid caring responsibilities are recognised, valued and supported.

Guided by Terms of Reference, a Working Group will be led by a RAP Champion (a manager), and the Chair of the Equity & Inclusion Committee (a senior manager). It will be informed by at least one staff member who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, along with at least one external First Nations representative who will ideally be a carer.

Carers Victoria will endeavour to build meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeking guidance and input from carers and communities to inform service design and delivery.

Carers Victoria is developing this Innovate RAP to continue building and maturing relationships, processes and systems that help us work towards our vision. We will remain humble, recognising that we still have much to learn. We will also commit to concrete actions, which will demonstrate the progress we are making.

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Relationships

Relationships are a critical part of our work as a peak body for carers in Victoria. Our work cannot be fully realised in isolation. Providing a state-wide voice for Carers, for example, requires strong working relationships with a range of people including diverse groups of carers, related agencies, and government. Similarly providing carer education and services requires a complex network of relationships. Nurturing relationships has been identified by our Board as a strategic priority.

This philosophy flows through to our reconciliation work. Carers Victoria is committed to nurturing relationships with individuals and organisations allow us to achieve our mutual goals.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. 	July 2024	RAP Champion Senior Manager Carer Services Statewide Sector Development Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	Dec 2024 (develop) Dec 2025 (Implement)	RAP Champion Senior Manager Carer Services Statewide Sector Development Manager
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. 	27 May- 3 June, 2024-25	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May- 3 June, 2024-25	Reconciliation Working Group
	<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, [2024-25]	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one NRW event each year. 	27 May- 3 June, [2024-25]	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. 	May 2024-25	RAP Champion
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce. 	July 2024 (develop)	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. 	27 May- 3 June, 2024-25	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. 	February 2025	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications Statewide Sector Development Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation. 	July 2025	Statewide Sector Development Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	July 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation. 	July 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. 	July 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate senior leaders and all staff on the effects of racism. 	Dec 2024	HR Manager

Respect			
<p>Respect is one of the five core values held by Carers Victoria. We pride ourselves in being respectful and united in our differences, and mindfully reach out to various diverse communities to see how we may work together to best achieve the best outcomes for ALL carers.</p> <p>We recognise that, historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have not always been treated with respect, and that this has led to reduced outcomes for our first nations peoples compared with the wider population.</p> <p>In keeping with our values, Carers Victoria seeks to respectfully work with communities towards bridging these gaps, achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.</p>			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	July 2024	HR Manager

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"> Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy. 	July 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff. 	September 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. 	December 2024	HR Manager
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	27 May-3 June, 2024-25	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. 	27 May, 2024	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. 	27 May-3 June, 2024-25	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings. 	ongoing	Reconciliation Working Group
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	First week in July, 2024-25	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	May 2024 (BEFORE NAIDOC week)	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff. 	First week in July, 2024-25	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications

Opportunities

Carers Victoria is committed to reaching and supporting carers from diverse backgrounds. We see our Innovate RAP as an ideal opportunity in which to work with Aboriginal and First Nations carers across Victoria, to ensure they receive appropriate and culturally safe support in their caring role.

This is also an opportunity for us to grow as an organisation, becoming more culturally rich from increasing employment outcomes and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. By taking these opportunities, we strive to support improved economic, employment and social outcomes.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	April 2024	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	May 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	June 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. 	July 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. 	June 2024	HR Manager
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy. 	August 24	Senior Manager – Carer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	October 24	Senior Manager – Carer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. 	October 24	Senior Manager – Carer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	October 24	Senior Manager – Carer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	November 24	Senior Manager – Carer Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	<i>March 2024</i>	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	<i>February 2024</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation. 	<i>Ongoing</i>	
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	<i>March 2024</i>	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	<i>March 2024</i>	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	<i>March 2024</i>	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management. 	<i>February 2024</i>	Reconciliation Working Group
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June annually	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August annually	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September, annually	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. 	Set schedule by March 2024	Reconciliation Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. 	Coincide with NRW	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. 	December 2024	HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP. 	<i>February 2026</i>	Reconciliation Working Group

13. 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. 	September 2026	Reconciliation Working Group
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