



Tallangatta Health Service

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

December 2022 to February 2024



Cover Artwork

‘Our Place of Healing’



Artwork by Tamara Murray

Artwork Story



OUR PLACE OF HEALING

This beautiful artwork was designed and painted by Tamara Murray.

The painting was inspired by Tallangatta Health Service and being in a place of peace, surrounded by love, light and kindness.

Being a part of a beautiful community is just like being part of a family.

The circles work represents the five core values of Tallangatta Health Service and the design work shows the connection to the beautiful landscape and surrounds.



About the artist – Tamara May Murray

The artist, Tamara May Murray, is a proud member of the Barkindji and Maraura tribe on her mother's side, the Yorta Yorta and Dhudaroah tribes on her father's side.

She grew up on the Namatjira Mission in the small country town of Coomealla

"Culture is everything to me, it's a way of life, it's my identity, it's who I represent – my people, my family. Culture is our way of healing, telling stories, keeping spirits and traditions alive. It's our connection to the land."

For Tamara, her art is not simply paint on a canvas. It's a story; it's a place; it's someone she has met along the way that has inspired her. It's a deep connection to the land and her culture. It is a story that has been passed down.



"I want my art to help break down barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I hope I can help educate and contribute to a more peaceful world where our children can all walk as one, hand in hand, no matter their skin colour or cultural identity."

Table of Contents

Message from Tallangatta Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Vicki Pitcher	4
Message from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer, Karen Mundine	5
About Tallangatta Health Service	6
Our Pillars	7
Strategic Priorities	7
Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	8
Our Partnerships	9
RAP Working Group.....	10
Our current and planned activities	11
Tallangatta Health Service Reconciliation Action Plan	12



integrity



caring



adaptable



respect



excellence





Message from Tallangatta Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Vicki Pitcher



Together with our Board of Directors, I am delighted to launch the Tallangatta Health Service's first Reconciliation Action Plan. We are dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workplace that supports all employees to thrive and in turn support all members of our community to achieve best possible health outcomes. A Reconciliation Action Plan is a vital element in achieving these goals.

I firmly believe that striving for Aboriginal cultural healing and equality is essential in improving the future for all Australians.

Vicki Pitcher

Chief Executive Officer

Tallangatta Health Service



Message from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer, Karen Mundine

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Tallangatta Health Services to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Tallangatta Health Services joins a network of more than 2,200 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 close to 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 Tallangatta Health Services 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 Tallangatta Health Services, 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





About Tallangatta Health Service

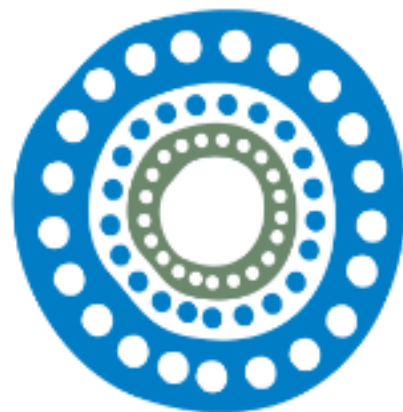


Tallangatta Health Service (THS) functions under the Health Services Act 1988 (VIC) and is delegated its functions by the Minister of Health. THS is a small rural health service funded by the Department of Health (State) to provide public health services, and it receives aged care funding from the Department of Health (Commonwealth). Our service operates within a Strategic Directions 2018-2027 framework with the vision of *'Empowering People for Health'*.

Tallangatta Health Service employs 180 staff in a mix of full and part time roles (EFT 100). Of these, three staff members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons. It is our hope that working through this process will ensure any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel comfortable identifying as such.

Tallangatta Health Service is situated on one site and is located 30 minutes from the large regional centre of Albury-Wodonga and services a large section of the Towong Shire encompassing Tallangatta, Tallangatta Valley, Bullioh, Tallangatta South, Georges Creek, Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta, Granya, Eskdale, Old Tallangatta, Jarvis Creek and surrounds.

Core business includes Residential Aged Care (low and high care), Medical Clinic, Acute nursing, District nursing, Allied Health and other community programs.





●●● Our Pillars

Five pillars provide a strong foundation to the success of Tallangatta Health Service:

- 1 Person Centred Approach**
The person will be at the centre of all we do and we will empower them in health decisions.
- 2 Evidence Based Decision Making**
Our decisions will inquire, looking for best practice to inform our decisions.
- 3 Sustainability**
Our decisions ensure that success can be maintained.
- 4 Culture of Excellence, Innovation, Learning & Development**
We will be the best we can be by embracing new ways.
- 5 Robust Clinical & Corporate Governance**
Our governance systems will provide assurance that we are providing the best care possible and that our strategic vision is being achieved.

Strategic Priorities ●●●

The **Strategic Direction 2018-2027** is based on four strategic priorities identified by Tallangatta Health Service and are critical to ensuring the service achieves its vision by remaining relevant and sustainable, and meeting the changing health needs of the community.

Strategic Priority 1

Our care is relevant, safe, high quality and responsive.

Strategic Priority 2

Our infrastructure is planned for future needs.

Strategic Priority 3

Our partnering with communities cultivates connections.

Strategic Priority 4

Our workforce is adaptive, skilled and compassionate.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Tallangatta Health Service acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions and the cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Tallangatta Health Service has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan to reflect our current position and introduce deliberate reconciliation initiatives going forward. Our starting point in this journey is a Reflect RAP given the organisational maturity. A working group of staff members has convened to explore the concepts to reach a shared understanding and vision of where we would like to be. We invited external stakeholders to join us on this journey to ensure we have strong and varied voices to provide input and expertise.

What we are trying to achieve

- Turn good intentions into real action with tangible outcomes
- Set realistic and defined goals
- Use respectful and inclusive language and terminology across the organisation and in all documents, policies and procedures
- Outline a long-term commitment to support social, economic, educational and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Understand the impact our Health Service has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Recognise and overcome the effects of dispossession, racism and discrimination
- Raise awareness amongst our staff and community who may not have considered or understood the impact of historical decisions and actions

The Working Group have adopted a Terms of Reference with the following objectives:

Development of a Reconciliation Action Plan which

- *Prepares Tallangatta Health Service for reconciliation initiatives*
- *Promotes a whole of organisation approach to the RAP*
- *Ensures that the RAP does not sit with a single team*
- *Ensures that the responsibility for implementing the RAP does not fall to individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff*

The THS Board is fully supportive of the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. Ideally, THS can work with our community to raise awareness and gain participation more broadly in this region. THS is naturally a leader in our community which means we have a voice we can use to promote and educate. Increasing awareness of racism and discrimination with the goal of creating greater acceptance of minority groups



can make society stronger and more cohesive. This benefits everybody as does recognising and celebrating diversity by welcoming new ideas and perspectives, opening lines of communication and promoting creativity.

THS has a very small number of staff identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and equally small numbers of community members/consumers. It is hoped this journey will facilitate greater trust in the Health Service which in turn will enable more accurate data, which can improve access to services to achieve better health outcomes.

The values of THS (integrity, caring, adaptable, respect, excellence) drive our culture and care, and the goal of developing a RAP is to have greater confidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in this area experience those values in all contacts with the health service. We need feedback and input in order to improve and understand what else we need to do. There is a strong spirit of willingness and desire to improve.

We recognise that this process can be slow and tentative, but also recognise we must start somewhere and the hope is that any steps we can take to being more welcoming and inclusive will move us closer to achieving our goals.



Our Partnerships

Tallangatta Health Service has been invited to participate in an existing collaboration with Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV), Corryong Health, Alpine Health and Towong Shire Council to liaise with local First Nations Traditional Owner groups. These Health agencies and the local Council are all in the process of developing their own RAP's and it was agreed that a partnership approach had great value. This partnership has produced a regional commitment to a reconciliation statement to publicly announce our joint intention to improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

BRV have coordinated a series of workshops with traditional owner groups. Tallangatta Health Service attended one of these workshops with representatives from the Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation. The Towong Shire has identified multiple Traditional Owner groups in this area and we seek to collaborate with their representatives.

- Bpangerang Aboriginal Corporation
- Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation
- Dhudhuroa Waywurru Aboriginal Nations Corporation
- Dalka Warra Mittung
- Waywurru (Pallanganmiddang)
- Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero

We are working closely with the other health agencies in this region to better inform our understanding and share our learnings, and have also applied for and been successful in obtaining membership of the Lowitja Institute in order to access training resources and new ideas.



RAP Working Group

The Tallangatta Health RAP Working Group (RWG) is comprised of:

- RAP Champion: Chief Executive Officer – Chair (THS)
- Director of Clinical Operations and Nursing (THS)
- Director of Quality, Safety and Consumer Experience (THS)
- Home and Community Care Manager (THS)
- People and Workforce Advisor (THS)
- Health Promotion Officer (THS)
- Social Worker (THS)
- Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator (THS)
- Recovery Coordinator Aboriginal Culture and Healing (BRV)
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer (Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation)
- Executive Assistant - minute taker (THS)

Currently, the only members of this working group who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the external members from BRV and Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation. In forming the Working Group, an invitation was extended to all staff of the Health service in the hope that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would choose to participate. For a short period, the health service employed an Aboriginal Cadet however that role has now finished up. We are exploring a First Nations Employment Support Officer role as part of the next Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

Three members of the Executive team including the CEO as sponsor, actively participate in this process and are firmly committed to making a difference. The development of the RAP may be the deliverable in this process but the actual journey is far more important as we strive to highlight the gaps in our health service being inclusive and find strategies for improvement.



Our current and planned activities

Current/Planned activities:

- Develop culturally appropriate and responsive services
- Always ask the question (“do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?”)
- Improve collection of metrics
- Towong Shire region partnership
- Celebration and acknowledgement of culturally significant events
- Improving staff cultural awareness
- Aboriginal Cultural and Healing training
- Transforming spaces (increase visual affirmation)
- Commissioning of artwork from local artists
- Audit of brochures and posters to be inclusive
- Initiate community focus group events to develop local relationships
- Community functions (e.g. BBQ’s, morning teas)
- Development of community garden to include Aboriginal cultural elements
- Participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in consumer committees and working groups
- Lowitja Institute Training forums (Health Journey Mapping Workshop)
- Subscribe to the Koori Mail and distribute for staff

Tallangatta Health Service has engaged with representatives from BRV and Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation who have joined the RAP working group. A series of events have been held with an ongoing commitment for future planning, with a particular focus on attracting community members to our community garden. The development of a yarning circle within the community garden, weaving workshops which bring community together with residential aged care residents and rock art with the local kindergarten are examples of our approach. THS strives to showcase our communal spaces to make them more welcoming and inviting. We are hoping that small steps on this journey slowly build trust with the community.





Tallangatta Health Service Reconciliation Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
--------	-------------	----------	----------------



Relationships

1	Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS)Mungabareena Aboriginal CorporationLocal eldersDuduroa Dhargal Traditional Owner Group	December 2022	CEO
		Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	January 2023	CEO
2	Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Health Promotion Officer (HPO)
		RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2023	HPO
		Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May to June 2023	CEO
3	Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	December 2022	CEO
		Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2022	CEO

		Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	December 2022	CEO
4	Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	February 2023	CEO
		Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2023	People and Workforce Advisor



Respect

5	Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights 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.	June 2023	CEO
		Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation and facilitate delivery of learning modules	May 2023	People and Workforce Advisor
6	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 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 2022	CEO
		Work with Bushfire Recovery Victoria to liaise with and identify Traditional Owner groups	July 2023	CEO
		Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2023	HPO
7	Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2023	HPO
		Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2023	HPO
		RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	HPO



Opportunities

8	Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	August 2023	People and Workforce Advisor
---	---	---	-------------	------------------------------

	recruitment, retention and professional development.	Introduce a First Nations Employment Support Officer role.	September 2023	People and Workforce Advisor
		Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2023	People and Workforce Advisor
9	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	July 2023	Director of Corporate Services
		Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2023	Director of Corporate Services



Governance

10	Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2022	CEO
		Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2022	CEO
		Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December 2022	CEO
11	Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2022	CEO
		Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2022	CEO
		Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2023	HPO
12	Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2023	HPO
		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 2023	CEO
		Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023	CEO
13	Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2023	CEO





Contact Details

Chief Executive Officer

Vicki.pitcher@ths.org.au

02 6071 5201

Health Promotion Officer

danielle.costigan@ths.org.au

02 6071 5431

